

India: Undeclared emergency? State repression from JNU students to Honda workers

Sunday 21 February 2016, by [JYOTI Nayan](#) (Date first published: 20 February 2016).

Even as the repression on students in universities, continues, the BJP regimes in Rajasthan and Haryana have attacked peaceful assemblies of young workers in the National Capital Region (NCR). This calls for widening and deepening the resistance against the Modi regime, whose fascist character is now nakedly visible. When the state starts hunting down workers and students at the same time, it is time for workers and students (and their friends) to stand united together and resist the repression by all means necessary and possible. We are posting below an account by Nayan Jyoti, a young activist, of the violence unleashed by the BJP governments in Rajasthan and Haryana, in collusion with factory managements, using the brute force of armed police and hired thugs in the last few days, with the hope that it will add crucially to our understanding of what exactly is going on in India. The Modi regime is in a deep crisis, and the only way the BJP (both at the centre and at the provincial levels) knows how to respond is through violence. Modi is the best student of Indira Gandhi in Indian politics, and he is following totally in her footsteps, invoking exactly the same 'Anti-National' tag, especially in terms of the way she led up to the declaration of the emergency in 1975. Things are different now, but also very similar. This is the beginning, as the author of this post says, of an undeclared emergency. The difference between a declared and an undeclared emergency appears at the moment to be only a formality. It is time we saw through the veil of this formality.

We #standwithJNU and raised our united voices against State repression and witch-hunt of students for #righttodissent since 9th February. On 18th February, more than 15,000 people said so clearly in Delhi and pointed out that this has directly followed in a coordinated manner more recently from the institutional murder of Rohith Vemula in HCU by the anti-Dalit administrations under influence of the BJP, and right-wing attack on FTII students to completely control freedom of thought and expression earlier and the murder of progressive intellectuals by right-wing groups in recent times.

As this terrorizing and silencing of progressive voices, students and intellectuals goes on by both the BJP government and its police-administration from the top and the RSS vigilante groups on the streets, another much more brutal crackdown on thousands of workers has just happened and continues in the Haryana-Rajasthan border.

The Joint Police forces of BJP-ruled Haryana and Rajasthan are raiding homes, beating, arresting and hounding anyone who looks like a HONDA worker or seen supporting one in the entire districts of Alwar in Rajasthan, and Rewari and Gurgaon in Haryana. For last 4 days there was still no trace of hundreds of workers, including 5 workers leaders who had gone to negotiate with the management on 16 February when a peaceful strike was going on in the factory from 2.30pm. Now 44 workers have supposedly been sent to jail, though no counsel on behalf of workers could be present in Court because of the atmosphere of complete terror. Hundreds of workers among 4000

workers of HONDA have been arrested and/or are missing, 350 received injuries with 50 seriously injured, the entire region-the DMIC belt in the centre of Modi's #MakeinIndia-has become a police camp and emergency-like terror situation prevails. To make this a normal state of affairs, the Haryana CM has already announced setting up of more police stations in industrial parks.

What happened at Honda on 16th February?

In the morning of 16th February, a supervisor physically attacked and verbal abused a contract worker in the Paint shop in HMSI (Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India, Private Limited) for refusal to work overtime. This contract worker was ill because of having continuously worked over-time for last few days, but was still being forced to work over-time today, and when he protested, the supervisor caught hold of his throat and physically attacked him. This was a regular instance of normal repressive control that the management and labour department deploys inside the factory and outside but the workers decided to get together to protest that day. Work was stopped and 2000 workers of Shift A, across categories of permanent-contract-trainee-apprentice, sat peacefully inside the factory, while 1000 more of shift B and C gathered at the factory gate. Frustration and anger against constantly scuttling the Right to Union formation since August 2015 (among a host of other reasons common in the industrial belt, like increasing work pressure and forced work, worsening working conditions, repression through bouncers) was there among workers. The management and Alwar labour department earlier suspended four and terminated two Union leaders, including Union president Naresh Kumar, and increased deployment of around 500 bouncers related to the contractor lobby.

On 16th, the company management responded by immediately dismissing 4 workers and suspending 8 workers, and 5 including worker leaders Naresh Kumar and Rajpal were called by the administration supposedly for discussion, company bouncers were called in to beat up workers (like in Maruti Suzuki in 2012) and the local administration came in with huge contingent of Rajasthan Police. Suddenly, at 7pm, a most brutal Police crackdown happened without any provocation, when they attacked the workers, chased them, brutally assaulted them and took control of the plant and the area. Hundreds of workers were seriously injured. They were then hounded in their rented accommodations or homes, while the migrant workers 'absconded' in the face of this State and lumpen terror. Phones were unreachable, and the entire Tapukhera area is under complete police control in a state of undeclared emergency.

They did not stop at this, and the Rajasthan Police under Vasundhara Raje's BJP government combined forces with Haryana Police under BJP's Khattar government (directed by the Modi government from the Centre). On 17th February morning, when hundreds of workers started gathering in Dharuhera-since they could not enter Tapukara-to protest, they were immediately arrested by the Haryana Police. 44 arrested workers who were supposedly produced in Tijara Court (no one could appear on their behalf due to the terror situation in Tapukara) were sent to jail on completely fabricated cases including 'attempt to murder' on the DCP, rioting and looting! This severe repression on 4000 Honda Motorcycles and Scooters India Ltd. Factory in Tapukara workers continues unabated today, while the lynch-mob instigating media conveniently suppresses all coverage on this.

On 19th February, thousands of Honda workers through increasing solidarity among lakhs of workers in Gurgaon, Manesar, Dharuhera, Bawal, Neemrana, Tapukara primarily on factory-to-factory level and with support of struggling Unions in the region, could finally gather in Gurgaon.

A 8000 strong workers march walked 8 km to the Honda HQ on Faridabad road where they now have set up camp. We walked through riot-torn streets due to the Jaat reservation issue, against the pro-corporate BJP governments of Haryana and Rajasthan, saying firmly: 'state terror down down',

'Mazdoor virodhi Modi sarkar murdabad', asking as a worker just in the rally, 'are we workers anti-nationals too now'?

Connecting the dots

This lays bare the real design of the current government in ever-clearer relief – that cynical hatred and crushing of anything progressive in society combines to create 'proper conditions' for a ruthless control through repression of the larger mass of those who labour under already horrendous conditions in society. How is this any different from 1975, when the crushing of the 1974 all-India Railway workers strike and the series of workers struggles in Faridabad and Kanpur for instance went hand-in-hand with the general crushing of all voices of dissent from peasants, students in Gujarat and Bihar, to silencing the media, lawyers, intellectuals and so on? If it is any different, then probably it is in the extent of the corporate-state collaboration and the ideology of a virulent Hindutva nationalism directed by the RSS to buttress the same.

We have come rapidly away from a sense of absurdity of 'how can they do this'. They are attacking us in a most organized manner, and we must stand our own grounds and with each other to weather the storm together, because we simply cannot survive in our own relatively separate zones anymore. Oppression is your privilege, struggle is our right. Stand in Solidarity, Advance the struggles.

Nayan Jyoti

P.S.

*<http://kafila.org/2016/02/20/undeclared-emergency-state-repression-from-jnu-students-to-honda-workers-nayan-jyoti/>

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