

Volume - 28, No. 10-12

December - 2023



*Organ of the  
Central Committee CPI(ML)*

# **NEW DEMOCRACY**

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# Results of Assembly Elections and Challenges Before the People

**H**eld in the backdrop of rising difficulties of the people, elections to the assemblies in five states have resulted in the defeat of parties ruling in four of them, but the ruling party in the largest of the states which went to polls has been returned to power with a big majority. Though factors peculiar to each state played their role, but there are some general trends of ruling class politics discernable in these elections. As has been the norm, the elections saw massive use of Three Ms- money, media and muscle power in these elections as well.

These elections, held months before the elections to Lok Sabha, were endowed with importance for setting portents of 2024 elections. While issues in the two elections i.e., for Lok Sabha and state assemblies, are different and at times give different results, yet they do indicate some general trends though the same may undergo change if some over-riding event intervenes to shape the ruling class discourse. People's concerns are any way peripheral for the ruling class parties except that they do force the main ruling class parties to articulate their positions on some questions; though with the help of 'friendly' media they mostly get away with misrepresenting the real issues and (mis)articulating solutions to them. This being the general situation, these elections evoked

interest in the backdrop of the attempts of RSS-BJP ruling at the Centre to foist fascist system over the country. Yet to be able to come to that position they have to fight these elections and also indulge in competitive so-called *revdi* politics.

Propaganda of the main contenders of power in all the states which went to polls was conspicuously marked by the absence of addressing the main issues before the people- unemployment which has been increasing, agrarian distress and problems faced by almost all sections of peasantry, problems of workers – in rural areas and in the urban areas in the industrial and service sector with increasing contractualization and informalization of work force, poor wages and lack of rights- and increasing oppression of Dalits, tribals and women. Main contenders for power vied with each other in luring the people with pittances under the name of different schemes but did not touch the question of guaranteeing employment or ensuring MSP to peasants or minimum wages and rights to workers leave alone job security. With the real issues driven out of the main electoral discourse, the issues bandied by the main ruling class contenders for power ruled the discourse. In this, corporate media plays a very important role in attempting to set the agenda and confine the elections to the main contenders for power.

These elections brought out distinct trends in three Hindi heartland states namely Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and others in two states outside this, namely Telengana and Mizoram. In Hindi heartland states RSS-BJP won in all three, dislodging Congress from power in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh while retaining power in Madhya Pradesh. In other two states, ruling regional parties were defeated. In Telengana, Congress defeated BRS (earlier Telengana Rashtra Samiti (TRS)

ruling since formation of separate Telengana state in 2014) while in Mizoram ruling MNF was defeated by another regional party ZPM.

In what are described as Hindi heartland states, where RSS-BJP won, there was also increase in the vote share of the BJP. On the other hand, Congress, though defeated in all three states, did not suffer any appreciable decline in its vote share (a mere 0.8% decline in Chhattisgarh and 0.3% decline in MP); in fact, it increased its vote share in Rajasthan albeit by a small 0.23%. Increase in the vote share of RSS-BJP is due to decline in the vote share of smaller parties, many of them regional parties including parties drawing support from tribals. This is due to rise of patronage vote i.e., benefits of the schemes through ruling parties and increase in penetration of corporate controlled media, mainly electronic media which keeps focus on parties contending for power. This reflects the desire of the ruling classes to make the struggle for power confined to two or at least fewer parties as confining to two is not feasible given diversity of the country.

Congress has also been keen to confine these elections, especially in Hindi speaking states, to a contest between itself and RSS-BJP. Despite formation of I.N.D.I.A. bloc it refused to give any space to smaller opposition parties including I.N.D.I.A. bloc constituents, even insulting them in the process. These elections saw that a large chunk of those who earlier voted for these parties switched to RSS-BJP rather than to Congress. Congress is yet to come to terms with its decline and given some positive results starts dreaming of its earlier dominance of ruling class politics.

The victory of RSS-BJP in three states is owed to several factors and all those factors must have played their role. But the striking feature is growth in the strength of RSS-BJP in these states which enabled it to overcome both anger against power and

patronage linkages established by other ruling class party-Congress in this case. In the latter case the organization of RSS reaching to grass roots and its penetration in govt. machinery, gives it an advantage in weaponizing the welfare schemes i.e., using benefits under govt. schemes to harness support for themselves.

### **Softer Version Can't Stand Against Hindutva**

RSS-BJP went all out to communally polarize these elections though there were no overt communal tensions preceding the elections. Their communal platform enables them to consolidate their upper caste votes while winning over most backward classes and sections of Dalits. With other ruling class parties contending for power not offering anything new or substantial to them, RSS-BJP scores over them.

In Madhya Pradesh and also Chhattisgarh, Congress embarked to confront RSS-BJP Hindutva with their Hindutva version. In MP, Congress leaders took credit for construction of Ram Temple on the site where Babri Masjid stood. They claimed and incidentally rightly so that it was the Congress that had opened locks of Babri Masjid. They went all out to prove that they are more for Hindus than RSS-BJP. In Chhattisgarh too, they embarked on pro-Hindu spree as elections approached. Congress leadership has been positioning itself to garner votes solely on the basis of people's disillusionment with RSS-BJP without offering anything different, rather pitching themselves on similar platform in socio economic terms.

These elections proved that in Hindi speaking states where RSS-BJP has developed well-knit organization, softer version of Hindutva cannot stand in face of hard Hindutva of RSS-BJP. Rather than standing on secularism Congress offers softer, more tolerant,

version of Hindutva. Congress has been attempting this for decades but with diminishing returns. Yet they continue to persist with this. In fact some other ruling class parties in North Indian states are also taking recourse to it despite knowing its diminishing returns even electorally. Congress offered no alternative economic policies rather claiming and again correctly so that they are the ones who pioneered pro-Corporate new economic policies. Basic issues of the people were not on the agenda in the contest between these parties. Throwing economic policies out of the contest, ruling class parties try to win over people on pittance, in a way commodifying the electorate and mobilizing them as communities. With upper castes overwhelmingly backing RSS-BJP, oppressed castes divided and minorities marginalized, RSS-BJP had an advantage over Congress. Congress talked of conducting all India caste census but it has failed to publish the report of such a survey conducted by its Karnataka state govt. though it has been months since it returned to power. Congress President himself talked of the domination of upper caste politicians in his own party for failure to make the report public.

### **Disenchantment Among Tribals**

In all the states which went to polls in this round of elections, tribals constituted a substantial part of electorate. Their number was higher in Chhattisgarh and Mizoram. In Chhattisgarh Congress lost a large number of seats (22 seats which it had won last time) in the tribal dominated districts. The real reason is brazen betrayal of promises it had made to tribals whose electoral support had played a big role in bringing it to power in last assembly elections. Congress had promised to implement PESA but failed to implement it despite being five years in power. Congress had promised to stop a number of projects displacing tribals, but all such projects continued. Moreover, Congress Govt. looked the other way when Christian

tribals were attacked. Congress Govt.'s performance disenchanted tribals, a situation utilized by RSS-BJP which has made some inroad among tribals with use of its money and muscle power. Though media has largely overlooked, there are reports that in several areas of two districts with large tribal population, polling was reportedly as low as 3%. Disillusionment with Congress was however unmistakable among tribals.

In Telengana, Congress made a comeback to power. Its vote share was only 2% higher than BRS but given its declining electoral fortunes since the formation of Telengana it is important for that Party. In its coming to power in Telengana victory in nearby Karnataka state also played some role. RSS-BJP was out of race for power and finished a poor third and faced decline from its performance compared to last parliamentary elections. Hence they drew comparison with last state assembly elections. Any way their brand of Hindutva has little traction among the people in South Indian states where sentiments against Brahminism (upper caste chauvinism) run deep. In Telengana too, elections were bereft of any basic issue or basic problems facing the people. Ruling classes in Telengana have divided all communities and even tribals while suppressing just struggles of the people especially tribals who had struggled against their podu lands being taken even away under so-called Harit Haram.

In Mizoram, while all regional parties have stood with Kukis of Manipur, the election was fought on local issues. With RSS-BJP in power at the Centre they have an advantage in states under AFSPA.

## **General Condition of the People: Some Aspects**

State machinery has been coming down heavily on the



people's movements including revolutionary movement, and on the struggles of the workers and landless and poor peasants. Space for democratic struggles of these sections is being increasingly squeezed. In this situation grievances of the oppressed are getting reflected in the mobilization along the lines of the castes and communities. However parties drawing support from these sections use such support only for election purposes and do not raise the real issues facing overwhelming majority of the people of these sections, let alone build any struggle on them.

On the other hand, RSS-BJP has been dividing oppressed communities, in fact atomizing them to pit one section against the other, what is called by them as social engineering, thereby maintaining stranglehold of the dominant castes on power and privileges. RSS-BJP has mobilized the more backward castes and communities and with the help of their sway over dominant castes have wielded this support to defeat the parties drawing support from the dominant castes among the oppressed. This shows the limits of such electoral mobilization. Unless struggle against social oppression is linked to struggle against class exploitation of these sections, RSS-BJP is able to draw them into their Hindutva fold micromanaging castes through what is called social engineering.

Despite tall claims of high economic growth and almost becoming a super power, ruling class parties are dangling pittance before the people. Rather than addressing the question of unemployment and providing social security to all people, they dangle small amounts before elections which can not address the problems. Such is the people's disillusionment with the performance of the Govts. of these parties that they prefer cash transfers to wooly schemes doled out before the elections.

## **RSS-BJP Victory in Hindi Heartland states and Challenges before the People**

With RSS-BJP victory so close to parliamentary elections, challenges before the people of the country have increased. While RSS-BJP base continues to be narrow in some parts of the country, they have increased their forces in North and Western parts of the country. RSS-BJP drive to impose fascism is intensifying as their attempt to use inauguration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya on January 22 to whip up Hindu communalism is geared towards coming back to power at the Centre and taking steps towards imposing fascist dictatorship over the country. These attempts should be seen in the backdrop of already precarious situation of democratic rights of the people and declining conditions of the people. Foreign debt over the country has increased considerably and is set to go above GDP. On the other hand there are reports that conditions of the vast multitude, those at the lower rungs on the economic ladder, precarious as these were, have further declined over last five years. Inequality has grown sharply with big capitalists increasing their wealth at fast pace. Govt. is on a spree to fudge data and even downright manufacture it to project the performance of the Govt. in better light. But the repeated outbursts on different issues show that people are disillusioned with the present state.

Challenges before the people including revolutionary and struggling forces are growing. These must be met. While working for electoral defeat of RSS-BJP is important, it is not enough to block the fascist drive and meet the challenge of the fascist forces. Most of the ruling class parties take compromising position towards majority communalism which makes Hindutva more acceptable among the people. There is a need for broad and determined opposition to Hindutva forces in all areas, in vast countryside and

cities and towns. For this all progressive and democratic forces should come together to challenge Hindutva fascists not only at all India level but also locally in the form of mass movement. For this revolutionary forces should take initiative and bring all those ready and willing to participate in the common struggle to fight fascist forces. Such a platform should take a firm stand for genuine secularism at all levels.

Fascism is terroristic rule of the ruling classes. They take recourse to it to crush the struggles of the people against intensifying exploitation and oppression. Hence, it creates ground for unleashing struggles of different classes and sections against onslaught of ruling classes. Revolutionary forces must put utmost energy in developing and unleashing struggles of different sections of people against such attacks and to secure the rights of toiling sections of masses. These struggles will push back the fascist forces and furnish forces for struggle against them. Workers' and toilers' fighting unity is the fort against fascism. Both sectarianism in forging broader unity in struggle and tailism behind the ruling class parties must be combated to forge and steel the unity of the fighting forces and people against fascist forces. Such a unity can galvanize broad sections of people in the struggle.



# **US-Israel Pulverize Gaza, Attack West Bank But Palestinians' Struggle Rises to New Heights**

● **Zameer**

**F**or over two months and a half, Israel supported by US imperialism and its allies has been relentlessly attacking Palestinians killing nearly 20,000 of them, over 70% women and children, razing most part of Gaza to the ground, demolishing hospitals, schools and colleges, housing blocks and mosques. No place is safe. Palestinians in Gaza are asked by Israeli authorities to move from one place to another and then murderous assault is launched at such designated places and then people are asked to move to somewhere else. The idea is clear, that Palestinians should be forced out of Palestine so that Israelis can claim the whole land as their exclusive home. This has been the Zionist project from the beginning, though it has been implemented and is being implemented in stages. Nobody should be fooled at the posture of Israel and their US backers that they are only targeting Hamas fighters, the real targets are Palestinians. This is amply evidenced by relentless violence against Palestinians in West Bank which had been under the administration of PLO and security control of Israel. Thousands of Palestinians have been killed in West Bank, even larger number are incarcerated in Israeli prisons and large swathes

of their land taken over, their homes demolished and they forcibly displaced. This should leave nobody in doubt about what the real intentions of Zionist rulers and their western imperialist backers have been all through. The sufferings of Palestinians are well documented and broadly known to the whole world. Also known to the world is Palestinians' resolve to achieve their national aspirations.

As commented earlier, post October 7, 2023 Palestinians have taken their destiny in their own hand. Earlier wars were fought under the leadership of Arab states ruled by monarchs and military leaders. However this time Palestinians have taken the leadership of their struggle in their own hands. Obviously, they need and are getting support from different quarters but they are deciding the course of the present struggle. This process burst forth in the form of Intifada which had many upswings and now it has assumed a form having global import.

Israel's war against Palestinians has developed in the ways not entirely to the liking of Zionists and their imperialist backers. They have largely killed civilians but by their own admission they have been able to eliminate very few fighters. In fact, this idea is by itself misleading. Palestinians are fighting for their existence as a people in their own land and every Palestinian is opposed to Israeli occupation of their homeland. It is not a question of eliminating a handful or a few fighters but a whole people and this is what Zionist rulers with the backing of their western imperialist patrons are setting out to do. That they may not admit so is part of accomplishing their designs. Only determined and death defying struggle of Palestinians has brought this nefarious, inhuman and genocidal agenda before the world people. The propaganda of eliminating "terrorist" Hamas is a cover of their genocidal designs

and actions. A number of top leaders of Israel have not hidden their genocidal agenda, terming Palestinians as animals fit to be eliminated. Preponderance of civilians especially children, women and elderly among those killed and targeted testifies to the charge that Israel is carrying on genocide in Gaza.

Present War in Gaza is being fought at a time when crisis of imperialist system is deepening with stagnation even recession in some centres, debt driven growth in some others but down turn in growth in all. This crisis is leading to intensification of all the contradictions of the imperialist system i.e. contradiction between imperialism and oppressed nations and peoples, contradiction among imperialist powers in the situation where multi-polarity has become dominant, and contradiction between labour and capital especially in imperialist countries. Intensification of all these contradictions finds reflections in the present developments and is leading to growing struggles of the people world over.

### **Factors Favouring Struggle of Palestinians**

Struggle of Palestinians against Zionist occupiers backed by western imperialist powers has come to the centre stage of world people's struggle against imperialism. This struggle is being waged this time in conditions which are to an extent favourable for the struggle to develop and get tangible results despite and due to tremendous sacrifices of the world people. This struggle is being reflected in the intensifying contradictions of the imperialist system as well. While Palestinians' own struggle is the main driving force, some favourable factors will influence and are influencing course of this struggle. One, the support Palestinian cause is finding among the people of Arab world especially major Arab countries considered allies of the Western imperialist countries. Though

leaders of these countries were cozying towards Israel disregarding plight of Palestinians prior to October 7 through so-called Abraham Accords, the mobilization among Arabs has halted that process. Arab leaders are forced to take a stand against brutal attacks by Israeli Army against Palestinians and demand immediate ceasefire and solution to Palestinian issue. Arab people's mobilization is an important factor influencing the course of development in the region. Govts. of Iran and Turkey though not part of Arab world are major powers in the region and are opposing Israel's war against Palestinians.

Second, various forces in the region support Palestinians' struggle against Israeli occupation. These forces called as "resistance axis" comprise Hezbollah of Lebanon, Houthis of Yemen and forces in Iraq and Syria. These are being supported by Iran, one of the major powers in the region. Of these Houthis lead Yemen Govt. which controls major part of Yemen (all of earlier North Yemen except Marib) and Hezbollah is a major force in Lebanon society and Govt. Lebanon shares a land border with Israel and is going through severe economic crisis. Yemen on the other hand does not share any land border with Israel. Houthis have come forward to support the Palestinians and demand Israel stop attacks in Gaza. While their missile attacks against Israel have only token value given the distance between the two and the capacity of their weapons, Yemen is situated on the Red Sea which is the main maritime trade route in the world. Nearly 15-16% of world trade passes through Red Sea which is connected with Mediterranean through Suez Canal and alternate route encircling African continent will significantly add to the cost of transport. It is being estimated that blockage of Red Sea will have the effect of decreasing world GDP by 8 to 10%. Houthis have announced that they will target all

ships owned by or linked to Israelis or going to Israeli ports. They have launched some strikes at commercial ships. Israel cannot attack them directly and Arab states cannot allow them to use their air space to attack Houthis through air force or missiles. US with UK have come forward to attack Houthis and announced on December 18, 2023 an alliance with the name of Prosperity Guardian. But from among the Arab states only Bahrain has joined this US led initiative. Support of Houthis to Palestinians has been of singular importance. It has not only shown that Palestinians have allies in the region willing to join their war, but also forced Israeli patrons, US in particular, to be drawn directly into this war. US has wide interests in the region and directly entering war against Palestinians will further isolate it among Arab people.

Palestinian cause has drawn world wide support and UN General Assembly has demanded immediate ceasefire by two third majority. In the last vote on the issue in the UN General Assembly motion for immediate ceasefire was supported by 151 UN member states. In the last week of December 2023 South Africa has instituted a case against Israel in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Countries of African continent which have been subjected to most brutal and inhuman subjugation, loot and plunder by Western imperialists have come out forcefully against Israel's war against Palestinians especially its genocidal actions in Gaza. Even the Indian Govt. has been forced to extend support to UN resolution on the ceasefire, having abstained earlier. All the above factors are part of the contradiction between imperialism and oppressed nations and peoples.

Israel's attack on Gaza has drawn big oppositon in western imperialist countries. Large demonstrations are taking place in



cities in the west. Workers are striking in the factories, at the ports and demonstrating to prevent supply of arms and ammunition to Israel. Students are walking out of their classes in opposition to massacre of civilians in Gaza. Youth and workers are in the forefront of this mobilization and opposition to their Govts' support to Israel. People's anger is so intense that some of the European countries are forced to support immediate ceasefire. Ireland has been in the forefront of this opposition from the beginning. Fissures among European countries on the issue are deepening. This is also related to the growing contradiction between capital and labour in developed countries.

A very important factor in the world situation is multipolarity which has become a dominant aspect. This is also influencing the ongoing war between Israel and Palestinians. Russia and China have been demanding ceasefire and advocating Palestinian statehood which till date is being stonewalled by US imperialism. China has been instrumental in the coming closer of Saudi Arabia and Iran, major powers in the region. Its impact also got reflected in the present dispute. Opposition of China and Russia is further isolating US and its allies among the people of Arab countries. Struggle of Palestinians is being helped by the growing contradictions among imperialist countries.

### **Israel's Armed Offensive Running Aground**

Since October 8, Israel has been relentlessly attacking Gaza. But it has succeeded neither in freeing those taken hostage by Hamas and other resistance groups of Palestinians, nor inflicted any major damage to Palestinian fighters and definitely not to the morale of Palestinians. Despite inhuman attacks and intolerable conditions including almost starvation Palestinians are not leaving

their homes in Gaza, rather those outside want to go back to Gaza. Palestinians fully understand the importance of the ongoing war.

Israel's military offensive, partly conditioned by domestic political compulsions of the ruling coalition (despite unity govt.), is a doomed project. Its target is to force Palestinians out of Gaza and in this they are not succeeding and cannot succeed. While indiscriminate demolition of infrastructure is an easy part given their vast superiority in this grossly asymmetric war, targeting resistance fighters is quite a difficult task for Israeli occupiers. After a few weeks, when Palestinian casualties were only 6000, Israeli officials admitted that among them only 60 were resistance fighters. Difficult part for Israel is that its forces have to be stationed among the Palestinian people in a densely populated area and can be attacked any time by resistance fighters who utilize vast network of tunnels and unanimous support among the people. A number of occupation forces have suffered disasters in such situations. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has suffered casualties and the number is going to rise with passage of time. It is under these circumstances that IDF has withdrawn its elite commando force, Golani Brigade, from Gaza. Already there have been pitched battles between IDF and Resistance fighters. In the first few weeks Israel had lost 150 artillery pieces including tanks. While Palestinian casualties may be disproportionately high, Israel can ill afford to take high casualties.

Israel has singularly failed in rescue of hostages. All they did was to kill some hostages in their offensive. They had to reach an agreement with Hamas for release of Israeli hostages in exchange of release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. This agreement was mediated mainly by Qatar. Relatives of hostages (nearly 150 are still reportedly held by the Resistance) are protesting along with

other citizens and demanding that Israel Govt. reach agreement with Hamas for release of hostages. This is leading to division among Israeli population and even Israeli Govt. including cabinet. That eliminating Hamas, which is euphemism for eliminating Palestinian resistance, is not possible is being admitted by a number of experts including those from Israel.

On the other hand, there is growing demand for statehood of Palestinians. Israeli Govt. is totally opposed to it. They wish to even finish off the so-called self-governing enclaves. US imperialism is formally committed to it in the name of two state solution but in practice has supported Israel's actions against realization of the same. However, contrary to Israel Govt.'s desires and despite machinations of its patron US imperialism, world people and majority of the countries are demanding creation and recognition of Palestinian state. Israel which had been formally created by the United Nations is abusing its creator. They brand anybody and everybody who criticize the actions of Israeli Govt. as guilty of anti-semitism. They first equated anti-semitism with anti-Zionism and now they equate anti-semitism with any and every criticism of Israeli Govt. Israel Govt. considers that suffering of Jews at the hands of Nazis with criminally horrific holocaust entitle them to inflict on others what Nazis did to Jews. A number of Jews including descendants of survivors of holocaust are raising the banner "Not in Our Name." The demand of Palestinian statehood has become an unstoppable trend with increasingly larger number of countries demanding this not in distant future but immediately as part of the solution of the problem.

A revealing feature of the present escalation is that no Israeli captive has complained of ill treatment in captivity while all the Palestinians in Israeli captivity (prisons) complain uniformly of

torture and inhuman treatment. This speaks volumes of the propaganda of western imperialists contrasting their civilization to barbarism of other countries and peoples. If this is so, one may recall Victor Hugo in *Les Miserables*, “If we are compelled to choose between the barbarians of civilization and the civilizers of barbarism, we would choose the barbarians.”

## **State of Israel : Tied to Western Imperialism**

Israel as exclusive homeland of Jews has been created by the imperialist powers though Palestine has been home to Jews for a long time. Even prior to First World War Jews were living in Palestine in peace and harmony with their Arab neighbours. It was British colonial power that came up with the idea of creating an exclusive homeland for Jews in Palestine much before even Nazi party was formed in Germany. Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917 was first decisive step in that direction. This declaration was affirmed by League of Nations in 1922, again before the advent of Nazis in Germany. Even partition of Palestine was first recommended by Peel Commission in 1937 though it could not be implemented then. All these are well known facts in the history of creation of Israel. After decline of British imperial power after Second World War and emergence of US imperialism as its successor, USA has played a leading role in the establishment of state of Israel, its protection and making it the strongest power in the region. In this it was helped by Arab monarchs who sought US protection against their own people. Israel became an important pillar in the US domination of this oil rich region. It is in this context that present US President had said in 1986 when he was in US Senate Foreign Affairs Committee that if there was no Israel we will have to create one. He obviously did not say that they and their predecessors, British imperialism, did create one. It did not exist

and could not exist without imperialism, rather came into existence as necessary tool of imperialism.

And it was not only in the past, even today, imperialism especially US imperialism remains life line of Israel. Zionist Israel is not a normal state. It is an expansionist state. Any country in the region becoming powerful becomes immediate enemy of Israel and US imperialism. There is often show of discord between US imperialism and Israel and it is largely due to people's reaction in USA. Whatever be the veracity of such differences Israel owes and continues to owe its expansionist existence to western imperialist powers. There should be no doubt that whatever the power of Zionist lobby in Washington, that power is able to control US Admn. because it is in the interest of US imperialism. The day it does not remain so will be another day.

## **Israel-Palestine War Set in the Deepening Crisis of Imperialism**

As crisis of Imperialism deepens and its contradictions intensify, these affect the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. There are at present three conflicts which symbolize the intensification of the major contradictions of the Imperialist system. Though these are not the only conflicts but they have become the most important defining features of the present day world.

First there is war in Ukraine which will complete two years in less than two months. After the acknowledged failure of summer counteroffensive by Ukraine to reclaim all the territories that were part of it between 1991 and 2014, support for Ukraine has been waning in western countries. This war erupting between Ukrainian Nationalists and Russian Ukrainians is essentially an inter-imperialist conflict, a proxy war being openly waged by US-UK and

other western powers to inflict “strategic defeat” on Russia. Russia has an upper hand but seems to be inclined to bring Ukraine regime to its feet or change it to prevent its accession to NATO. Another hot spot of inter-imperialist contradiction is Taiwan, which is officially part of China according to One China Policy accepted by UN, USA and most of the countries of the world. However, there is some cooling of tension there as USA is overstretched. There are conflicts in all corners of the world, in Africa, in Latin America, in Middle East and in several parts of Asia where imperialist powers are contending for domination. These conflicts are turning into wars fought among the forces supported by different imperialist powers especially western powers on the one hand and China-Russia on the other. These conflicts may wax and wane; on the whole will continue to intensify.

War between Israel and Palestinians has become the epicentre of growing contradiction between Imperialism and oppressed nations. The trajectory of this ongoing war will be influenced by other conflicts and will in turn influence other contradictions especially contradiction between Imperialism and oppressed nations and peoples. Countries oppressed by western imperialism had not backed US led sanctions against Russia and have now forcefully come out against US backed Israel’s war against Palestinians. These countries, being increasingly called as Global South, are making their voice heard though there is strong influence of Imperialism including western imperialist powers in many of these countries.

The third important conflict is developing inside imperialist countries especially in USA. There, the contradiction between labour and capital is getting intertwined with contradiction between progressive changes in society and attempts to restore the *status*

*quo ante*. With ruling class continuing anti-communism as its policy plank, this contradiction is finding its inverted and convoluted expression. Immigrant workers are becoming the main target of attack of the reactionaries and anti-immigration main plank of 'rightist' forces of ruling class. With other ruling class section too being wedded to Imperialism and anti-working class policies, hence main expression of contradiction among them becomes one between two sets of the policies opposed to working class. There is urgent need for the working class to uphold its own banner and politics.

With the intensification of contradictions of imperialist system, conditions for development of people's struggles and revolutionary movement are turning increasingly favourable. This is so even in India where fascist section of ruling classes is moving towards imposing fascist system on the country. While intervening in the ongoing campaigns against fascism, there is urgent need to intensify class struggle and revolutionary movement in the present situation. This will enable revolutionary forces to not only play effective role against fascist forces but also create a powerful force of toiling people brought up and steeled in the course of struggle. Every situation poses its own challenges. Past is to serve the present. We should learn its lessons to complete unfinished tasks and not continue to live in it.



# **Hamas Attack in Israel Brings Palestinian Question to the Fore**

**O**n the morning of October 7<sup>th</sup> 2023, the Palestinian organization ruling Gaza launched an attack on Israel through air, land and sea. Over 3000 missiles were reportedly launched from Gaza and Hamas troops crossed Gaza Israel border through breaches in defense walls, as well as on paragliders and through boats. They attacked a number of places including three Army installations and captured tanks and armoured vehicles. According to Israeli media, over 600 were killed and nearly eighteen hundred injured in these attacks. Israeli Govt. accepted that a large number of people were taken captive in this attack and Hamas claimed they have taken 53 prisoners of war. These include Army personnel and civilians. A few hours later, Israel Govt. launched a massive missile barrage against Gaza, razing to the ground some buildings. According to Palestinians, over 300 have been killed and nearly 2000 have been injured in these attacks. This morning, Israel Govt. said that its Army is battling Hamas fighters at nearly 20 places inside Israel, in areas bordering Gaza and in Southern Israel which may increase the toll of dead and injured.

These attacks by Hamas and Israel have big significance for the Middle East. There is little doubt that, backed by Western imperialist powers, Israel will be able to inflict far greater damage and casualties on Palestinians. The whole of Gaza will be pulverized and casualties will be large in number. Hamas embarked on this



attack knowing this well. The support enjoyed by Hamas among Palestinians show that Palestinians are willing to endure all in their quest for their national rights.

When Western imperialists and Zionists were seeking to make Palestinian national aspirations unachievable and the Palestinians themselves invisible, this attack has shaken the Middle East, highlighting that Palestinian question is at the heart of achieving peace in the region; that Palestinians refuse to commit political suicide and refuse to become invisible, giving proof that they are alive and struggling.

This attack has come in the backdrop of steady and brutal capture of Palestinian lands by Zionist rulers of Israel in West Bank. Netanyahu Govt. has intensified attacks against Palestinians, their homes and their religious places including the Al Aqsamosque held sacred by Muslims world over. This has also come in the wake of US imperialism and its western imperialist allies not only increasing military aid to Israel but also attempting to lure Arab states into pact with Israel, sidelining the Palestinian question. As Netanyahu said recently in the UN General Assembly, Palestinians should not have veto over Israel-Arab relations. Zionists and their Western imperialist backers have since long denied Palestinian nationhood, paying only lip service to hoodwink Arab masses but eroding the very basis on which Palestinian statehood could stand. This attack has also come in the background of several Arab monarchies and dictators making peace with Israel ignoring rights of Palestinians. This conflagration has brought the atrocities against Palestinians once again before the world public opinion and the conspiracies of some Arab rulers before their own people. It is indeed a high cost effort, as Palestinians will be the worst sufferers but it will jolt the conspiracies to sweep the Palestinian issue under the carpet. This

attack has come in the backdrop of US effort to restore the uni-polar world which is sputtering while a multi-polar world is consolidating.

The immediate prelude to this conflagration is also the failure of talks with the mediation of Egypt, Jordan and Qatar which resulted in total failure with Israel showing no intent to loosen blockade of Gaza strip.

Several civilians have become casualties in this war and more are likely to become so. Targeting civilians in war by whichever side must be condemned. This must rouse the world people that the Palestinian issue must be resolved; that national rights of Palestinians must be secured.

This conflagration may give a short term reprieve to Netanyahu whose 'ultra-right' govt.'s attack on judiciary was highly divisive in Israel, drawing large number of people in protest, but more importantly it will at least temporarily stop the process of normalization of relations between Arab states and Israel- what it being termed Abraham Accords. This may be the most conspicuous result. There is much anger in the Arab street while there have been massive demonstrations in Iran and Turkiye against Israel.

International reaction to this conflagration of Palestinian-Israel conflict has been quite diverse. US, UK, France, Germany, in fact almost all the western imperialist powers have fully supported Israel and its right to attack Palestinians as its self-defense. US is also sending its Navy carrier strike group to the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Japan has also reacted on similar lines. On the other hand, Iran and Syria have supported Hamas attack. Qatar and Algeria have blamed Israel for the attack and so have many other countries including Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, most of

Arab countries- Egypt, Morocco, UAE and others friendly to Western powers have asked both sides to show restraint. Turkiye has also talked in similar vein i.e. asking both sides to show restraint. Russia said it is “in contact with Israel, the Palestinians and Arab countries” and called for restraint. China too, according to Global Times, expressing its “deep concern” called on all relevant parties to remain calm and restrained and to cease hostilities immediately besides calling for establishment of Palestinian state. Brazil’s President also expressed hope of preventing escalation and expressed commitment to “two state solution” with Palestinians and Israelis coexisting within mutually agreed and internationally recognized borders. South African Dept. of International relations said, “The new conflagration has arisen from the continued illegal occupation of Palestine land, continued settlement expansion, desecration of the Al Aqsa Mosque and Christian holy sites, an ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people.” “Deeply shocked by the news of terrorist attacks in Israel,” wrote Indian Prime Minister on X, “Our thoughts and prayers are with innocent victims and their families. We stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour.” Indian Govt. position as expressed here, totally ignoring Palestinians, is very much aligned with the position of Western imperialist countries.

It is clear that this is no terrorist attack but an attack carried out by those ruling in Gaza. While targeting civilians by any party to the conflict must be condemned, it is by no means a terrorist attack. Nor is Hamas, which had won elections among Palestinians, a terrorist organization unless one views all Palestinians as terrorists and the national aspiration of Palestinians as terrorism. As far as international law is concerned Zionist rulers of Israel are worst and serial offenders. They have totally ignored the UN resolutions,

violated them with impunity and systematically gobbled up Palestinian territories through settlements. They have killed and imprisoned Palestinians at will. Obviously, they could do so because of near total support extended by US imperialism and other Western imperialist powers. In fact, western powers consider Israel as vital to their domination of this oil rich region. But the emergence of other powers in the region, presence of Russian Army in Syria, besides Russia deepening military relations with other countries in the region and China developing and deepening economic and strategic relations with the countries of the Middle East, have stirred the pot. There cannot be business as usual in the region.

While Israel enjoys overwhelming military superiority over Hamas in this asymmetrical war, the war has potential to drag on, spread to other areas in the wider region and western countries may also feel the heat. There have already been exchanges of fire between Israel and Lebanon (Hezbollah). With their failure to drag Global South along with them in their war against Russian invasion in Ukraine, the emergence of the question of Palestine in world arena comes at an inopportune time for American Imperialists. While they are shouting themselves hoarse on the UN resolutions on Ukraine, on Palestine question they are siding with Israel which has not only systematically violated UN resolutions but has no intention of honouring them. Brazil has already convened a Security Council meeting on the issue.

Whatever time it takes, there can be no peace in West Asia and wider Middle East without solving the Palestinian issue on the basis on realization of national aspirations of Palestinians. Despite the original injustice of handing over Palestinian land for establishing state of Israel, solution of the dispute in present times would involve two basic aspects- establishment of Palestinian state

in pre-1967 borders and right of return of Palestinians to their homes in Israel. Both of these are covered and guaranteed by relevant UN resolutions and are supported by overwhelming majority of countries. It will be interesting to watch the somersaults of western political gymnasts who are shouting for UN charter and international law.

Progressive, democratic and revolutionary forces and justice loving people of the world should raise their voice for just solution to this conflict based on meeting national aspirations of Palestinians. This may be the silver lining of the otherwise great sufferings of the people and civilian casualties on all sides. We should also demand that Indian Govt. should carry on with the country's traditional support to just and legitimate aspirations of Palestinians and unequivocally demand implementation of relevant UN resolutions to secure Palestinians' national aspirations.

CPI(ML)-New Democracy

October 8, 2023



# **No Ground Offensive ; Lift Siege of Gaza**

## **Implement UN Resolutions on Palestine**

**W**ar in Palestine is grinding on. Killing fields have replaced ‘silent’ slaughtering. Frontal challenge has replaced behind the back conspiracies. Israel has launched bombing raids on exclave Gaza killing over 1900, a good number of them children and elderly. This is in retaliation to a Hamas raid in Southern Israel on October 7 in which nearly 1300 people have been killed including a large number of civilians including children and Army personnel and a good number including civilians taken to Gaza as “prisoners of war”. Targeting of civilians by all sides –Israeli Govt. and Hamas is condemned.

While Palestinian resistance has been going on since they were forcibly and violently displaced from their homeland in what is called the *Naqba* in 1948, there have been three wars among Arab states and Israel in the past i.e., in 1948, 1967 and 1973 but the present war is different. This time Palestinians themselves are leading the war and not the Arab states. This is the singular difference between earlier wars and this war. Though Palestinians have been resisting Israeli occupation braving bombing raids and large scale civilian killings by Israel in the past, it is the first time that they have launched an offensive on such a scale. It is an ominous sign for Occupation and for its backers- western imperialist powers. It is a positive development for realization of national aspirations of Palestinians; they have taken their destiny in

their own hands. Rulers of Arab states – monarchs and dictators– could be coerced and cajoled by western imperialists, but not the Palestinians who are fighting for their very existence. It is an old saying that do not leave any body without option, because in that case they would fight and fight well. This aspect is the biggest achievement of the present conflagration and this achievement will not be easily lost.

While Palestinians know and know well that they will pay a heavy price for this attack but every Palestinian is rejoicing in the success of the attack. People long suppressed and made to feel that they would be banished from their homeland and made to disappear have long past the time of mourning their dead. In fact, these are dead people fighting which is making them feel they are alive. This attack has energized the Arab street, in fact the Middle East street. Their leaders have since long been bargaining over the corpses of Palestinians, building bridges with Zionist rulers of Israel and their benefactors- USA and other western imperialist powers but their people have come out in strength to support Palestinians. Mosques, Football Stadia and almost all gathering places have become centres of assembly to express support. Rulers are restrained but people are not. Palestinian flags are flying atop buildings across Middle East. Palestinian cause has been resurrected from what their enemies considered dead. Israel has already lost in its gambit to win all- the whole of Palestine.

Questions are being raised about efficiency and efficacy of Israeli intelligence agency Mossad. Some of this criticism is misplaced. This is not the first time that Mossad failed. Among its more well known failures is 1973 Arab-Israeli war which it had failed to know in advance. In fact, Mossad specializes in targeted killings and surveillance over populace; in the first it has gained

worldwide notoriety and many disciples from other Govts.

Israeli apologists excel in detecting terrorism though never bothering to question themselves about what constitutes such acts. Targeting of civilians is condemnable, but how on earth do they conclude which civilian killing is terrorism and which is not. When Israel razes Gaza buildings and indiscriminately kills Palestinian civilians, that in their view is not terrorism! Some of them go to the extent of justifying killing of civilian Palestinians- children and elderly- as a part of exercise of Israel's right of self-defense. But they believe and repeat *ad nauseum* all claims of Israeli Govt. without any evidence, not even video-graphic. Indian apologists of Israel which don the main electronic media have been calling Hamas a terrorist organization though neither United Nations nor India has designated Hamas as terrorist organization; only western imperialist countries have done so. Even BBC is not calling Hamas a terrorist organization but our media apologists are more loyal than royals! These apologists wear patriotism on their sleeves; in this case acting as western patriots.

Not just this. Claim of video-graphic evidence of “beheaded babies” i.e. babies beheaded by Hamas fighters made it to media reports including in India. Even US president claimed to have seen ‘beheaded babies’, claimed to have seen “confirmed pictures” of Palestinian militants “beheading children” in Israel. However, Israeli military said that it was not able to “officially” substantiate the allegation forcing US White House to officially backtrack on the claim. It is old saying that in war truth is the first casualty but in today's world of dissemination of information, the casualty is seen and brought to light. US president had also echoed the charges that women had been “raped, assaulted, paraded as trophies”. Even Los Angeles Times reportedly appended an Editor's note saying that



“such reports have not been substantiated.” All these accusations had been in the Indian media but without the clarifying notes.

While cheer leaders for Israel including those of Indian media are waiting and even hoping for ground offensive of Israel into Gaza, Israel has not yet entered Gaza. In fact Hamas must have known that Israel would go all out in their offensive retaliation. Israel well remembers how it got bogged down in Southern Lebanon which Israeli military had occupied and had to withdraw from in disgrace after nearly two decades of occupation. Any incursion into Gaza is fraught with grave danger for Israel as its military personnel have to face daily attacks from the Palestinians. Army stationed among hostile people can neither avoid casualties nor save their morale for long. And there would be no path of exit except in defeat. However, Israel Govt. is planning to inflict unprecedented punishment on Palestinians and is under pressure of its own making to enter Gaza. It is quite likely it may raid all parts of Gaza without occupying it.

It is worth remembering that Hamas represents majority of the Palestinians. In the last elections held for Palestinian Legislative Council in 2006, Hamas had won a clear majority of 73 seats out of a total of 132 seats. No elections have been held since and by all accounts Hamas support among Palestinians has only increased over last 17 years and that of Abbas led Fatah has only declined. It is clear that Palestinians support Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement) and Netanyahu’s claim that his govt. would wipe out Hamas can only mean that his Govt. would wipe out Palestinians. So far as killing Hamas militants- leaders and cadres- is concerned they have been doing so and may do so on even larger scale but that would only mean far more Palestinians actively joining resistance. Israel and its western backers, mainly USA, have left Palestinians

with little choice but to resist the attempts to erase their identity, their nationality.

It was with the advent of uni-polar world that Palestinian cause went into downward spiral with Oslo accords being the symbol of their humiliation- a peace mandated without any recompense. It is opposition to Oslo Accords among Palestinians that saw rise of popularity of Hamas among Palestinians. It is also not any coincidence that the present upswing has come when multi-polar world is consolidating itself. What would have been easy for US overlords to secure unanimous condemnation of Hamas from Security Council during the days of uni-polar world was not to be. All that Security Council was prepared was to condemn targeting of civilians but old imperialist powers of the West know they are the main slaughterers of civilians and they still wish to continue to target civilians. But it is not the end, overwhelming majority of the countries of the world openly say that Palestinians have been wronged and there would be no peace in the region without securing legitimate rights of the Palestinians. No mean achievement.

There have been some side shows as well. As the news came that most of the weapons used by Hamas fighters were of American origin, attention immediately shifted to Ukraine from where pilferage of US supplied weapons has long been in news. Ukraine President immediately jumped into fray alleging that Russia was behind the Hamas attack. But Israeli Ambassador to Russia rubbished the claim. On the other hand, Netanyahu alleged that attacks were planned and executed with Iranian support. US establishment sensed the game plan of dragging them into war with Iran, a cherished ambition of Netanyahu, and denied this saying that they have no intelligence information of Iranian involvement and that according to their intelligence Iranian leaders were

themselves surprised at the attack.

While battles are still continuing in some pockets in Southern Israel and at many places in West Bank, the main battle scene has shifted to Gaza, known to be largest open air prison in the world. Israeli Defense Minister has threatened that no food, electricity, water or gas will be permitted to enter Gaza, leave out the medicines. Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza has been bombed into closure thus completely cutting off Gaza. Such a siege is not only against humanitarian law; it is also against law of war. World people should rise to protest against such a large scale starving of people and driving them to death. All democratic and peace loving people should rise against such a siege of a small densely populated exclave which is home to over 2.2 million people. All these are those whose families had been displaced from their homes in present day Israel during the Naqba and the Naksa (forcible displacement from Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 war).

Now Israel Govt. has given ultimatum to Palestinians to move to South, out of northern Gaza within 24 hours. United Nations has commented that this is impossible. WHO has said that this would mean a catastrophe. The main purpose of Israel Govt. is to cleanse the northern Gaza of Palestinians. This is part of their policy of swallowing of Palestinian lands which they have been relentlessly and steadily been doing in their pursuit of Greater Israel. They wish to destroy whatever Palestinians have built in Gaza. Israel Govt. is calling October 7 Hamas attack as Israel's 9/11 thereby preparing the ground for large scale of genocide of Palestinians. But they should keep in mind what happened to US attacks after 9/11 first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq. However, Israel Govt.'s plan poses grave risk of human suffering on a very

large scale and puts challenge before the democratic people all over the world to prevent and mitigate this. This also put pressure on Govts. of different countries especially those of Arab countries and countries of Middle East not to let mass slaughter of Palestinians and total collapse of living conditions in Gaza take place.

Israel's aggression against Gaza is fraught with danger of extension of war in the region. There has been some exchange of fire across Israel-Lebanon border. Israel has also bombed main airports in Syria, ostensibly in the name of Iranian military supplies. US has moved its Naval armada led by aircraft carrier Gerald Ford. All these maneuvers are to warn other countries and movements in the region against coming to the aid of Palestinians especially when Gaza is attacked. Aggressive war being unleashed by Israel against Palestinians is increasing the danger of regional conflagration. It should also be kept in mind that Russia has its military stationed in Syria and China has a naval base in the region in Djibouti.

Indian Govt. too has tried to correct its earlier stance of total and one-sided support to Israel. Spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs has expressed support for the humanitarian law and for a "two state solution" with sovereign, secure and viable Palestine state. With its earlier stance expressed in PM's tweet and speech, India was seen totally aligned with Western imperialist powers in its stance and out of sync with majority of the countries especially third world countries. In fact there is growing support for implementing UN resolutions on Palestine which Israel has violated with impunity and western imperialist powers are complicit, rather instrumental, in this impunity.

"This is not an era of war" is only a *jumla* with active wars going on in several parts of the world. World has not been free of war. Not only several old conflicts are continuing; many new ones

are rising. Imperialism means War and in today's world war cannot be eliminated without overthrowing imperialism.

October 13, 2023



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# **‘Right to Self-Defense’ of Israel in Multi-polar World**

**I**srael has put a siege on Gaza depriving nearly 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza supplies of food, water, electricity and gas, virtually everything necessary for sustaining life in the exclave. Govt. and Army leaders of Israel are talking about confronting “human animals” thus giving advance justification of their conspiracies of carrying out genocide in Gaza. Israel has been executing a systematic policy of eliminating Palestinians from Palestine to create their “pure” Greater Israel. Israel has given ultimatum to Palestinians to leave Gaza, evicting them once again, a second Nakba.

On October 7 when Hamas carried out its attack in Southern Israel killing over 1300 majority of them reportedly civilians, Israel vowed revenge, talking of wiping out Palestinians from Gaza. Their leaders justify this saying Palestinians support Hamas hence they have a right to target all Palestinians. Israel has carried out extensive bombing campaigns killing nearly 3000 people in Gaza most of them reported to be children and elderly. Their plan of meting out collective punishment to Palestinians is however being opposed by overwhelming majority of the people and countries of the world.

Israel portrays this as “exercise of right to self-defense”. America has supported Israel’s “right to self-defense”. USA with UK, France, Germany and Italy issued a statement supporting Israel and its right of self-defense. These countries made its explicit

that they support Israeli rulers in whatever they do in this name of self-defense. USA has sent its naval armada including two aircraft carriers to the region and is also readying a force of marines to be sent to Israel.

However, a number of countries have come out in opposition to the siege of Gaza and have opposed meting out of collective punishment. They have termed this as exceeding the right of self-defense. A number of third world countries have made statements in this light. Israel's offensive against Gaza has galvanized the people especially in the Middle East. Purported normalization between Saudi Arabia and Israel has been frozen. Such is the anger in these countries that the rulers have been forced to support Palestinian cause which has come on the agenda. Saudi Arabia has convened on October 18 a ministerial level meeting of Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) which is the largest grouping of countries after UNO, comprising of 57 countries. Suggestion for convening this meeting had been made by Iran to Saudi Arabia, Chair of OIC.

But of particular import is the stand taken by China and Russia. Both have military presence in the region. Russia has Army stationed in Syria and defense ties with a number of countries in the region. China has a naval base in Djibouti on Red Sea. China has emerged as an important player in the region developing close economic and strategic ties with a number of countries. Rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran was a singular feat of Chinese diplomacy heralding that China has arrived in the region in a big way. USA and its allies had assiduously fomented animosity between Iran and Saudi Arabia as a part of their strategy of carving out a Shia-Sunni divide to further their imperialist agenda in the region. China has appended that strategy with consequent

admission of Syria in the Arab League and cooling down of war in Yemen. This has been a big setback to US imperialism which had been portraying Iran as their main enemy in the region. Despite myriad of sanctions Iran has emerged as a formidable power in the region.

Russian President Putin while blaming US for the present conflagration for doing away with peace process, has opposed siege of Gaza likening it to “Siege of Leningrad during World War Two” by Nazis. This comparison has a lot of meaning. Russia has supported the creation of Palestinian state. China has opposed collective punishment of Palestinians, its foreign minister Wang Yi saying “Exercise of the right to self-defense should comply with international law and international humanitarian law, including ensuring the safety of civilians and detained individuals”, and calling that “Israel’s actions go beyond the scope of self-defense.” Speaking with EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell, Wang Yi said “Root cause of this question lies in the long delay in realizing the dream of an independent State of Palestine and the failure to redress the historical injustice suffered by the Palestinian people. ... The Jewish nation is no longer homeless in the world, but when will the Palestinian nation return to its home?”

While USA gave total support to Israel sending naval armada to Eastern Mediterranean Sea, it has become aware of the dynamics in the region. It has been forced to accept that this is no longer a uni-polar world dominated by them. With the rising anger in Middle East countries forcing the Govts. of these countries to oppose Israel’s actions especially in Gaza, the stand taken by China and Russia and Saudi leadership talking to Iran on the issue, USA has started at least showing its concern for the civilians in Gaza. While US president Biden is on record saying that occupation of Gaza will



be “a huge mistake” US Secretary of State, Blinken is in the Middle East. According to him, his mission is to secure humanitarian supplies to Gaza and prevent spread of the conflict. Blinken has claimed that Rafah crossing is being opened for aid and supplies. USA is acknowledging that sending two naval carriers may not be enough to deter the spread of war. Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iran have stated that ground offensive against Gaza will be a cause for their involvement. Israel has reportedly postponed its ground offensive at least for the time being. It is reported that the offensive may begin after US President Biden’s visit to Israel.

US Secretary Blinken has talked to Saudi crown prince who called for preventing escalation in Gaza. Blinken also talked in Qatar about release of civilian hostages being held by Hamas in Gaza. According to reports Hamas has agreed to release civilians held by them if bombing of Gaza by Israel is stopped. Blinken also talked to Chinese Foreign Minister of the subject and Japanese Foreign Minister talked to his Iranian counterpart on the situation in the region.

Present escalation of situation in Palestine is occurring at a time when multi-polar world is consolidating with the result that despite being the biggest power in the world, US imperialism is no longer able to dictate to other countries. It was quite evident when western powers were forced to agree to the G-20 Joint Statement though it had not named Russia, for which they had blocked a number of earlier statements. This condition of multi-polarity is bound to influence the developments in the region.

Creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine had been a project of western colonial powers from the beginning. West European colonial powers developed interest in Jewish homeland only after industrial refining of oil started, with West Asia having big

reserves. Then started, first in literature, sympathetic treatment of Jews, their quest for a homeland after centuries of vilification of Jews and the pogroms organized against them. Balfour declaration in 1917 helping Jewish homeland in the region, came much before the rise of Nazism and holocaust. It is also worth mentioning that Peel Commission of Britain had recommended partition of Palestine back in 1937. Israel has been treated as the main pillar of US influence in the region lording over the region ruled by monarchs and dictators, mainly pro-imperialist. USA and West European imperialists have systematically and consistently opposed democratic changes in the region, fearing people's assertion.

However, in the changing world situation western imperialist powers are faced with increasing isolation and their domination is being challenged in several regions. Hence, they would like to ensure that present conflagration does not spread to wider region and draw other countries into the conflict. But the problem is that Israel has based its whole strategy on erasing Palestinians from the region and inflicting disproportionate violence against them in case of any resistance. Israel has based its existence and well being on keeping Palestinians and neighbouring countries in terror of its response. It cannot be seen to be reasonable i.e., weak by its standards. Hence, the conflict is likely to escalate.

USA and western powers are pursuing an agenda of total support to Israel as well as keep their Middle East clients on their side, is bound to face contradictory pulls and pressures. Palestinians are fighting for their existence and are no longer dependent solely on the pro-West monarchs and dictators who themselves are now developing relations with other powers. Among Palestinians, once dominant Al Fatah had been steadily losing ground especially after Oslo Accords which gave little to Palestinians and a lot to Israel.

Today, Hamas has emerged as the organization having widest support among Palestinians and other organizations of Palestinian resistance are also with Hamas. Palestinian Authority led by Mohammad Abbas has lost support among Palestinians and survives in West Bank largely due to military control of Israel over the region. Furthermore, Gaza has been the epicenter of Palestinian resistance populated by Palestinians violently dispossessed and evicted from their homes in 1948 and in 1967. Gaza is the barometer of Palestinian mood, no less.

Indian Govt. has been caught on the wrong side of the world public opinion on this question. Having extended total support to Israel, Indian Govt. has tried to balance it with support to “two state solution” and respect for international humanitarian law. RSS-BJP Govt. has diverted from the earlier position of Indian Govt. of supporting Palestinian cause. The main reasons are; firstly, they see the Palestinian issue from their communal glasses. They support Israel for attacking Palestinians because they are Muslims. Secondly, they endorse the treatment of total suppression and subjugation of minorities, not according them any right. It may be worth recalling that RSS had been supporting Nazis, hailing their solution of minorities i.e., of exterminating them. Now the situation has changed but the fulcrum is same – how they would like to solve the minority question, a solution they have been advocating and implementing in the country. After all foreign policy is but an extension of domestic politics. RSS has little regard for the old position of Govt. of India and anti-colonial traditions of Indian people as they had consciously stayed away from that struggle. Not surprising that RSS-BJP Govt. did not permit demonstrations demanding lifting of siege of Gaza! Germany and France too have prohibited all pro-Palestinian gatherings but that has not been able to stop outbursts of anger against homicidal acts of Zionist rulers in

those countries. The present conflagration and its likely escalation have brought the Palestinian issue on the agenda and proved that no peace can be established in the region without solving the Palestinian issue.

It is time that United Nations General Assembly or an international conference be called for peace in the Palestine securing the national rights of Palestinians. In Security Council, patrons of Israel will block all attempts to check the aggression of Israel. General Assembly, though not having power, will prove legitimacy of the struggle of Palestinians. Advocates of “rules based order” will once again stand thoroughly exposed before the world people. More significantly, it is at a time when Western imperialist powers do not call all the shots.

The countries of the region must come forward to extend all humanitarian aid and supplies to Palestinians and oppose meting out of collective punishment to Palestinians. Without condoning targeting of civilians by any party, Israel or a Palestinian organization, one should not close eyes to the real issues in the region i.e., forcible and violence eviction of Palestinians from their homeland.

The real issues of the conflict in Palestine should be explained to the people of our country. A wide and broad movement should be built to demand that Indian Govt. oppose collective punishment being meted out to Palestinians by Zionist rulers of Israel and support national aspirations and rights of Palestinians. Such a movement should also demand that Indian Govt. should send humanitarian aid to suffering Palestinians and oppose Israel’s blockade of all supplies and aid to Gaza.

October 17, 2023

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**Supreme Court Decision on J&K**

**Against Federalism &  
Democracy; For Communal  
Majoritarianism**

**T**he Supreme Court's Judgment delivered on December 11, 2023 on abrogation of Article 370 in essence and on dissolution of the state of J&K on August 5, 2019, more than four years later, has dealt a serious blow to Federalism in general and rights and aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir in particular. The Judgment has also given a boost to the communal majoritarianism of the ruling RSS-BJP who are taking away rights of the people and moving to thrust fascism over the country. The Apex Court Judgment like several other judgments delivered in the past, indulges in eclecticism in jurisprudence rather than taking a holistic view.

There were mainly two issues before the Apex Court: First, abrogation of Special Status on J&K enshrined through Article 370 of the Constitution and second, dissolution of the state of J&K into two UTs thereby converting a state into a Union territory. On the first the judgment is marked by judicial cherry-picking, while on the second it is marked by what is called judicial evasion. The net effect is that the attacks on people of J&K by RSS-BJP Union Govt. has been upheld by the Court.

Upholding the President's (in fact Union Govt.'s) power to abrogate Article 370, Supreme Court has stressed on its temporary character through inclusion of the Article 370 in Chapter XXI of the Constitution titled Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions and Article itself subtitled as Temporary Provisions with respect to the State of Jammu & Kashmir. The judgment seizes upon the word temporary without giving importance to why it was so. At the time of adoption of Indian Constitution, Jammu & Kashmir Constituent Assembly had not been convened. At that time Instrument of Accession signed by Raja Hari Singh held the field in law. However, the Govt. of India, to take Sheikh Abdullah and his party alongthen,had attached importance to the views of people of J&K which were to be expressed through the Constituent Assembly of J&K. Even the Apex Court Constitution Bench in Premnath Kaul vs. State of J&K (1959), two years after dissolution of J&K Constituent Assembly, had acknowledged this, "Constitution makers attached great importance to the final decision of the Constituent Assembly." If one sees the historical context of this provision, it is clear that only the Constituent Assembly could take any further decision on Article 370 and it was clearly stated in Article 370(3). This may look very distant at the present time of substantial democracy deficit, but it was not so then. Constituent Assembly of J&K did not vary, modify or annul the Article. However in 1952 it did amend Explanation to Clause (1), which shows that it did consider the Article and communicated its will for the continuance of Article 370. Supreme Court has attributed inclusion of Article 370 in the Constitution to "special circumstances of war conditions in the state." But by the time Constitution was adopted, war in J&K was over.

Supreme Court judgment has highlighted that the Article was part of the process of "integration" of the state into Indian

Union and this process has continued. Obviously there had been continuous dilution of the Special Status of J&K over decades even prior to its total negation in 2019. Article 370 had stipulated the process of integration to be based on the will of the people as expressed through their elected representatives as provided in Article 370 (b) (ii) Explanation. What RSS-BJP Govt. did and what Apex Court has upheld was forcible integration and not voluntary i.e., democratic integration, which the then Govt. adopted at that time to win over people at the time of communal partition of the country. Supreme Court's repeated reference to absence of sovereignty of Kashmir post adoption of Constitution of India is only semantics as the question is of the Constitutional arrangement enshrined in the Constitution itself. Thus, Supreme Court has put its seal of approval on an undemocratic act not envisaged in the scheme of Constitution relating to State of J&K. Supreme Court's striking down amendment to Article 367 is of no importance when Supreme Court has left annulment of Article 370 to the will of Union Govt.

Second question before the Apex Court, which was directly related to the issue, was of dissolution of state of J&K and its conversion to a Union Territory. Article 3 ('a' to 'e' of the Article) of the Constitution does not provide for any state to be converted to Union Territory, the country being considered to be "a Union of States" in very Article 1 itself. There has been no example of any state being downgraded to Union Territory status except initial rearrangement. Supreme Court has left this question "open" without giving any opinion. It is as an example of judicial evasion. Supreme Court has left itself satisfied with the Govt. assurance.

This act of the Union Govt. had further deepened resentment among the people of J&K especially in Kashmir Valley.

Despite long blockades, internet shutdown, closure of media and severe repression, Govt. has not been able to hold elections over past four years which demonstrates that neither peace nor justice has been brought to the erstwhile State of J&K. Even after four years it dare not lift restrictions and honour democratic rights. RSS-BJP Govt. wants to change the demography of the region and its decision to enable people from outside the erstwhile State to own land and get jobs is being resented by the people of Ladakh, Jammu and the Valley. RSS-BJP Govt. wishes to carry out delimitation so that it can get a majority among the elected representatives.

J&K is a case where majoritarianism intersects with Federalism. While justifying the RSS-BJP Govt.'s actions in J&K, Supreme Court has dealt a blow at Federalism itself. While dealing with the issue of whether Union Govt., while taking over administration of a state under Article 356, could take decisions of far-reaching importance, of "irreversible consequences", the Supreme Court has held that it could do so, dealing a powerful blow at Federalism. If, during exercise of power under Article 356, Union Govt. can take and implement decisions with irreversible consequences which an elected state govt. cannot undo, it strikes at the very essence of Federalism. It leaves state govts. powerless before the Union Govt. It does away with sharing of power between Union and States under Constitutional scheme. It is pertinent to note that Supreme Court itself had termed Federalism as part of the basic structure of the Constitution which cannot be amended. This decision however gives precedence to unitary govt. over Federalism. Union Govt. has been making inroads into the rights of the states, infringing on one sphere after another, and in that situation this Supreme Court judgment will further bolster such attacks.



The judgment will increase the hurdles in the path of reaching negotiated agreement in North East especially with NSCN [IM]. This will further erode credibility of the promises of the Govt. even the durability of Constitutional provisions.

This decision has come, accidentally or otherwise, a few days after the results of the elections to five state assemblies. It has emboldened the ruling fascist forces in their onward march towards imposing fascist system over the country. This terrorist rule of the ruling classes has to trample upon Federalism and Judicial independence. This judgment makes deep inroads into both of these aspects. RSS-BJP Govt. is targeting minorities and is trampling over the rights of the toiling sections- workers and peasants. This Govt. is bent on shrinking democratic space through administration putting wanton restriction on the people's right to assemble and unleashing their fascist hordes against those differing with them. They are driving all dissent from public sphere and clamping on educational institutions.

Democratic rights cannot be reduced to a mere exercise of votes. Without other rights this right to vote, which is called by some as "representative democracy" will be reduced to a mere formality and it will not be difficult for ruling fascist forces to fashion it in a way different from present.

Higher judiciary should realize that true judicial independence can only operate when people have rights. With people's rights being infringed in one sphere after another, such independence will only be formal i.e. they will be independent to stamp the decisions of the rulers.

Present situation is very precarious for the people's interests, their rights and freedoms, for Federalism and for

minorities and oppressed sections including people of J&K. People's movements are most important for saving the situation and checking the onward march of fascist forces.

Central Committee

CPI[ML] New Democracy

December 12, 2023



# **Lift UAPA Against Youth Who Raised Slogans in Parliament; Release them Immediately**

**F**raming of charges under UAPA against youth who raised slogans and discharged harmless smoke inside and outside Parliament on December 13 to highlight certain people's issues must be thoroughly condemned by all progressive and democratic forces. They should demand withdrawal of UAPA cases against them and stand against their prosecution and in solidarity with them.

Four youth have been arrested in the case. Two of them had managed to go inside the Parliament. While one of them jumped on tables in the Parliament and released harmless smoke from a small canister carried by him, the other raised slogans on issues like

unemployment, price rise and anti-people policies of Modi Govt. besides Inquilab Zindabad and Bhagat Singh Amar Rahen. The youth who released smoke from the canister continued to hold it in his hand, ostensibly to demonstrate its harmless nature. Outside Parliament two youth raised slogans against unemployment, Modi's dictatorial rule, women's oppression and the like besides slogans hailing Bhagat Singh, and they too released harmless smoke from a similar canister. These two were arrested from outside the Parliament building. Two other names are also being mentioned and are to be arrested for being their accomplices and having facilitated their action.

The intent of these educated youth was to highlight some people's issues in a demonstrative way. These youth were drawn from four corners of India to show the pan India nature of the issues they were raising.

The youth have obviously been inspired by the act of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt who had thrown leaflets and lobbed a smoke bomb from the gallery on to empty benches in the Central Legislative Assembly on April 8, 1929. Shaheed Bhagat Singh and his comrades continue to inspire countless people especially youth in the country in their strivings against exploitation, oppression and repression. These youth with some others had come together under the banner of Bhagat Singh. The dreams for which Shaheed Bhagat Singh and other martyrs laid down their lives remain unfulfilled and their vision continues to be a source of inspiration.

Fascist RSS-BJP Govt. has termed and treated this demonstrative act as an act of terror. This is wholly baseless and meant to subject these youth and their friends to blatantly repressive UAPA and also to divert attention from the issues raised

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by these youth. These issues are agitating the youth throughout the country. Parliamentary opposition parties on the other hand have focused on the question of 'security breach', demanding a statement from the Union Home Minister. They too have not spoken on the issues highlighted by these youth, which shows that on the issues they do not have much different to say.

While all the issues raised by these youth are the issues agitating the people of the country, the issue of Unemployment has grown to explosive extent. Such is the level of unemployment and underemployment that youth, including educated youth, find themselves superfluous in society and their lives redundant. They are deprived of the means of making meaningful contribution to society. Ruling class parties focus on doling out pittances rather than providing employment. Rather, they are driving youth to lumpenism, drug abuse, suicides; the ruling dispensation channelizing their energies into communalism including goonda attacks against minorities. Educated youth in particular stake their all- family assets and their own lives- to migrate to other countries to seek gainful employment highlighting lack of such opportunities in the country.

While acts such as the one done by these youth, highlight the issues including the issue of unemployment in particular, the real need is to build a broad-based and militant movement against rising unemployment and underemployment. All organizations, youth and student organizations in particular, should build such a movement against policies responsible for this gross unemployment. Issue of Unemployment is an issue waiting to explode. This will challenge the whole policy paradigm of the ruling classes.

Protest against terror charges against these youth. Stand against their persecution and demand their immediate release. Move to build a powerful movement against Unemployment.

**CPI(ML)-New Democracy**

December 15, 2023



# **IFTU Calls On Central GOVT — Clarify Israeli GOVT. Assertion That Indian Workers Will Replace Palestinian Workers in Israel**

**O**n 14th December 2023 the Minister of State for Home had non committally stated in Parliament that Israel has not asked for Indian workers to replace Palestinians driven out of jobs in Israel. However, after the recent talk between the two concerned Prime Ministers following India finally voting for a ceasefire in Gaza, the Israeli Govt has stated that Israel asked for hastening the process of sending Indian workers to Palestine. The Indian Govt has not stated this issue in the content of the talk released in the country.

It is known that in May this year there was an agreement between the two Govts for sending over 40 thousand Indian

workers (34 thousand construction workers) to Israel. But since 7th October 2023, there has been persistent news that the Israeli Govt is asking India to replace the Palestinian workers it has driven out by Indian workers and that the Central Govt is complying. Most central trade unions including IFTU have called on the Govt to desist from using India's workers to support a colonizer power. While there was no further comment from Central Govt., now the media reports are quoting Israeli sources and asserting the Indian Govt's agreement. Unfortunately there is no denial from India.

IFTU holds that whatever be the earlier agreement between the two Govts, GOI should not send workers from our country to Israel either directly or through agencies. Nearly 20 thousand Palestinians, mostly women and children have been killed in the name of 'self defense' by colonizer Israel and it is attacking, starving, imprisoning Palestinians at will on their own land. In this it is fully backed, funded and armed by American imperialism.

The Indian workers must not be used as a pawn in this conspiracy of American Imperialism and colonizer Israel against the Palestinian people and the Central Govt's eagerness to please them. India itself was colonized for 200 long years and has a vibrant and long history of anti colonial struggle, which still inspires the people. IFTU calls on the Central Govt. to clearly state that the Govt. will not be sending workers from India to replace Palestinian workers.

*Issued by National Committee of IFTU*

20th Dec 2023



Organ of the Central Committee, CPI(ML)

December - 2023

**NEW DEMOCRACY**

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Price : Rs.20

**Editor : Com. Y. S. Rao**

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Published, printed and owned by Dr. V. K. Patole from Balmukand Khand, Giri Nagar, New Delhi - 110019 and printed at Star Offset Printers. 1-215/8-A-2 New Patel Nagar. New Delhi - 8

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