

frontier

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'One Nation One Uniform'

STATES ARE AT WORST BIG MUNICIPALITIES. THE SYSTEMATIC erosion of federal structure has literally paved the way for authoritarianism and concentration of exclusive authority at the centre. The biggest 'showcase of democracy' is in reality an elected autocracy. Opposition parties, left parties in particular, no longer raise the issue of centre-state relations despite continuous centralisation of powers and abolition of autonomous institutions. At one stage the left talked a lot about internal colonialism. Today that perception is more relevant than ever before. The relationship between the Centre and states is simply colonial. The multi-party democracy is no guarantee to arrest the trend of increasing colonisation and destruction of whatever remains of federalism as guaranteed under the constitution. And authoritarianism in the Indian context is fascism. Law and order is the state subject. So are the police forces. With so many central intelligence and security agencies interfering in internal affairs of states through governor or otherwise whatever autonomy the states used to enjoy even a decade ago no longer exists under the Modi dispensation. Now state police is going to be under partial control of the Centre if Modi's plan of 'one nation one uniform' gets implemented. While addressing the 'Chinton Shibir' (brainstorming session) of home ministers of states on October 28 at Surjakund in Haryana Prime Minister Modi mooted the idea of 'one nation one uniform' for all state police personnel, albeit he didn't forget to add a rider that 'one nation one uniform' prescription must not extend to bringing operations of police forces under one umbrella. Nobody believes it. In truth the move is not that innocuous as he says. The Centre will finally police the police to cripple state's authority in certain areas. He added 'maintaining law and order is a 24x7 job demanding work towards advancements and improvements in the processes involved'. In other words he was actually suggesting modernisation of police forces with latest technological gadgets. But any modernisation needs money. Most states, particularly non-BJP ruled states are in the red, failing to carry out even their modest social welfare schemes due to paucity of funds. So states will again depend on the central government's benevolence to make their police forces 'modern and effective'. And the Centre is unlikely to disburse money without its control over the police.

At the same venue Modi came down heavily on the Naxalites, hopefully to encourage state home ministers to crush what they technically call 'left-

wing extremism' with brutality. He said 'every form of Naxalism, be it the one with guns or the one with pens, has to be uprooted to prevent them from misleading the youth of the country'. He was visibly worried over the increase of Naxalite intellectual atmosphere. They have been talking about urban Naxalism for quite some time only to silence any voice of dissent. It is their time tested practice to destroy any mass movement by giving it a Naxalite or Maoist or terrorist tag. They tried it during the historic farmers' movement but failed miserably. A large number of academics, journalists, social activists and human rights crusaders are behind bars because they are 'Naxalite suspects' as per the assessment of

the persons in power. They are indiscriminately arrested, tortured and kept in jails without trial for years. India is already a police raj. Laws like UAPA have given unlimited power to the state police and central intelligence agencies to terrorise people, ironically in the name of combating terrorism. The Prime Minister spoke about the Police Technology Mission of the Central Government and stressed the need for a common platform as differing technologies of different states do not talk to each other. Here lies the crux of the matter. He has a pan-Indian plan for the state police forces and it cannot be achieved without a central supervising authority over the state police.

No opposition party is opposing

Modi's anti-democratic measures to allow the security agencies to do whatever they like to do in the name of curbing Naxalism and maintaining law and order.

For one thing Congress Prime Minister Manmohan Singh originally described the Naxalites as the greatest threat to internal security. And Modi is now reiterating the same Congress rhetoric to curb protests and yet he thinks he is promoting cooperative federalism to honour the Constitution. True, he is honouring the constitution by continually dismantling it. Modi or Manmohan, they always need an internal enemy to suppress democratic aspirations of people and the bogey of rising Naxalism foots their bill. □□□

COMMENT

Dalits vs Dalits

IN THE WAKE OF THE MODI government forming a commission to reevaluate reservations for Dalits, Ambedkarite intellectuals are debating whether Muslim and Christian Dalits should be included in the Scheduled Caste list. Much of the opposition stems from the contention that Dalit Muslims and Christians do not face the same level of caste oppression as Dalit Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs.

However, many others have strongly contested this claim, arguing that reservations should be religiously neutral and that the caste oppression faced by Dalits does not go away on changing religion through conversion. Then the question arises why do they resort to conversion. Maybe, to get rid of untouchability tag.

At present, only Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist Dalits are eligible for reservations in jobs, education and legislatures under India's Scheduled Caste quota. This is according to the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order

of 1950, a Presidential order which lists all Scheduled Castes. Initially, Paragraph 3 of the order stated that only Hindus could avail of reservations. In 1956, the text was amended to include Sikhs and in the 1990s to include Buddhists. It means Hindutva ideologues consider Sikhism and Buddhism as part of Hinduism.

However, pressure groups have long argued that the list should include Muslim and Christian Dalits as well.

In 2004, a case was filed in the Supreme Court by several petitioners, including the non-governmental organisation Centre for Public Interest Litigation, arguing that limiting the Scheduled Caste category to certain faiths amounted to discrimination on the basis of religion. In August, the Supreme Court asked the Centre to file a response to the case by October 10.

On October 6, the Centre appointed a three-member commission to examine whether the Scheduled

Caste category should be expanded to include Muslims and Christians. The commission, comprising former Chief Justice of India KG Balakrishnan, former Indian Administrative Service officer Ravindra Kumar Jain and University Grants Commission member Sushma Yadav, will submit its report within two years.

Since the formation of the commission, several Ambedkarite activists have opposed the inclusion of Dalit Muslims and Christians in the Scheduled Caste list.

One argument being put forward is that many Dalit Muslims and Christians already get reservations under the Other Backward Classes category. "Most Dalit Christians and Muslims are part of central or state OBC list," said Ashok Bharti, Chairman of the National Confederation of Dalit and Adivasi Organisations. "They are already enjoying the benefits of reservation. So they cannot say they are not reserved."

Further, intellectuals argue that from the inception of the Scheduled Caste category, Muslims and Christians were not envisaged to be a

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part of it. “Even during Constituent Assembly debates, Muslims and Christians did not ask for becoming a Scheduled Caste.

However, other activists and intellectuals have disagreed with this characterisation of reservations. They argue that reservations are religion neutral and that oppression faced by Muslims and Christians continue to exist after they convert.

Several scholars argue that the opposition to including Dalits Muslims and Christians as Scheduled Castes are also based on two fac-

tors that have little to do with social justice: anxieties around conversion and competition for existing quotas.

In terms of social justice, no one has any case against Dalit Muslims and Christians. But people do not approach these categories only through social justice. There are also interest-based interventions.

Opposition could also result from the fact that including Muslims and Christians in the Scheduled Caste quota would reduce opportunities for those who can currently avail of them.□□□ [Contributed]

NOTE

The Festival of Lights

Bharat Dogra writes:

DEERAWALI, THE MOST awaited festival of lights in India, is celebrated by people in many ways but most prominently as a wish and worship for prosperity to them and their near and dear ones. While economic well-being should be wished to all people of the world, certainly the greatest concern should clearly be for the poorest sections.

It is very important to emphasise this, as in the middle of all the discussion on GNP and growth rates, billionaires and mega-companies, the most important feature of world economy today is that those at the bottom are finding it more difficult to meet their basic needs. In a leading middle-income country India the bottom half of the population has a lot of difficulty in meeting its basic needs.

While as much as two-thirds of the population, or even more, are in such a situation in some countries of Africa and Asia, even in some of the richest countries the bottom one-third or one-fourth of the people are in a situation of not meeting their basic needs on a continuing basis.

This is certainly the situation in the USA where it appears increasingly clear that the bottom one-third of the population is unable to meet all basic needs in continuing basis and the problems of homelessness and unaffordability of rent payments are reaching unprecedented levels. On the one hand the USA does not hesitate to create highly dangerous situations to assert its dominance over the world, on the other hand it is unable, or does not care, to meet even the basic needs of nearly one-third of its own people.

The difficulties of poorer sections increased significantly in times of pandemic, and this trend has continued till now. A report of Oxfam pointed out that at one stage of pandemic times almost a million people were being pushed into poverty on almost daily basis, even as a billionaire was emerging almost every day at world level.

Clearly concerns of the weaker sections are receiving less sympathy and attention. Among the poor, the greater burden of the deteriorating conditions has to be borne by women. Perhaps what is most worrying is the

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fact that a large number of people—their number is in millions—are also facing high risk of starvation deaths. This is true of the Horn of Africa region in particular, and to a somewhat lesser extent in some other countries of Africa and also Asia.

While several factors are responsible for these continuing or increasing difficulties of a very large number of people in meeting their basic needs, the most important factor relates to high, and often increasing, levels of inequalities in most countries. The extent of inequalities in two leading countries can be seen from Table 1 [see next page].

It is evident from this table that both wealth inequality and income inequality are extremely high in both the USA and India. Just imagine—the bottom 50% of the population has just 1.5% of the wealth in the USA and just 6% of the wealth in India. Again the bottom 50% of the population has only 13% of the income in both countries. It is this

bottom 50% of the population which faces the most difficulties in most countries in meeting their basic needs.

Due to overall much lower income level in India, the impact of inequality in terms of denial of basic needs is higher in India. Among the poor, the greater burden of increasing difficulties is being borne by women.

Clearly, in all discussions and actions regarding economic policy, it is the bottom 50% of the country which should be at the top of concerns. This is all the more important in times of climate change when adverse weather events and worsening disasters are also combining with other factors to increase the economic difficulties of weaker sections.

Table 1 : Inequalities in USA and India

1. Wealth Inequality	USA	India
Share of bottom 50% in Wealth	1.5%	6%
Share of Top 10% in Wealth	71%	65%
Share of Top 1% in Wealth	35%	33%
2. Income Inequality	USA	India
Share of bottom 50% in Income	13%	13%
Share of top 10% in Income	45%	57%
Share of top 1% of Income	19%	22%

Source of data : Obtained from India and USA country profiles provided in the World Inequality Report 2022.

In times of climate change, there is clearly need for much higher levels of equality and much higher concern for weaker sections, although the adverse appears to have happened in recent times in many countries including India.

Clearly this should change. The

lamps lit on Deepawali should be placed first and foremost on the doors of weaker and poorer people who need justice and a fair deal on urgent basis. □□□

[The writer is Honorary Convener, Campaign to Save Earth Now. His recent books include *A Day in 2071*, *Protecting Earth for Children*, and *Navjeevan*.]

BANKING SCENARIO

Denationalisation is in Full Swing

Aswini Kumar Pramanik

THOSE WHO ARE IN THE banking sector as employees, as executives or as trade unionists are very much concerned about their fate. The industry has undergone sea change during the last five years, so to say. The merger question apart, the disinvestment had started a long time back toward the process of privatisation. Major Banks have sold out the government share up to 25% or even more to the public and accordingly the public directors are enlisted in the Board of Directors of those banks. The remarkable thing is that the representatives from the employees' side -award staff and officers alike have been driven out from the Board. Even though debate was there as to role of those employees' directors in the crucial Board meetings, the representation was a very conceptually significant indicator of the system of management in the socio-economic perspective of the day. It was acknowledged that the employ-

ees have a say in the management of the bank which is a public institution. But the privatisation move has taken away all those privileges of the employees or their representatives. There was a gossip that the employees' Directors would enjoy the five star cultures but did nothing for the employees' sake. Whatever be the fact, the numbers were the determining factor in taking any crucial decision as regards the future of the bank. And that had happened. The employees' directors were driven out by the decision of the Government and they could do nothing to prevent it.

And now, the banks have decided to be merged by the Government and the Board of Directors has nothing but to give their affirmation to that decision. Again the Government had in the Budget proposals declared that they would sell two public sector banks to the intending buyer in this financial year. The names are doing the rounds in

the industry corners. The Government had sometimes divulged the names. But the reality is that there are no buyers as such to buy those banks. The names like UCO Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, IOB and the like have lost all attraction to the buyers in a volatile market. Even though they are earning profit, the buyers are not showing much interest in them. In case the Government takes the decision to sell a bank, the Board of Directors of that particular bank has to sign their death certificates, with pleasure, of course. The rumour has it that the big industry houses are much more interested in big banks like Canara Bank or Bank of Baroda who have good standing in the market. They are waiting behind the curtain to hear from the Government the decision to sell these banks and to celebrate the completion of privatisation of the banks. The question is which will be the next to be sacrificed to the greed of the private monopoly houses?

But before the privatisation of the big banks to begin, the process of in-house privatisation will be com-

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pleted. Just imagine the process: the cart before the horse and not the reverse which is but the normal order. A paradox? How? Let us cite some concrete examples to corroborate the theme:

- **Recruitment of Arm Guards:** Before merger of some big banks it was transparent that the personnel management affair gained topmost priority. The privatisation move also gears toward the very end of reducing the employees' strength to ensure highest profit. The policy for recruitment of employees at different cadres is a direct reflection of this end. Here of course, the first target is the better unionised award staff. The Arm Guards ensure the effective yet secure bank functioning. But the recruitment of this cadre is in absolute chaos. The banks are running with dire deficiency of arm guards in huge number of branches. The bank is following a very cost effective recruitment policy of requisitioning arm guards from security agencies on contractual basis. Apart from their poor salary from their recruiting agency, they don't get any PF, Pension, other compulsory allowances permissible to a permanent award staff of the bank. State Bank of India has been the pioneer in this respect. Others are to follow the suit.
- **Recruitment of Clerks:** The major chunk of recruitment in banking industry comprised, after nationalisation, clerical cadres and probationary officers. It continued till mid eighties. There was a lull for a long period of time in this regard. The new army of clerical staff and officers of different scales began thronging the branches and offices of the banking industry only around 2010. Now again the old phenomenon had started repeating.

According to a senior trade unionist of Canara Bank, the recruitment of clerical cadre in a big bank like Canara Bank had come down to poor 500 posts all over the country while the same for officer cadre is 2500. Implication is amply clear. Bank is concentrating on officers as its main pillar and not otherwise. This would then alter the pattern of staff strength in the Bank. Once the majority strength of clerks and other employees who came under the purview of different Awards will no more be the majority force in Banks. The place would rather be occupied by the officers.

This is on the whole the picture of staff pattern in almost all major banks. This was the target of the Narasingham Committee recommendations I & II for de-control, merger and ultimately, privatisation of the banking industry and these have been painstakingly pursued and ultimately achieved by the bank management and the government after decades of concerted effort through Bipartite settlements and other measures.

Trade Union Movement

- Needless to say, this would bring a huge change in the trade union movement too in the entire banking industry. The trade union movement since the fifties till date has been dominated by the workmen cadre unions. It would now be dominated by the officers' unions on the basis of sheer strength. Here is the staff position in a branch :
Before 5 years Now
Clerks > 40 5
Officers > 5 5 + 4 (managers).
The drastic reduction is observed in clerical cadre. This is however, the picture of a particular bank branch but the overall picture at

the industry level will not be much different though with slight variation, here and there. The recruitment of clerical cadre vis-a-vis officers' one as mentioned above only vindicates this position.

The struggling spirit of the workmen unions may naturally be subdued to a great extent and may not be replenished by the Officers' unions /associations. Their service rules necessarily restrict their struggling spirit a lot. It itself heralds a change in struggle itself. However, it is difficult at this moment to forecast the course of that movement led by unions/associations of officers. It cannot be ruled out that the new work pattern may metamorphose the lower rung of the officers themselves to take up the baton of the workmen's struggle to the permissible extent. As of now the bank management and the Government are in a position to dictate terms to their employees of all cadres even if those terms flout the settled norms of the bipartite settlements. The irony is that the employees are forced to

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Board of Directors

- Almost in all the banks, Government's stake has been sold to public through issue of shares to the extent of 25% or even more. Now, they intend to maintain only 25% or even less than that of the shares of the Bank. Accordingly, the Board of Directors will be represented proportionately by the percentage of shares implying that there will be major portions of directors from monopoly corporate houses or their lobbies.
- The impact of this will be seen in policy making, deciding credit policy, NPA resolutions etc. During the Government possession, humongous amount of bad debt of the corporate houses had been written-off/liquidated. Canara Bank itself has written-off 1.29 lakh crore of bad debt of the corporate houses. It may not be a surprise if a good number of

public sector banks go red overnight as is witnessed as a real life phenomenon in developed capitalist economy. After all, the industry leaders as well as the ruling elite are very much enamoured of the policies of the developed world and cite them every now and then. And after all, they have a mission and a vision, too and that is privatisation. Till now, they have achieved their goal of reversing the purposes of Bank nationalisation to give the orientation towards class banking from that of mass banking. And privatisation has dealt a death blow to those policies and orientation of mass banking.

- Now this is the harsh reality before the banks go for full privatisation. One can imagine what else the real privatisation would bring in the industry or more particularly to the employees. Actually, it is more than privatisation in real terms. It is better being termed as privatised public sector, a paradox indeed. The number of corporate sector private banks have gone red in the past few years and the public sector banks have come to their rescue at the instruction of RBI or the Government. The corporate houses have therefore, realised that they would not be much troubled if their banks fail. The Public Sector Banks are there. So they can take huge amount of loans from the public sector banks and indulge in non-repayment of those loans. The Government has nurtured till date this motive of the corporate borrowers. Result: the public sector banks are going to be liquidated in not too distant future. The Government intention is abundantly clear-either to sell the banks to the private monopoly

houses directly or implement the privatisation process under the nameplate of public sector.

Outsourcing

- Pending privatisation, the Bank management under the Government's instruction is closing some sections of the bank. The works are being outsourced. For instance: the Printing Section is no more in Canara Bank: Printing works have been outsourced.
- Currency Chest is persisting : Receiving and remittance have been outsourced.
- HKP staff exists : But cleaning and sweeping of branch premises outsourced.

As far as the Bank of Baroda's case is concerned, outsourcing has been forcefully tried to be implemented violating all norms of industry-level settlements. Reference may be made to the clause 31(h) of VIII Bipartite Settlement dt 02.06.2005 wherein it is clearly stated that "while it shall be bank's endeavour to retain/re-skill staff and to develop in-house competencies, they may outsource IT and its related activities in respect of specialised areas where in-house capability is not available." So for sweeping, in-house competency is sufficiently available and outsourcing, therefore, violates the provisions of BP settlement. Moreover, since sweeping is a permanent and perennial kind of job, outsourcing of this job is in total contravention of the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act 1970. But who cares for all those laws?

The management of BOB has not placed any indent for last 2 years with the IBPS for clerical recruitment. On the other hand they are intent on doubling the number of Business Correspondent and want to get the clerical jobs done by them. This mode of outsourcing is a direct attack on job security of the

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award staff. BOB employees are also on the warpath against this outsourcing.

Outsourcing of permanent and perennial type of job is not the monopoly of the above two banks. The other banks led by State Bank of India are implementing it violating all the industry level settlements and the existing law of the country. The total number of Business Correspondents (BC) in the banking industry hovers around 5,26,000 as per NABARD statistics. The question is how the banks could violate the industry level settlements and engage such a vast number of BCs. Obviously, it couldn't happen without the patronage of the Central Government. The central Government wants the banks to trim their workforce before ceremonial privatisation.

True to say, the outsourcing function had started in the nineties itself with the operationalisation of the computerisation in the branches. Outside agencies were deployed for data feeding. And now it persists in variegated forms and in different sections of the bank and industry. Every moment it is expanding its horizon. Every moment an advancement for privatisation.

The privatisation of the public Sector banks is not the agenda of this Government only. It is a long drawn struggle of a major section of the ruling class of the country since the days of nationalization. Even before nationalisation, while a section favoured nationalisation as the panacea for all ailments of the economy deeply drowned in chaos and thought it the appropriate step to preempt any social upheaval, the other section strongly opposed it. This deep chasm in their economic purview led to political splits in the oldest party with deep future ramification. But ultimately, in the last days of eighties and in the early

nineties, the country witnessed the beginning of the end of that policy of nationalisation when the new economic policy came into existence. Now the chasm became irrelevant. There was the competition between the rival camps as to who was more ardent in implementing the new policy. The trend still continues and policy of privatisation, liberalisation is not the monopoly of any particular camp now. These are omnipresent and all encompassing. Not sparing even the left camp wherever they are in power. Is it a melodrama? Is it a commitment of both the camps to protect the system in a roundabout way? The tragedy is that the antagonists even shy away from telling the employees the history of that old struggle.

However, it is a fact to remember that the Governments policies and projects like Jan Dhan projects in the present regime are channelised through Public Sector banks and not through Private Banks. Actually, one objective of nationalisation was to cater to the people's needs through huge branch network and that part was played by the nationalised banks very satisfactorily. Today also no pause to that tradition. Today there is the demonetisation and umpteen social projects of the Governments where the employees risk even their nights of rest to implement those projects. These proves their commitment to the people and makes at the same time the policy of nationalised banking a milestone of glorious service to the nation. Private sector banks on the other hand had so far no such record to their credit.

But who cares? The monopoly houses are eyeing on the big profit making banks to make them their next hunt. □□□

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CPC'S 20TH CONGRESS

Xi—The Red Emperor

Sankar Ray

THE SEVEN-DAY LONG 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing ended without really creating any international impact. The foreign ministry of the People's Republic of China in a press communiqué claimed that the much awaited Congress was 'a successful conclusion' with the election of 'a new CPC Central Committee and a new Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and passing the Resolution on the Report of the 19th CPC Central Committee, the Resolution on the Work Report of the Central 19th for Discipline Inspection and the Resolution on the Commission Revised Constitution of the Communist Party of China.' The third five-year term with suitable changes in the party constitution for the CPC general secretary Xi Jinping who is the President of PRC too, was a *fait accompli*. In fact, unless very uncertain things happen, he may stay on at the helm as long as he wishes. More interestingly albeit not unexpectedly, the jamboree with 2338 of 2378 elected and specially-invited delegates, having attended the Congress, condescendingly endorsed the tradition of personality cult that began 77 years ago at the seventh congress of CPC when Liu Shao Chi introduced and got okayed a resolution in the party constitution endorsing Mao Tse-tung Thought as an ideological adjunct to Marxism-Leninism. "Everyone of us in the Party must hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics and develop a deep understanding of the decisive significance of establishing Comrade Xi

Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole and establishing the guiding role of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. We must resolutely uphold Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Central Committee and in the Party as a whole and fully implement Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era", the press communiqué stated.

The seven-member Politburo Standing Committee, China's ruling apex, above the 205-member Central Committee, has no women. The four new entrants, all Xi-loyalists are Shanghai CPC head Li Qiang who oversaw its disastrous Zero Covid lockdowns, Beijing chief Cai Qi, and Guangdong province's Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi. In the wider 24-member politburo, more than half were replaced with Xi's adherents.

Li was named number two in the PSB, shunting out Li Keqiang as premier, although technically he is to retire in March 2023. BBC's China correspondent Stephen McDonnell banteringly told the Today Show: that the seven-member apex, 'stacked with Xi Jinping loyalists' seems to show that 'now loyalty to Xi Jinping trumps proven ability. There had been an argument that the Chinese system is one of meritocracy, it would be hard to stand that up now if you look at the people who have been given roles on that politburo standing committee'.

Xi's factional consolidation is explicit. The sudden exit of his predecessor Hu Jintao, during the last session of the Congress was its clear reflection. Sitting beside Xi, he had a

brief but visibly tensed conversation with the CPC supremo before he was escorted out of the venue—officially because he wasn't feeling well but video footage shows his displeasure.

Aside from Li Qiang, set to take over as the Prime Minister, Zhao Leji, in-charge of tasks towards anti-corruption and discipline, Wang Huning, head of implementing for party (Xi's) ideology, Cai Qi, the current party secretary of Beijing, Ding Xuexiang, director of the general office of the CCP plus office of the President and Li Xi, party secretary of Guangdong province are Xi's main sidekicks.

The distribution of roles within the PSC is yet to be spelt out. Xi, who, like his predecessors, holds the positions of President of PRC, general secretary of the CPC and chairman of the Central Military Commission concurrently.

Undeniably, notable successes have been achieved in curbing corruption and almost complete elimination of people, living below poverty line. 'Chill penury' was very much present during the Mao era, especially when the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was in full swing. But the in-egalitarianism has risen disturbingly. According to Ilaria Mazzocco of Center for Strategic and International Studies rising inequality is obstructing China's prosperity. The leadership has touted inequality as a top priority to be tackled through its Common Prosperity initiative, but this goal was barely mentioned in the 14th Five-Year Plan. And in the spring of 2022, the economy was dealt a severe blow by extended lockdowns in major cities introduced as part of the leadership's zero-Covid strategy. All of this will likely worsen inequality and further complicate China's economic outlook.

Xi has laid out a vision called

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'Common prosperity' aiming at a significant reduction of in-egalitarianism. The gist of his vision, stated in his report of the 19th CC of CPC at the Congress is as follows:

'None should think that anyone is above the party. No matter how rich you are, the power lies with the party'. This has caused a psychic tremor among the wealthy Chinese who are putting in place plans to move their capital offshore, purchase homes in their intended destination and to acquire citizenship of those countries. A report by the Financial Times of London reveals how worried is the nouveau riche in China over the policy decision on 'Common Prosperity' at the 20th Congress. Some apprehend that instead of the informal 'Common Prosperity' formula that is in place now, the Chinese government may introduce a formal wealth tax. Xi has made no bones of his plan to crack down on what he and the party perceives as infusion of harmful traits in the society, such as prep schools and tuition classes.

However, some western analysts are still skeptical about Xi's promises. They say bluntly, Xi Jinping himself doesn't understand or even care about the economy, that loyalty to him is what is important and thinks that party discipline and rampant nationalism can fix any problem. There is no denying that Xi focuses mainly on self-reliance in technology, faster military development and protection of Beijing's 'core interests' abroad. The welfarist imperative during China's post-Mao economic strides remains unaddressed and given a secondary role for years together.

Xi has subtly warned the Taiwan rulers (read the US President Joe Biden and top western leaders) of using force to amalgamate Taiwan with mainland China. But financial experts and diplomats take it as no

more than a verbal missile. Former British diplomat Charles Parton, currently a fellow of the Council on Geostrategy, the Royal United Services Institute and the Mercator Institute for China Studies, in an article in FT said that Xi should be cautioned by western leaders that threatening Taiwan would have adverse economic consequences. The Chinese invasion of Taiwan is bound to be retaliated by the USA which would block the Malacca and Sunda straits, the channel of oil supplies from the Middle East to China. The ship owners too would oblige the US rulers in such an eventuality. Strategically and militarily too, it would be detrimental to China. "The 100 nautical miles of rough seas, only 14 beaches on which to land men and materials and Taiwan's mountainous topography all favour the defence. After a slow start, Taipei is moving towards a 'porcupine' defence, which acknowledges Chinese superiority in conventional arms and relies on small, mobile platforms. These are difficult to knock out and would inflict considerable casualties" he wrote.

True, nothing is more important to President Xi than implementing the Chinese dream to replace the US as the pre-eminent global power and redraw the world map in line with its interests and values. It is an unnecessary risk, if he is indeed convinced by his own slogan that 'the east is rising, the west is declining.' Better to wait. The ex-diplomat remembers the Delphic oracle warning Croesus that, 'if he invaded Persia, an empire would fall; leaders have succumbed to the blindness of hubris.'

Moreover, China should in its own interest not be hostile to Taiwan pointed out Parton. The Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company is the largest manufacturer of the world's most hi-tech semiconductors. The TSMC CEO C C Wei

made it known that the company whose annual revenue crossed US\$ 57 billion would never go into Chinese hands as China is yet to be able to manufacture a well-aimed missile that the Americans possess and just banning of the sale of the materials, machinery and parts would be enough to stop China from dreaming to take over TSMC. And most of Taiwan's nearly \$200bn exports to China are components in China's own exports.

Lastly—pertaining to the Taiwan issue- it was never a part of China before the end of the 17th Century. The Imperial China launched a successful blue-sea naval campaign against Taiwan in 1683. It was one of the most complex and hazardous sea battles before modern times. "The mainland Chinese expeditionary forces commanded by Admiral

URGENT APPEAL

This unique world law fortnightly—perhaps the only law journal in India which regularly publishes important foreign and international courts' decisions—as also provides copious information regarding the socio-economic/political conditions of various countries the world over and invites/publishes thought provoking articles on the pressing problems and crises faced by the people of the world in various spheres—is running on heavy losses and is IN DANGER OF BEING CLOSED DOWN SOON unless subscribers, admirers/well-wishers rise to the occasion and render crucial help in the form of causing many more subscriptions, advertisements (Rs 15,000 or more) and donations at the earliest and regularly. Hope and request all such sympathetic persons/institutions would chip in with their precious aid.

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Shi Lang first decisively defeated the Zheng fleets at Penghu, or known as the Pescadores in the West, and then compelled the Ming loyalists on Taiwan to accept unconditional surrender. Admiral Shi's skills, bravery, and experiences were surely indispensable for the victory, which not only secured imperial China's political legitimacy by eliminating the last bastion of the Ming loyalists but also firmly acquired a strategic island off the mainland coast", wrote Young-tsu Wong in his well-researched book, 'China's Conquest of Taiwan in the Seventeenth Century Victory at Full Moon'.

Is Taiwan Chinese? It is pompous to say that Taiwan has been part of China since millennia. As a

matter of fact, Taiwan could have gone a number of different directions, such as a Spanish or Dutch colony or an independent maritime kingdom. But it truly and specifically became a part of China in the seventeenth century, 92 years before the birth of the United States, and its destiny has since been inseparable from Mainland China.

The accusation that post-Mao China witnessed capitalist growth as if Mao and China under his stewardship was against capitalism. Mao—as far known to and read by this writer—never gave a call for terminating or preventing capitalism. He wrote in *On New Democracy* (section VI): "In the new-democratic republic under the leadership of the

proletariat, the state enterprises will be of a socialist character and will constitute the leading force in the whole national economy, but the republic will neither confiscate capitalist private property in general nor forbid the development of such capitalist production as does not 'dominate the livelihood of the people', for China's economy is still very backward." His tirade against Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and others as 'capitalist roader' during the GPCR was hypocritical.

In the age of imperialism, going by the Leninist vision, the era of old type of bourgeois democratic revolution that paves the way for capitalism, has long been discarded by the Marxists. □□□

REVOLUTIONARY REALISM

Unpublished Rosa Luxemburg

Peter Hudis

[A new edition of Rosa Luxemburg's writings, most of which have never appeared in English before, gives a unique perspective on her thought. Luxemburg believed that a socialist revolution would have to be democratic or else it would be doomed to failure.]

GENERATIONS OF Socialist thinkers and activists have grappled with the life and thought of Rosa Luxemburg. Yet there are many surprises still in store for those interested in her legacy, as seen in the recent publication of Volume Four of the English-language Complete Works. Along with the previously published Volume Three, the new collection brings together her writings on the 1905 Russian Revolution, one of the most important social upheavals of modern times.

Luxemburg's analysis of 1905 in her pamphlet *The Mass Strike, the Political Party, and the Trade Unions* is already well known (and appears in Volume Four in a new translation). However, more than four-fifths of the material in the new volume, covering the period from 1906 to 1909, is appearing in English for the first time. Most of her writings that

were originally composed in Polish—about half of the volume's 550 pages—have never appeared in any other language.

Luxemburg, like most Marxists of her generation (as well as Karl Marx himself) held that a democratic republic with universal suffrage was the formation best suited for waging the class struggle to a successful conclusion. Like many of her contemporaries in the Second International, she saw no contradiction between fighting for democratic reforms within capitalism while reaching for a revolutionary transformation that would abolish capitalism—even as she relentlessly battled those who separated the two.

Rosa Luxemburg distinguished between forms of struggle employed in 'peaceful' as against those used in revolutionary periods.

In doing so, Luxemburg distin-

guished between forms of struggle employed in "peaceful" as against those used in revolutionary periods. The aim in both scenarios was to enhance the consciousness and power of the working class. However, "in peacetime, this struggle takes place within the framework of the rule of the bourgeoisie." Luxemburg referred to this as "a sort of iron cage in which the class struggle of the proletariat must take place." Hence, mass struggles in such periods "only very seldom attain positive results." A revolutionary phase was very different, she argued:

Times of revolution rend the cage of "legality" open like pent-up steam splitting its kettle, letting class struggle break out into the open, naked and unencumbered... the consciousness and political power [of the proletariat] emerge during revolution without having been warped by, tied down to, and overpowered by the "laws" of bourgeois society.

For Luxemburg, the activity and reason of the masses during the 1905 Revolution, in which millions engaged in mass strikes aimed at bringing down the tsarist regime,

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was a clear example of such a moment. As she wrote in early 1906: “With the Russian Revolution, the almost-sixty-year period of quiet parliamentary rule of the bourgeoisie comes to a close.” The time had come for the socialist movement in Western Europe to begin to “speak Russian” by incorporating the mass strike into its political and organisational perspectives.

In the years since Luxemburg penned these words, numerous commentators have praised her efforts to push the rather staid social democratic parties in a more revolutionary direction, while others have criticised Luxemburg’s perspective on the grounds that it downplays the stark differences between the absolutist regime in Russia and Western liberal democracies. There are several points worth noting in this context.

Luxemburg held that the immediate task in the Russian Empire was the formation of a democratic republic under the control of the working class.

Firstly, Luxemburg held that the mass strike “is and will remain a powerful weapon of workers’ struggle,” but went on to stress that it was “only that, a weapon, whose use and effectiveness always depend on the environment, the given conditions, and the moment of struggle.” Secondly, she held that the Russian proletariat was “not setting itself utopian or unreachable goals, like the immediate realisation of socialism: the only possible and historically necessary goal is to establish a democratic republic and an eight-hour workday.”

In Luxemburg’s view, socialism could not be on the immediate agenda in Russia for two main reasons: the working class at the time constituted only a small minority of the populace of the Russian Empire (less than 15 percent), and it was impossible for socialism to exist in a single country:

The socialist revolution can only be a result of international revolution, and the results that the proletariat in Russia will be able to achieve in the current revolution will depend, to say nothing of the level of social development in Russia, on the level and form of development that class relations and proletarian operations in other capitalist countries will have achieved by that time. In a lengthy essay addressed to the Polish workers’ movement, she further developed this point:

In its current state, the working class is not yet ready to accomplish the great tasks that await it. The working class of all capitalist countries must first internalise the aspiration to socialism; an enormous number of people have yet to arrive at an awareness of their class interests. ...When Social Democracy has a majority of the working people behind it in all the largest capitalist countries, the final hour of capitalism will have struck.

However, this did not mean that the Russian Revolution would be confined to a liberal or bourgeois framework. Much like Vladimir Lenin’s Bolshevik current—and in direct opposition to their Menshevik rivals—Luxemburg held that the immediate task facing revolutionaries in the Russian Empire was the formation of a democratic republic under the control of the working class. Since the liberal bourgeoisie was too weak and compromised to lead the revolution, “the proletariat had to become the only fighter and defender of the democratic forms of a bourgeois state.”

Yet the question remained: How could the workers maintain themselves in power in a democratic republic over the long haul if they constituted a minority of the populace? Luxemburg’s answer was that

As Timir Basu is still seriously ill, he is not in a position to communicate with contributors and subscribers. Please bear with us.

—Fr.

they could not—and yet the effort would still be worth it:

The revolution’s bourgeois character finds expression in the inability of the proletariat to stay in power, in the inevitable removal of the proletariat from power by a counterrevolutionary operation of the bourgeoisie, the rural landowners, the petty bourgeoisie, and the greater part of the peasantry. It may be that in the end, after the proletariat is overthrown, the republic will disappear and be followed by the long rule of a highly restrained constitutional monarchy. It may very well be. But the relations of classes in Russia are now such that the path to even a moderate monarchical constitution leads through revolutionary action and the dictatorship of a republican proletariat.

Shortly before writing this, in an address to a Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, she made the following remarks:

‘I find that it is a poor leader and a pitiful army that only goes into battle when victory is already in the bag. To the contrary, not only do I not mean to promise the Russian proletariat a sequence of certain victories; I think, rather, that if the working class, being faithful to its historical duty, continues to grow and execute its tactics of struggle consistent with the unfolding contradictions and the ever-broader horizons of the revolution, then it could wind up in quite complicated and difficult circumstances. . . . But I think that the Russian

proletariat must have the courage and resolve to face everything prepared for it by historical developments, that it should, if it has to, even at the cost of sacrifices, play the role of the vanguard in this revolution in relation to the global army of the proletariat, the vanguard that discloses new contradictions, new tasks, and new paths for class struggle, as the French proletariat did in the nineteenth century.

She did not shy away from acknowledging the implications of this argument:

‘Revolution in this conception would bring the proletariat losses as well as victories. Yet by no other road can the entire international proletariat march to its

final victory. We must propose the socialist revolution not as a sudden leap, finished in twenty-four hours, but as a historical period, perhaps long, of turbulent class struggle, with breaks both brief and extended’.

This was a remarkable expression of revolutionary realism. Luxemburg was fully aware that even a democratic republic under the control of the working class—which is how she as well as Marx understood “the dictatorship of the proletariat”—was bound to be forced from power in the absence of an international revolution, especially in a country where the working class constituted a minority. And yet, even though the revolution would therefore have “failed” from at least one point of

view, it would have produced important social transformations, providing the intellectual sediment from which a future uprooting of capitalism could arise.

In short, Luxemburg did not think that it made sense to sacrifice democracy for the sake of staying in power, since the political form required to achieve the transition to socialism was “thoroughgoing democracy.” If a nondemocratic regime stayed in power, the transition to socialism would become impossible, since the working class would be left without the means and training to exercise power on its own behalf. Yet on the other hand, if a proletarian democracy existed even for a brief period of time, it could help inspire a later transition to socialism. □□□

TRADITION CONTINUES

Denying Drinking Water to Dalits

Ambika Aiyadurai

ON THE EVE OF INDIA'S 75th Independence Day, newspapers carried the news of a nine-year-old Dalit boy's death, who was allegedly beaten up by his school teacher for drinking water from a pot meant for the teacher (an upper caste). The teacher has been arrested and booked for murder and under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Dalit narratives, autobiographies, and testimonies often carry painful memories of their experience of the lack of access to water and water sources. One should not assume that these are matters of the past. Even today, the water narratives of Dalits are informed by caste. Caste has been a prominent, almost inherent factor in water usage in India. The severity of the restrictions on water informed Dalit notions of themselves as human beings and their relationship with water and other natural resources.

In a 2015 article published in the *Journal of Comparative Economics*, Bros and Couttenier highlight that murders against the ‘ex-untouchables’ are related to the way water is distributed. Titled *Untouchability, homicides and water access*, the article examines the case of ‘untouchability’ rules in India that forbid sharing of water with the ‘lower’ castes.

The report says that homicide rates of ‘lower’ caste members at the district level are significantly correlated with the public access to water, showing that access to water, ‘untouchability’ norms and violence is closely interlinked.

Several stories have been reported of Dalits being beaten up, assaulted and killed because they attempted to collect or drink water.

Stalin's 2007 documentary *India Untouched: Stories of a People Apart* shows a school in Gujarat where children knew where they can have

water and where they cannot. For Dalit children, memories of water are of deprivation and inaccessibility to water sources. Many still live in a state of alienation, with painful memories of punishment.

Images of ‘caste-ridden’ water, long journeys in search for water, and lack of access to clean water are plenty in Dalit writings. In the eyes of the ‘upper caste’, water encompasses cleanliness, spiritual well-being, an object of worship, holy sanctity, religious rituals, and that which washes away impurities and pollutants. Such core beliefs and practices keep Dalits out of bounds of water sources and their systems.

Water, for Dalits, is not a crest of life, but constant pain and segregation. For Dalits, water is not a natural beauty, the nectar of life or a life-nurturing agent, but a ‘caste burden’. Prominent Tamil Dalit playwright, K.A. Gunasekaran, in his biography *Scar* writes: “If thirsty, we would kneel down and drink water from the Thovur canal. We did not know if the right of access to the canal water was reserved for any

particular caste. If it was upper caste water, then we would be tied up and beaten for drinking it. So, we just drank quickly and ran away immediately. In the villages... even inert water bodies threaten us in the name of 'caste'".

Water, therefore, is the marker of caste society, says Mukul Sharma, author of the book 'Nature and Caste'. One of the chapters is titled Dalit Memories and Water Rights where he notes that in some regions, people are broadly divided into two groups:

Pani chalne jati (castes from whom drinking water can be accepted)

Pani na chalne jati (castes from whom drinking water cannot be accepted)

There have been touching narratives and struggles on water that shaped B R Ambedkar. Ambedkar's hardships and deprivation of drinking water began as a child. One summer, he and his brother set out to meet their father. As their father did not receive their letter, he did not turn up at the railway station. After waiting for long hours, they persuaded the station master to get them a bullock cart and started for Goregaon.

Soon the cartman came to know that the well-dressed boys were 'untouchables', and he threw them out

on the road. He felt they had polluted his wooden cart and destroyed the purity of his domestic animals. From the evening till midnight the boys travelled with their mouths parched with thirst, but nowhere could they get drinking water on the way. Every time people either pointed to the filthy water or asked them to go away. This was the first rude shock to the young Ambedkar. That day he knew that he belonged to an 'untouchable' family, degraded to drink and eat filthy things.

The Mahad Satyagraha in 1927 was one of the defining moments in Ambedkar's political thought and action. He launched a satyagraha to assert their rights to use water in public places. The site was located in the Kolaba district of Bombay Presidency. Mahad town had a population of 7,000-8,000, of which around 400 were 'untouchables'. The Chawdar tank was an old public tank owned by the municipality. This was the only public tank from which an outsider could get water, though the 'untouchables' were barred from fetching water.

In 1923, the Bombay Legislative Council passed a resolution that the 'untouchables' be allowed to use all public water places, wells, and dharmashalas. On March 29, (close to a century earlier), the 'untouch-

ables' for the first time drank water from that tank. The centrality of water for Dalits, and the abuse and misuse of public water bodies, became a converging point for democratic agrarianism.

In 21st century India, one of the prevailing forms of 'untouchability' practices and discrimination is the denial of drinking water to Dalits. A vast majority of Dalits depend on the goodwill of the 'upper caste' community members for access to water from public wells. This applies to natural resources, food, land, and water.

According to Ambedkar, all aspects of people's relationship with the environment, whether water, land, or farms, was necessarily mediated through the ties of caste. Even the man-made environment like schools, offices, houses, streets and subways is no different. These places continue to be used for caste oppression. For Ambedkar, nature was shaped by caste. Water, for instance, had a definite caste, as it became 'polluted' as soon as a Dalit touched it.

The death of the Dalit boy recently is a cruel reminder that water still has a caste in today's India. □□ [Ambika Aiyadurai is an assistant professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar. She teaches Politics of the Environment.]

(Courtesy : The Wire)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Spice Diplomacy

Bishaldeep Kakati
Bagmita Borthakur

ANCIENT INDIAN TEXTS OFTEN refer food as the ultimate healer and curer which can be understood by a popular quote from the Indian ancient texts, "aushadha-mucchyathe-sarvam". The land of India since time immemorial has always been known for its vivid cuisines, which is accompanied by

native Indian spices. The spices of India are so popular, that it also has a history of trading with civilisations of ancient China and Rome. The Indian spices, even till date, have been internationally recognised for its medicinal value, aroma, taste and texture. According to the list of notable spices, prepared by the ISO,

India alone produces 75 out of the total 109 varieties of recognised spices.

The popularity of the Indian spices globally, has thereby enhanced the Indian spice industry and data shows that the Indian spice industry is a big boost to the Indian economy as well. According to data reported, in the financial year 2020, spices worth over 3.62 Billion USD was exported by India. In fact, between the period from April 2020 and March 2021, an export value of spices worth 4 Billion USD was achieved by India. Further, from the

official sources of Indian Brand Equity Formation, it was known that a whopping 1.08 billion KG of different spices was exported by India, during the year 2017-18. Along with it, report on spices market (2021-26) by Industry ARC foresees the continuing growth of the spice market with a 4.80% CAGR between the period from 2019-25.

In fact in the global scenario, India occupies the top spot in terms of export of chilly, cumin, and turmeric. The China and the US formed the major markets for India's spices, for the financial year 2022. On one hand, China is heavily dependent on India for import of chilly, cumin and mint products, and on the other hand, US relies heavily on India for imports of curry powder and pastes, spice oils, and oleoresins. Further India also exports turmeric and ginger to Bangladesh, and countries like UAE and Saudi Arabia import small cardamom from India. And the conspicuous thing is that these countries in an amalgamated way constitute 50% of the export of the Indian Spice Market.

The encouraging scenario behind the growth of the India's Spice Market is mainly because of the various steps that have been implemented by the Government. The Government has focused on value addition, quality improvement and branding. The government through Spices Board has laid importance on infrastructure development for quality evaluation, research and development and has also encouraged India's spices to be apart of the global trading market via participation in international fairs and have also set up Spice Parks or the benefit of producers and exporters. Laboratories have already been set up in various cities like Cochin, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Guntur, and Tuticorin for the purpose of equality evaluation. These steps have

indeed further strengthened the spice industry of India to capture the global market. The growth of India's spice industry has no doubt been a big benefit for India's growing economy but it's time the policymakers think of taking India's spice market to the next level by enhancing diplomacy and foreign relations with countries across the globe through it.

For one thing food and cuisines have played a cardinal role in enhancing diplomacy. In the book, *The Art of Diplomacy*, Francois de Callieres rightly pointed, "the natural effect of good eating and drinking is the inauguration of friendships and the creation of familiarity, and when people are a trifle warmed by wine they often disclose secrets of importance". Added to this, French Diplomat, Talleyrand famously told Napoleon, "Give me a good chef, and I will give you good treaties". The former US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton in terms of developing diplomacy through food once quoted "Showcasing favourite cuisines, ceremonies and values is an often overlooked and powerful tool of diplomacy". These statements are brought in to further justify the fact that food can be a strong instrument to develop diplomacy.

Speaking of food, Indian cuisines are popular all over the world and one of the reasons behind it is the addition of the spices to these cuisines that form an essential part of it. Most countries also have Indian restaurants, and Indian inhabitants residing in western countries as well as the global citizens have all shown their interest in the Indian cuisines. This brings forth the fact that Indian spices that add flavour to the Indian cuisines can definitely be used as a diplomatic tool to enhance International relations, as developed countries like US and China are already major exporters of Indian Spices. In

this context, it is also necessary to bring in the statement that was given by Australian Diplomat, Lachlan Strahan. Mr Strahan once told, "Food provides the naturally convivial setting for interaction between Australia and India and lays the base for a deeper relationship". Therefore this also forwards a duty for the Indian chefs to show their creativity in coming up with cuisines that might be globally accepted with the proper usage of Indian spices, thereby enhancing diplomacy. As such, more popular the Indian cuisines become, the more vibrant Indian spices shall be, leading to creation of strong foreign relations.

Furthermore, the West has also focused constantly on the importance of Indian Spices as the cure for many ailments. This is because Indian spices also contain many medicinal properties which is already known and more detail research on it may also lead to knowing of many other antibiotic and medicinal properties. This if done properly can further increase the demand of the Indian Spices and thereby enhance the spice market. In reality the benefit of Indian spices is manifold as it is not only leading to the economic growth of the country but also enhancing the foreign diplomacy with its increasing demand because of its aroma, texture and medicinal properties.

To be precise, the strategic importance of the Spice industry of India, can be simply understood by the statement given by Pushkar Mukeshwar, CEO/Founder of Drip Capital. He commented, "Another industry trend India can capitalise on is emphasising the medical properties and potential health benefits that spices like turmeric, ginger, cinnamon etc can offer. Identifying countries with an increasing influence of Ayurveda and natural remedies will reveal new opportunities for Indian spice exporters." □□□

LETTERS

Eviction and Rehabilitation

The government is forcibly snatching the land of poor Dalits and tribals from across the country and selling them to a handful of capitalists, and continues to vandalise the settlements by bulldozers like a storm.

On one hand the government is pretending to be the well-wisher of the poor and labourers, on other hand is celebrating destruction of livelihood and housing. These demolition/eviction drives are being fuelled with the communal agenda by creating an environment of hate in the name of encroachments in Delhi and thus trying to break the unity of the working class.

From the on-set of COVID-19 pandemic to till date, more than 6 lakh people have been evicted from their homes and around 1.6 crore of people are now faced with the threat and uncertainty of being displaced.

There is a growing trend of dispensing “justice” using bulldozers rather than the procedure established by law. The Delhi Development Authority announced eviction of 63 lakh houses in Delhi-NCR however there was not a single word about rehabilitation.

Additionally, of the 50,000 labourers in the informal sector, there is no statutory provision, nor planning for their housing by the government, while in Delhi, 28,000 houses are lying vacant. Ground realities also contradicts the claim that under the Pradhan Mantri Awaaz Yojana about 123 lakh houses have been sanctioned till March, 2022. The Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) Policy 2015 guarantees rehabilitation to the residents of the 676 recognised slums; however it is silent on the hundreds of slums/bastis that have not even been surveyed. Similar situations prevails in many other states such as Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu.

People from Gyaspur Basti, Khori Gaon Faridabad, Haryana, Ghaziabad, Agra, Dhobi Ghat Camp, Kasturba Nagar, Bela Ghat etc. have gathered who have faced forced eviction and demolition, despite having Delhi High Court stay order in some cases. These demolitions/evictions have violated the many “alternative shelter” provisions that both the executive and judiciary have guaranteed to the urban poor and inconsistent with the rights to life, livelihood and dignity” of the affected people.

While the unemployment in the country is rising day by day, hawkers, street vendors, waste segregation & sanitation workers are being evicted from their place of work. The government itself is not allowing the law made to protect the work of the labourers. Report by the National Crime Research Bureau (NCRB), “Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India”, shows that daily wage earners remained the largest profession-wise group among suicide victims in 2021, accounting for one in four of the recorded 1,64,033 suicide victims.

Those organisations or activists who raise their voice are being put in jail by putting false cases on them. Neither survey nor relocation nor certificate allotment, only deprivation of livelihood and consequently to the deprivation of life.

Nirmal Gorana Agni, Delhi Lula Has Won

He has defeated incumbent Jair Bolsonaro to become the next president of Brazil.

This election is the world’s most significant of 2022—and it is hard to overstate how fraught with danger the process has been. Bolsonaro and his supporters were relentless in their assault on the right to vote, from voter suppression to outright violence.

Days before the elections, Roberto Jefferson, a former federal deputy and self-professed personal friend of Bolsonaro, threw grenades and open fired on police claiming that he would

“not surrender” to the tyranny of Brazil’s Supreme Court. Congresswoman Carla Zambelli, also a Bolsonaro ally, pulled a gun in central São Paulo down the street from the Lula rally the day before polling day.

On election day, reports of federal highway police blocking roads and conducting unwarranted vehicle searches in Lula’s bases of support areas across Brazil were heard—yet the Chief Justice of Brazil’s Supreme Electoral Court declined to take any substantive action.

It is no surprise then that some of Lula’s first words after the victory were, “We didn’t just defeat a candidate and we defeated the machinery of the Brazilian state.”

That is why the Progressive International was in Brazil. For more than a year, the world has been wary of a coup in Brazil as Bolsonaro repeatedly indicated that he would not accept a loss. With Brazilian democracy itself on the line, Brazil’s largest trade union federation and PI member, the CUT, invited the PI to bring the eyes of the world to the election and help defend democracy.

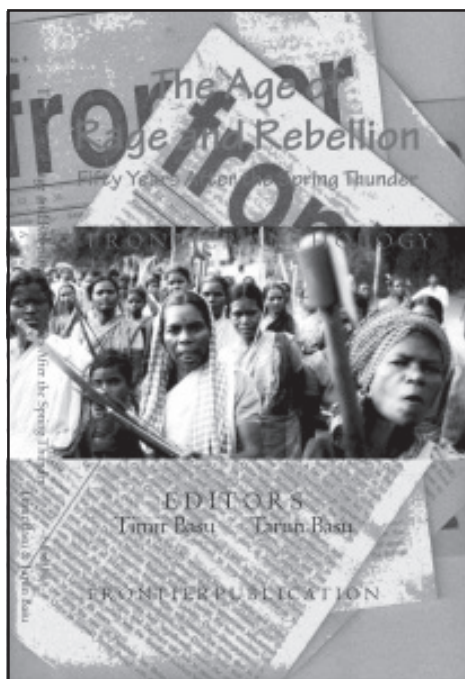
This victory is historic. This election result is a demonstration of the determination of progressive forces in Brazil to reclaim their democracy against all odds. And forces of the right world over—corporations, big polluters, and the imperialist interests that helped unseat Lula during his last presidency—should be afraid.

In his speech as president-elect, Lula immediately championed urgent action against the climate emergency, indigenous justice, and internationalism. “Brazil and the planet need a living Amazon; a standing tree is worth more than tons of illegally extracted timber, a river of clean water is worth more than all the gold extracted at the cost of mercury that kills the fauna and puts human life at risk...When an Indigenous child dies because of the greed of predators, a part of humanity dies with it.”

Aline, Progressive International

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