

COMMENT

Dancing with Dynamite

SPONTANEITY IS THE ORDER OF THE day. From Arab to America. From Argentina to India. But how long spontaneity can sustain itself is open to question. Not that all protests, rather spontaneous outbursts could be transformed into long-lasting movements leading to radical social and political change.

No doubt the public show of protests taking place across the US is a sign of deep disillusionment among Americans to very ordinary politics based on institutions and periodic elections. It's glaring disparity in economic and political power that forced people to take to the streets in Arab Spring and in Wisconsin, Greece, Spain and London. True, occupy Wall Street is part of this global revolt. This sudden and astonishingly strong movement in the US also shares much in common with uprisings in another part of the world : Latin America.

Essentially OWS movement connects tactics and philosophies with similar movements in Latin America, from the popular assemblies and occupation of factories during Argentina's economic crisis in 2001-2002 to grassroots struggles for land in Brazil.

It's obvious that OWS owns its primary inspiration to Tahrir square, especially the ethos of a non-violent leaderless, programmeless rising that learns day by day what it is about, who it is, and what is possible. Of course the stakes are much lower than in Egypt or elsewhere in the Middle East as there is little risk of death at this point on American Streets. Also, the monsters of Wall Street are not quite as potent a unifying target as was the grim presence of Hosni Mubarak. Simmering discontent is everywhere. But the system is failing to listen to the murmur under the surface. And it is failing even in an advanced economy like Greece lying near to the centre of global corporate power. Here contradictions are active among the dominating "partners", actually contenders, of the system having stakes in Greece. All the "partners" are trying to secure and expand respective interest. It's a partnership in competition. None of the "partners" have capacity to initiate actions independently. All the contenders need all of them. It's a unity of disunity. Within the Greek ruling elites, dissent will be heard, and fractures will appear. That will be a contradiction between interests, not a reflection of sense of dignity. But they will remain united on the fundamental question of common destiny: accumulate, even in distress condition.

Further austerity measures will "assist" anguish and frustrations overwhelm public life. Apathy, inertia and a desperate psychology will cohabit. The state, the World Bank, the IMF, the bankers, the Brussels bureaucrats—and broadly, the system will come under scrutiny by the people, which is a very long, and initially, a silent process. Armed with the power to silence dissent, and to make lies heard as truth and establish illogic as logic they also carry the

capacity to erode their own legitimacy. But in the process, adventurism and anarchism may find fertile ground strengthening forces of reaction in absence of a lead by a class conscious politics.

Yet spontaneity is also a welcome respite for the left throughout the world from years of passivity. The reports from anti-POSCO agitation in Odisha as also shouting before Liberty Plaza actually, place focus on financial and corporate structures, and not merely on the state. The inner message of spontaneity is how to create a change outside of this system because the system is failing everybody everywhere across the globe. □□□