

# The Pulwana attack and the Kashmir National Liberation Movement

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On February 14, 49 soldiers of the Indian paramilitary force, Central Reserve Police Force, CRPF, were killed in an attack on their column near Pulwama. Since then, extremist Hindutva organisations have become active in Jammu Kashmir and other areas of India. In Jammu Kashmir, Muslims were attacked, their property was set on fire and many Kashmiri families had to find refuge in mosques. At the same time, attacks are being carried out against Kashmiri students in other Indian states. Extremist Hindutva organisations are putting pressure on college and university administrations to expel them from educational institutions and, according to various reports, one college has refused admissions to Kashmiri students for the next year. In addition, Uttar Khand University suspended seven Kashmiri students. A case has been filed against the student leader Shahila Rasheed for a tweet that said that extremist Hindutva protesters had surrounded the hostels, demanding the eviction of 15 to 20 Kashmiri women from the student hostels.

Meanwhile, Hindutva extremists are given a free hand, so that they can frighten Kashmiris, be violent against them and register false cases against them. After the attack, India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, said that the time for dialogue is over. He had already given the army permission to act freely. The Indian Army's General Commander for Kashmir, KS Dhillon, said that mothers should pressure children to lay down their arms, as those who did not lay would be killed. At the moment, campaigns to express solidarity with the military are going on all over India. Almost the entire opposition has sided with the government and the military. Furthermore, India not only closed down all bus services with Pakistan, but all trade between the countries was suspended and the order was given to expel all Pakistanis from Rajasthan within 48 hours. While Pakistan condemned the attack and Imran Khan also offered every possible collaboration in the investigations, it also formulated threats, and as we write, the relations between the two nuclear powers are worsening.

There has been a Kashmir liberation movement ever since Partition in 1947 but it intensified towards the end of the 60s. Later, in the 90s, armed resistance emerged, in which the Kashmiri nation made immeasurable sacrifices. Changes in the global situation and in the Pakistan ruling class' priorities, meant this struggle could not be successful. Since 2010, a new movement and a new generation have been challenging the Indian army on the streets. The involvement of Kashmiri students in 2016-2017 gave it a new strength, which the Indian army was not able to control. This movement received support on the international level, even from students in India itself. For this reason, the Indian Army's brutal repression reached a climax. As a result of their involvement in this movement, thousands of Kashmiri youth are facing imprisonment. Many have been blinded by pellet gun firing. Because that movement showed no results, some Kashmiri youths are again attracted to the armed struggle and Pulwama is an expression of that.

For the past 70 years, the ruling classes of both Pakistan and India have used Kashmir for their own interests. They have fuelled militant nationalism to divert attention from real domestic problems and to divide the class struggle. The truth remains that the Indian ruling class committed endless crimes against the Kashmiri nation during the past 70 years and since then hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris have been martyred and thousands of women raped. Kashmiri youth, children and women are disabled for their entire life, due to the large scale use of pellet guns. Secondly, Pakistan's ruling class has also not only put down all kinds of democratic movements in the name of Kashmir and enmity towards India but, on this basis, has maintained Pakistan as a 'security state'. At the same time, the people of so-called 'Azad' Kashmir are deprived of democratic rights, their resources are forcefully extracted and religious extremists have been strengthened in the name of supporting Azad Kashmir.<sup>1</sup> That is how the liberation movement of the Kashmiri nation became divided. The Pakistani ruling class is more interested in maintaining the conflict than in its resolution, so that it can safeguard its privileges and geostrategic interests in the region.

Inqilabi Socialist opposes change through individual terror and we do not consider incidents like Pulwama a solution. Such methods generally lead to the state becoming even more powerful. However, we do recognise that this incident was primarily a reaction to the gruesome oppression and bloodshed which the Indian state has established in Kashmir. The Indian state is using this incident as a pretext to inflict additional oppression and tyranny on Kashmir, while it presents itself as the victim. In reality, it is the Indian state and the army who are the terrorists and it is they who keep imposing this war on Kashmir.

It is the Kashmiri national liberation movement's indisputable right to carry out the political struggle and the armed struggle against occupation, and the Indian and Pakistani workers' movements should support this struggle in every possible way. It is the duty of the Indian and Pakistani labour movement to stand for unconditional solidarity with the Kashmiri national liberation movement and to oppose racism and the ongoing attacks. In India, although racism and warmongering against Kashmiris has reached a high point and attacks are carried out against Kashmiri students and merchants, there are also many people coming to the defence of Kashmiris and offering them shelter in their homes. It is now necessary to stand united against such sentiments of racism against Kashmiris in India.

Neither American nor Chinese imperialism, nor Saudi Arabia, can help the Kashmiri national liberation movement in any way. Their interference only serves their own interests and it is this that has kept the Kashmiri nation divided, they have strong relations with those who have brought war to the Kashmiris. Any hopes that the leadership of the Kashmiri national liberation movement has in them, can only lead to a betrayal of the Kashmiri liberation movement. It is also clear that the United Nations Organisation has not solved Kashmir's problems. Indeed, they have contributed to putting down the Kashmiri liberation movement by lending support to the Indian and Pakistani ruling classes. While we understand that it is the right of those fighting for Kashmir's freedom to seek all possible help in the struggle against Indian occupation from wherever they can get it, we warn against the danger of becoming proxies of one or other imperialism or of other states.

The only solution to Kashmir's problems lies in the Kashmiri nation's struggle itself, which is continuing in Kashmir at this very moment, and in which the youth and students are playing an important role. The political struggle will have to take over precedence over the armed struggle in Kashmir. To achieve this, committees need to be formed in schools, colleges, neighbourhoods and workplaces in Kashmir, through which leadership can be provided to the struggle. The Kashmiri liberation movement needs to build connections to the Indian and Pakistani working class, who can play an important role in this struggle. Indian and Pakistani socialists should support the right to self-determination on the basis of internationalism. Only in this way can the war against the Kashmiri people and the bloodshed be brought to

an end. Ultimately, Kashmir's future will be bound up with the struggle for a Socialist Federation of South Asia which can liberate all the oppressed nations of the region under the leadership of the working class.

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