

# frontier

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## *No Talks, No Peace*

**A**S THE G-20 LEADERS ENDORSED NARENDRA MODI'S STATEMENT in the context of Russia-Ukraine conflict that "today's era must not be of war" at the just concluded Bali summit in Indonesia the saffronites and their media backers are jubilant enough to project it as a grand diplomatic success of India. They are reading too much between the lines. Modi made this observation while talking to Putin at the sidelines of the SCO meeting in Uzbekistan in September. America and Europe found in it a little bit of anti-Russia stance of India and so they highlighted it through their world-wide propaganda machines. Peace will not return to war-torn Ukraine because of Modi's tight-rope walking in international politics. This war is not going to end soon unless Biden asks his proxy Zelensky to halt and stop supply of sophisticated arms. The Bali declaration condemned war as it was causing immense human suffering and constraining growth, increasing inflation everywhere, disrupting global supply chains, heightening energy and food insecurity and endangering financial stability across the globe. That was all. No firm appeal for peace talks!

Right now both Russia and Ukraine are in no mood of negotiations. In truth Ukraine is more adamant than Russia because Zelensky and his Generals think they are winning this war anyway. Zelensky is desperately trying to escalate tensions and drag NATO into war directly as his troops would fire a Soviet-era missile on Poland, a member of NATO, killing two people and blame it on Russia for the misdeed. But Poland finally made it clear that it was not fired by Russia. Ukraine did it to show the world that Moscow was now attacking NATO. Quite expectedly for Zelensky it backfired.

The hard fact is that Biden, of late, has softened his anti-Russia rhetoric, particularly after winning the mid-term poll. And European Union doesn't want another war on their soil. Zelensky apprehends that western military assistance is likely to dwindle in this winter which is already taking its toll in Ukraine in a big way. More and more people are without electricity and water—some parts of Ukraine are living hell. So Zelensky is frantically trying to involve NATO in this war. He wants NATO forces on Russian territory. As a result both Russia and Ukraine are far from negotiations. Despite euphoria at the G-20 conclave, at the end what will decide the early prospect of peace initiatives between Russia and Ukraine, is shifting position in the battlefield. Also, winter will dictate both sides' strategic calculus.

Russia and Ukraine have made several public statements apparently to re-

engage in dialogue, blaming one another for stalling a negotiated settlement after nearly nine months of bloody fighting. With Russian retreat in some regions, earlier occupied by Putin's army, Ukraine will seek to achieve more territorial gains before agreeing to head to the negotiating table. And Russia after losing so many combat soldiers and weapons is unlikely to go empty-handed. If anything, the Kremlin strategists are relying more on the impact of winter on the allies of Ukraine, NATO countries to be precise. As the fracture in NATO is widening with popular unrest erupting in a number of European countries due to high inflation and energy crisis Western military 'aid' to Kyiv will not be as robust as it was four or five months ago.

Zelensky had made a clear departure from a softer position

adopted in March when he had demanded Russian troops to withdraw to the pre-February invasion borders. But after the annexation of four regions by Russia, he is asking the Russians to pull out from the whole of the country---Crimea and eastern Donbas included. After Biden's victory in Senate, US officials are talking in multiple voices, indirectly urging Ukraine to signal an openness towards talks.

It's too soon to speak about peace as both sides at this stage have too much to gain or lose. Zelensky is still adamant because more than 85 percent of Ukrainians insist their men in uniform should continue fighting rather than negotiating, a recent survey indicated. Putin may be internationally isolated but in his country he commands majority support in continuing the war until Moscow's de-

clared objectives are fulfilled. Germans once tasted the depth of Russian nationalism and 'winter ordeal'; now Ukrainians are feeling the pinch. The tragedy of Napoleon the great is not a forgotten chapter!

As temperatures fall more people will flee Ukraine, putting pressure on Europe. The economic and energy crisis will worsen further should Russia weaponise gas flow to Europe or threaten to sabotage underwater cables and pipeline connection. Russia is banking more on a political rather than military strategy. So far there is no possibility of a revolt or coup against Zelensky though civilians are paying the price. At one point Zelensky may go down in history as the worst enemy of his own people, notwithstanding his bold resistance against Russian aggression. □□□

18-11-2022

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## COMMENT

### EWS Reservation

ON NOVEMBER 7, THE SUPREME Court decided to enforce the 103rd Amendment, which grants 10 percent reservation to some communities who are poor to uplift their social status. According to recently published data on November 2, 2022, by Sanyukta Kanwal, 45 million women and 38 million men still live in poverty in India. Can this EWS exercise lift these people from abject poverty? The answer is simply 'no'. The upper caste poor will remain poor despite this much publicised 'Reservation' verdict.

Therefore, what is the basis for creating a supernumerary category of the "poor", when existing economic marginalisation is massive and does not include the generational effects of caste, but class deprivation?

Can the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) reservation, remove

poverty in India? Who can claim to be poor, and who cannot?

What is the fate of those millions who live on the streets—migrants, manual scavengers, destitute, and the poor who belong to no citizen's land? Instead of bringing into effect robust economic policies and development to counter unemployment and poverty, the EWS quota satisfies the whims of savarnas and political parties to reserve reservations according to their taste buds and preferences. Let the poor fight the poor! The reality is that too many job seekers are chasing too few jobs.

The EWS does not and cannot be said to be affirmative action for removing economic inequality and deprivation because improving poverty indexes requires attending to festering economic policies and not infesting the reservation discourse with generalised marginality.

The EWS reservation is a class-selective favouritism granted by the present government to these sections.

It is only an "Electoral Working Scheme", and a vote bank mechanism for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to satisfy and satiate some sections of the society who are neither so rich nor can claim to be Dalits, Adivasis and OBCs to get reservations. This section constitutes the poor upper castes who, despite being poor, have the cultural and political power to re-form reservation in their favour if not remove it.

This means that now there is a paradigm shift in the understanding of reservation which Ambedkar envisaged for Dalits, the downtrodden amongst the downtrodden who are considered the untouchables or bahishkrit (outcastes) of Hindu society and who silently continue to suffer caste violence at the hands of these upper-caste sections of the society despite a significant number of Dalit representation in Parliament and state assemblies.

This shift signals the protection of jobs, education and representation on the basis of economic marginalisation and not caste.

Categorically EWS reservation is then an attempt to “Ending Weaker Section” reservation by empowering upper-castes to gain social privilege through the same channel of protection and representation called reservation for the Dalits and minorities. The Hindu Right has been campaigning for the upper caste weaker section reservation scheme for long and now they are successful. And BJP is going to reap electoral gains in the coming parliamentary polls in 2024.

The challenge of protecting the idea behind the “reservation” started by B R Ambedkar is not new today. It is inevitable that in the historical periods to come, it will be under further attack by forces against this constitutional protection extended to the Dalits and minorities. In truth

the ruling BJP is systematically destroying the Constitution—this is part of their hidden agenda.

For one thing the EWS reservation threatens the very idea of this affirmative action and social justice as Constitutional protection granted by law to the victims of caste Hindu society on whose sweat and labour upper caste elites lead their lives.

The EWS quota challenges and threatens the reservation mandate for the historically oppressed by violating the basic tenets of discrimination when it extends its ambit to include the same provision for its caste discriminators.

The hard fact is that Indian parliamentary politics these days basically revolves around reservation and hate speech. In the absence of mass mobilisation against huge unemployment, retrenchment, price rise and runaway inflation ordinary wage earners in every sector of the

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economy find it increasingly difficult to live a dignified life. No political party is serious about hardships people are facing daily—even left parties have stopped organising masses on class lines; they too dance to the tune of caste-lords. □□□

[Contributed]

### NOTE

## Yatra and Congress

*Ram Puniyani writes:*

**T**HE HUMONGOUS SUCCESS of Bharat Jodo Yatra has brought forth many a dormant issue of Indian society. While its title does hint to combat social divisions created along religious lines during last three decades, core issues of Indian society have come to fore. The problems of farmers, youth, rising prices, the worsening plight of Adivasis, the insecurity and other problems of women are being well articulated during this spectacle. This is visible not only in the statements of its leaders of Yatra but also through those who are joining the Yatra with great enthusiasm and hope.

Indian society witnessed the divisive issues, emotive issues and the escalating religious violence along

with decline in the conditions of the average, poor and marginalised sections of society. To large number of people a sense of despondency is giving way to some sense of hope and optimism.

At electoral level the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has already made unshakable place in Indian political system. Apart from the rightward shift towards Hindu nationalism engineered by RSS combine, BJP enhanced its political clout by winning over opportunist politicians through money, muscle power and use of ED in particular. It appeared as if this party is invincible.

Congress, the other major National party, was reduced to a emaciated machine, where many of its leaders, not deep set in secularism

and values of Indian Constitution started leaving it. They thought that their political prospects will be better in other parties, particularly BJP which offered them generous fodder.

The Congress party which was going through ideological and organisational decline seems to have got a new lease of life and vibrancy. It now seems to have all the potential to take up the newer situation. Question is: can it take challenges head on to restore its place in the National life?

All in all the phenomenon of democratisation and inclusive politics was struggling to march from formal to substantive equality. But there were many internal flaws and external forces, which started impacting on the national polity. Internally the Grand old party’s ideological training wing left a lot to be desired. Many entrants to the party did so for sake the of power and pelf.

The absence of land reforms and

persistence of pre modern ideology was well exploited by Religious right wing. The Hindu nationalists, had prepared the ground not only ideologically enhancing the conservative, orthodox and retrograde views, they also banked on the religiosity of the society to bring forth the identity issues like Ram Temple and Cow for example. The solid strength of RSS

is the large and committed workers, fully indoctrinated in the view of history and ideology which not only sees democracy, secularism as Western concepts but also glorifies the past where values of Manusmriti ruled.

No doubt the Yatra is doing a miraculous job where the leadership of the party can understand the

needs of the country's average people and not just the Corporate, who have the access to centres of power all the time. The present Yatra also reminds one of extensive 'third class compartment' travels of Mahatma Gandhi which helped him grasp the pulse of the Country. Will this Yatra fulfil such a mission in current times is a million rupee question. □□□

#### FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

## Colonialism and Indian Indenture ship during 19th Century

*Chaman Lal*

**I**N EUROPE, WHILE FRANCE under the Jacobins as First republic abolished slavery as early as in 1794, later reinstated by Napoleon in 1804, but finally abolished in 1848; Britain did it in 1834/38, USA under Abraham Lincoln abolished it in 1863; in Tibet, slavery could be abolished only after Dalai Lama left and Chinese Communist Government abolished it after 1949, ironically Arab countries are the last to abolish slavery, thus Saudi Arabia, Oman, Niger, UAE etc. abolished slavery only in sixties and Mauritania is the last country to abolish slavery as late as in 1981. Even if there could be a record of Black/African arrival in different countries, it is doubtful that they will ever be willing to 'celebrate' their 'arrival' as 'slaves'!

Is the Indian arrival in these countries as 'indentured labour' during 1834-1923, an occasion for 'celebration'? The conditions of 'indentured labour' in most of these countries were more like that of semi-slavery and Indian descent people everywhere went through most cruel sufferings at the hands of sugar planters and colonial authorities of the time.

#### **Emancipation and Indentureship**

As the emancipation act was pro-

mulgated from August 1, 1834, giving six years of a time called 'apprenticeship', meaning transition period for clear emancipation from slavery. On August 1, 1834 Governor of Trinidad addressed few elderly Africans to mark the occasion at Government house, there were slogans raising—'no six years, no six years' and within four years, Trinidad became, in fact, the first British colony to be completely emancipated from slavery, other colonies followed. Although as per Trinidad historian Bridget Brereton, none of the 20,656 slaves emancipated, was given any compensation to start new life, whereas slave owners were given massive state funding.

As the emancipation act came into existence and thousands of slaves of African descent became free, large numbers of them refused to work at their ex-masters, mostly sugar planters, in many countries, colonised by British, French, Dutch and Spain and Portugal. In Caribbean region itself, Trinidad, Demerara (part of Guyana now), Jamaica etc were British colonies, French Guyana, Martinique, Guadalupe etc were French colonies, Dutch Guiana, now Suriname were Dutch colonies—all having sugar planters, now facing

the lack of labour. Under the circumstances, India being a huge British colony with immense population, European colonialists looked towards Indian labour, then given name of 'Indentured labour'.

British colonial Government in India made certain rules called Colonial Emigration Acts V and XXXII of 1837 regarding 'indentured' conditions. Five years was the minimum term of indentured labour, after which a labourer could return to India at his or her own expense. To earn a return ticket, he or she was to perform ten years indentured labour. Regulations differed somewhat in different countries. Though on paper some safeguards were created, in practice these were never followed, the real conditions of the indentured labourers were just close to the conditions of ex slaves. The masters and their agents used to treat them in most cruel manner, beating-thrashing in blue for little things, raping their women, making women work in most advanced pregnancies, sometime births taking place on work sites, making women work even if the new born or grown child died same morning.

#### **Suicides**

Because of these cruelties, indentured labourers in Mauritius used to commit suicide from a particular hillock, which got the name of 'suicide hill', now turned into a monument. Hundreds of indentured Indian labour committed suicide by jumping down from this hill during

the period, when indentured labour act was in force. The condition was no better in Fiji, though it may have been slightly less cruel in Caribbean countries. The first emigration from British India started to Mauritius as early as 1834, immediately after the abolition of slavery act was promulgated on August 1, 1834.

#### **Mauritius**

First ship Atlas from Calcutta, brought Indian labour to the shores of Mauritius on November 2, 1834. And till 1923, even after the indentured labour system was abolished from 1920 onwards, Mauritius received the maximum number of Indian indentured labour from the ports of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. A total of 453,063 Indians landed in Mauritius, during 1834-1923, maximum in any part of the world.

The second largest contingent of Indian indentured labour went to now called Guyana from 1838 to 1916. First ship Hesperus with Indian labour arrived in Demerara on May 5, 1838 and total of 238,909 Indians arrived in ships. Trinidad & Tobago was the third country to receive large numbers of Indian labour from May 30, 1845 onwards and here 147,596 Indians came as per Sat Balkaran Singh. First ship to arrive in Trinidad was Fatel Razack from Calcutta, a total of 154 ships undertook 320 voyages from Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, to bring Indian indentured labour up to 1917. Out of these only 20 per cent or so, went back to India after indentured system was abolished.

#### **South Africa and other countries**

South Africa also started receiving Indian labour, mostly Muslims from Gujarat 1860 onwards. Here the first ship Truro with Indian labour arrived from Madras on 16th November 1860. South Africa received 152,184 Indian labourers in indentured act period. French and Dutch

colonisers also made agreements with British Indian Government to recruit Indian indentured labour with similar agreements as issued by British colonisers. Thus French colonialists recruited Indian indentured labour for French Guyana, Martinique, Guadelupe etc. Dutch colonisers got Indian indentured labour for Dutch Guyana, now named Suriname from 1873, the first ship Lala Rookh from India arrived here on 5th June 1873 and a total of 34,304 Indians arrived here till 1916.

#### **Fiji**

Fiji under British regime was the last to recruit Indian indentured labour, where the first ship Leonidas arrived on 14th May 1879 and it got 60,995 Indians till 1917. Other countries to receive Indian indentured labour in this period were, Jamaica-36,412, East Africa, including Kenya and Uganda-32000, mostly Sikhs from Punjab, for building Uganda-Kenya rail link; Reunion-26,507, Seychilles-6315, St Vincent-2472, St Kitts-337, St Lucia-4350, Grenada 3200 etc. A total of nearly 1.2 million or 12 lakh Indians travelled to different parts of the world during this period. In all countries, Indian indentured labour went through hell, a lot of sufferings and Indian newspapers reported about these cruelties on Indian labour.

#### **Role of Mahatma Gandhi**

Since Mahatma Gandhi was invited in South Africa as a lawyer to defend the rights of Indian businessmen there, the other countries also came into focus. In 1909, Mahatma Gandhi spent few days in Mauritius on his way back to India through sea journey. Dr Mani Lal, a young advocate, who was later, married to the daughter of Dr Mehta, a close friend of Mahatma Gandhi, was sent to Mauritius in 1907. Dr Mani Lal started a paper, Hindustani, from Mauritius in Gujarati and English, Hindi replaced Gujarati soon. Mani Lal spent

few years till 1910 in Mauritius and defended Indians' rights. Later Dr Mani Lal played a similar role in Fiji, where he went in 1912; he was treated very harshly by British colonial authorities in Fiji and was made to leave the country in 1920.

#### **Documentation of Indentureship**

Sufferings of Indian indentured labour are well documented in the creative Hindi literature of Mauritius and Fiji. Abhimanyu Anant is most celebrated Hindi writer of Mauritius and he through his many novels like Lal Pasina (Red Sweat), the introduction of its French translation was written by French Noble Laureate Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio, depicted the horrible sufferings faced by Indian indentured labour at the hands of Sugar planters, mostly Europeans and their Indian agents, colonial police and other officials. Same way Joginder Singh Kanwal in his novels like Savera and Karvat depicted the hardships and struggles of Fiji Indian labour. Munshi Rehman Khan, writing in Hindi and Urdu, did it for Suriname Indian labour.

Unfortunately in Trinidad and

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Guyana Indian descent people lost their languages as well and their sufferings in these countries were depicted in English language much later, when their second or third generation became well versed in the language. Peter Jailall from Guyana wrote about Indian indentured labour's sufferings in his English poetry collection of recent times under the title Sacrifice-Poems on the Indian Arrival in Guyana. V S Naipaul did not focus much on Indian indentured labour's sufferings in Trinidad & Tobago, though he was born and brought up there, but had references to the sufferings in his classic autobiographical novel-A House for Mr Biswas.

In India also people like C F Andrews, who visited almost all countries, where Indian labour migrated, at the behest of Mahatma Gandhi, Benarsidas Chaturvedi, Hindi writer and journalist, Lakshman Singh, husband of celebrated Hindi writer Subhadra Kumari Chauhan and member of All India Congress Committee (AICC) wrote plays like Coolie in Hindi, basing on Indian labourers sufferings

in Fiji, the play was immediately proscribed by British authorities. Tota Ram Shandilya, who returned from Fiji, wrote My Twenty One Years in Fiji, in Hindi, which is translated in English and now an important reference book in Fiji. In these countries freedom struggles against British colonialism started, which were mostly close to Indian National Congress in India, like movement by Shiv Sagar Ramgoolam in Mauritius, who became the first Prime Minister of independent Mauritius.

#### **Cheddi Jagan**

Dr Cheddi Jagan was one of the most important organisers and leaders of freedom struggle in British Guiana as leader of People's Progressive Party, a party with Marxist ideas. His classic book-The West on Trial is study of British colonialism. In Kenya, Makhan Singh, a Communist, fought alongside Jomo Kenyatta and his other colleagues for the freedom of Kenya. Monuments of struggles by Indian indentured labourers, along with other communities are found in many countries. In Guyana, where Hesperus, first vessel from Calcutta brought 156 souls on 5th May 1838, out of 170 boarded, 14 died on the way by sickness and drowning.

#### **Walter Rodney**

There have been conflicts, rebellions in 1872, 1903 and 1912, 1913, 1924. Walter Rodney, one of the brilliant radical scholars of Guyana, depicted the conditions of Indians and other countries indentured labour emigration to Guyana in books like Lakshmi out of India, History of the Guyanese Working People. Rodney was assassinated in the young age on 13th June 1980 and Guyana national archives are now named after him. In Trinidad & Tobago, massacre of Jahazis, as the East Indian indentured labour were called, as they came on ships, took place in 1884 at the time of holy Eid.

#### **CLR James**

CLR James, the radical Marxist scholar-writer of Trinidad & Tobago had focused upon Black and East Indian indentured labour conditions in his writings and during March 1970 Black Power movement in Trinidad, there were banners and calls for Indo-African unity, though some people tried to scare Indians with rumours that Blacks would attack East Indians, to counter it Black Power movement took a massive march in Caroni sugar plantation area and home of large number of Indians, who did not join the march, but showed warm hospitality to the marchers, thus frustrating the designs of those, who wanted to turn this most progressive movement as a Black-Indian conflict.

#### **Need for Monuments**

Strangely Trinidad & Tobago has no monument in memory of Black and Indian sufferings in the country, whereas neighbouring Caribbean countries-Guyana and Suriname have a large number of monuments for both communities' sufferings in their countries. In Suriname there is a monument in memory of 16 Indians and Indonesian indentured labourers, who were martyred at sugar factory site, struggling for better wages and living conditions. At suicide hill site in Mauritius, now stands a grand monument in memory of those poor indentured labourers, who died due to the worst cruelties inflicted upon them by colonial authorities and sugar barons. In Fiji, workers struggled in February 1920, even after the abolition of indentured labour system and Fijian authorities in revengeful manner crushed workers' strike and forced Dr Mani Lal out of the country.

#### **Deliverance Day**

Struggles in these countries and pressure by the national movement in India in favour of this struggling migrated Indian labour, British Govern-

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ment had to finally abolish 'indentured labour' system in 1917, through legislation to this effect, as they had to do in case of slavery in 1834/38. Indentured system was also given lease/transition till the end of 1919 and from 1st January 1920, indentured Indian labour system came to a complete stop. So 1 January 1920 was hailed as Deliverance Day, as was end of slavery was hailed as Emancipation Day by Africans.

Irony is this that Indians in these countries never focused upon Deliverance Day, which is much more historic day of their life, particularly of present generation people of Indian descent in Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname and Fiji, than so-called Indian Arrival Day, which is the day to mark the beginning of untold sufferings, deceit, as most of Indians recruited for this scheme of indentured labour, were recruited by agents by telling all kinds of lies, like they are being taken to the countries of goldmines and they will become rich with gold, once they are there, or lies like Mauritius is a country of Ramayana character Marich, trapping innocent but poor, needy Indian rural folk into their trap of prolonged sufferings for them.

In fact the day to celebrate in these countries is 1st January uniformly as 'Deliverance Day', but what they celebrate is not their deliverance, but their semi-slavery status. And by pomp of word 'Arrival', they unwittingly give signs of the colonial mindset, as only colonialists had this pleasure of celebrating arrival in colonies, like that of Columbus, Vasco de Gama kind of Spanish colonialists, who became instruments of future colonial conquerors in the world of Africa, Asia and smaller countries of Latin/South America, Caribbean!

#### ***African-Indian relations***

Another sad part of this whole anti-

slavery and anti-indentured system movements and freedom from these, is that the integration between East (wrong term, given by colonialists) Indians and Blacks have not taken place at the level, it was desirable. Blacks and Indians both communities were brought to these far off countries by colonial masters. Technically they were free to go back to their root countries after their emancipation/deliverance, some Indians returned to their bitter experiences back home, where rather than being welcomed, they were treated with much contempt and misbehaviour due to caste system and orthodox beliefs of crossing impure 'kala pani' (black waters of the sea), so many had to get back to their indentured countries.

Blacks had a more tragic past; their connection to their roots was completely lost due to centuries' gap in between. Blacks even lost the memory of the place from where they came! Under the circumstances both communities became the naturalised citizens of these countries along with small communities of natives like Amerindians and in the process they all became nationals of new nations after freedom from colonialism.

It would have been natural for these nationals to merge and mingle with each other through inter-racial marriages, bringing into existence the new community of mixed race communities, which did not happen. Such was the cultural resistance to such efforts that first feature film 'Wan Pipel' (One People) by Pim de la Parra, made in Suriname in 1976, brings this reality into focus. In the film Hindi speaking Indian descent girl Rubia dares to fall in love with black Surinamese Roy, she is out-casted and harassed by her family, while Roy, who was in love with Dutch white girl in Holland, while studying, and was supposed to go

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back to Holland to complete his studies; as he came only to see her dying mother, decides to stay back with Rubia. Roy's father is as opposed to this relation, as are Rubia's family. After more than three decades of this film, conditions have not changed much.

#### ***La Divina Pastora***

In Trinidad & Tobago, there is a black statue in Siparia town Catholic church, which is claimed as 'Divina Pastora' by Catholics and they believe the statue coming from neighbouring Venezuela, but Hindus claim here it to be 'Siparee ki Mai', a folk image, which later day Hindu religious fundamentalists distorted it to as 'Durga' or 'Kali'! Chinese Buddhists claim it to be Chinese girl statue, while some believe in the myth of Kampuchean priests bringing it from Kampuchea! The good part of it is that though the statue is part of a Church, Hindus visit the statue for worship or offerings on every Friday, with happy arrangements with Church, though some sectarian trends among Hindus in Trinidad try to whip up 'Temple' phenomenon here, like that in 'Ayodhya-Babri Masjid' dispute in India. But they cannot whip up hysteria like India; in Trinidad & Tobago, as many Christian and Muslims priests and commoners are of Indian descent and they generally live in harmony in Trinidad.

Hindus and Christians of East Indian descent claim Jahazy revolt of 1884 in Trinidad, as part of Indian tradition and not just Muslim revolt, it is called 'Jallianwala Bagh' of Trinidad here, though the numbers of killings in state attack were nowhere near Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, where on 13th April, 1919, hundreds of people were shot dead by the notorious General Dyer's forces, while attending a peaceful protest meeting.

Interesting part of indentured

labour immigration to different countries is that in Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname and Fiji; large number of people went from east Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar, though some from Bengal and south India also went. In South Africa and East Africa, more people from Gujarat and Punjab and South India went. Later in the early twentieth century, Punjabis went as free labour to USA, Canada and UK. While only Mauritius has been able to preserve its Indian demographic and cultural structure, most of the other countries of the Indian Diaspora are now getting mixed and mingled with other Diasporas in terms of language use. Mauritius is still able to preserve Indian languages—Bhojpuri, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Urdu, where a full-fledged department of Indian languages functions in the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, as part of University of Mauritius to teach these languages, apart from Sanskrit. South Indian temples exist as much as other temples in Mauritius and Fiji.

Fiji and Suriname are able to preserve Hindi as a common language of all people of Indian descent, but other countries have mostly lost the existence of Indian languages in public life and these may be just surviving in some homes and some religious gatherings. Though large number of Indian indentured laborers returned to India after completion of their term, but more than that stayed back and now after three generations are more, they have become most prosperous in these countries.

#### ***Indian Arrival Day***

The celebration of Indian Arrival day started in these countries, after Indian descent people became prosperous and started sharing political power as part of ruling classes. Mauritius, from the very beginning had Indian descent people in political power.

After Shiv Sagar Ramgoolam, Dr. Anerood Jugannath and Dr. Naveen Chander Ramgoolam (son of Shiv Sagar Ramgoolam) are sharing power, though being in different parties. These days Pravind Jugannath son of Aniruddh Jugannath is Prime Minister since 2017. In Trinidad & Tobago, after Basdeo Pandey remained Prime Minister in 1997 period, Kamla Prasad Bissessar of Indian descent remained Prime Minister during 2010-15. These days Keith Rowley is Prime Minister. In Guyana Dr Cheddi Jagan, a Marxist of Indian descent had been most popular leader of the country, remaining Prime Minister and President for many years. Bharat Jagdeo of Indian descent, from Cheddi Jagan's People's Progressive Party (PPP) remained President of the country since last almost a dozen years and his successor is again of Indian descent, Donald Ramoutar of the same party, who won the elections held in November, 2011. Nowadays Mark Philip is Prime Minister of Guyana since 2020. In Fiji, Mahendra Chaudhary from Rohtak background family was the fourth Prime Minister of the country for short period. Suriname also had Indian descent Presidents of the country like Fred Ramdutt Misier during 1982-88 and Ramsewak Shankar during 1988-90. Jules Ajodhia had been Vice President during 1991 and 2000-2005, while Pretaap Radhakishun remained Vice President during 1996-2000, Ramdin Sarjue remained Vice President during 2005-2010. Surinamese Vice- President is equal to Prime Minister's position and chairs the Cabinet meetings; the post was created after the abolition of Prime Minister's post in 1987. Pretaap Radhakaishun remained Prime Minister of Suriname, the only Indian descent person to hold the post, for a brief period during 1986-87. However it was in Jaggernath Lachmon, a former speaker of National Assem-



bly or Parliament with 50 members, Suriname had a strong leader of Indian descent people, whose statue finds a pride place in Independent square of Paramaribo, capital of Suriname. New Zealand had its Governor General Anand Satyanand from Indo-Fijian background. There have been ministers in many countries from Indian descent people in South Africa, Malaysia, Singapore, Tanzania, Zambia etc.

Since Indian descent people after becoming prosperous and part of ruling classes, holding political power, it has created a sense of suspicion in other communities in these countries, particularly when this event of Indian arrival is not marked as somber event and celebrated with certain sobriety, with remembrance of the past sufferings gone through by Indian indentured labour in these place, a century or more ago. At most of the places the event is celebrated with pomp and

show, like a happy festival, which is supported by Indian Government official as part of their official diplomatic duties in many ways. When Africans celebrate Emancipation day, they bring into focus the horrible days of slavery through films, exhibitions, lectures, songs and make it an event to remember their ancestors for their sacrifices for the prosperity of present generation; but Indian arrival day rarely focuses upon the sufferings gone through by their ancestors, except in some seminar papers; sadly present generation does not have much knowledge about these suffering of their ancestors, they are too much engrossed in the pleasures of consumerism brought by the prosperity.

It is only after Emancipation and freedom from colonial yoke, that some of the Africans have prospered, but not all. So are with Indian descent people in these countries, some or little more of them,

than Africans have prospered in these countries, but only after Deliverance and not before. So Indian descent people in these countries need to learn from history and review their days of celebrations. It is 1st January as 'Deliverance Day', which should be celebrated in all these countries, like 'Emancipation Day'. Arrival day may be marked, like a day of penitence, by way of fasting, in memory of sufferings of those ancestors, who suffered during their Indentured labour bondage period!

[Chaman Lal is Retired Professor & Former Chairperson at the Centre of Indian Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. In 2011 he was visiting Professor at Hindi Chair in The University of the West Indies, St Augustine. Presently he is honorary advisor to Bhagat Singh Archives and Resource Centre New Delhi. A part of this article was published in Daily Trinidad Guardian of Port of Spain. □□□

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## CONFLICTING DUALISM

# Ambedkar in the Company of Everybody

*Suraj Milind Yengde*

**A**MBEDKAR WAS BRAHMINISED by being made a part of India's greatness and presented as an exemplary patriot. And he was Dalitised at the same time to ensure that his place as an untouchable remained in the archive of Indian history, while he received no further credit. In either case, it was the intention of the ruling classes to control the narrative and own the history. Brahminising and Dalitising form a space of conflated dualisms. They are separated by the logic of history and yet they are one. The 'one'—a unison of neglected human fallacies that become an absolute logic of interpretation of the other from the fragile ground of the oppressor. The juxtacondition of possibilities and pain affixed alongside

each other makes it a mandate of the people.

The two extreme possibilities of human status—one on the highest while the other is left excluded. Accretions of unmasked merits define the final destiny of every human stretched in the rigid caste sphere. The chaos over having Ambedkar in the company of everybody who stood to denounce and reject him is something strange. This includes the appropriation politics of assimilation by the Hindu right, the Hindu left, Hindu progressive and Indian liberal order. In Dalitising Ambedkar, even the socialists who failed in their deliberate attempt to absorb Ambedkar took Dalit politics into their fold after his death. If there is any figure from India's modern his-

tory that is present, alive and relevant, it is B R Ambedkar. No other historical figure has been resurrected so strongly as him. His colossal scholarship, along with his radical social and political interventions, have made him a deified rector of India's political school.

In 1919, aged twenty-eight, his first testimonial to the Southborough Commission argued for the franchise rights of all, irrespective of status or class.

Ambedkar's oeuvre continues to expand as more literature produced by him and on him hits the bookshelves every year. The pile of scholarship crediting to Ambedkar's work in non-English languages represents the largest import of Dalit cultural production. Books on Ambedkar are sold in crores over two days commemorating Ambedkar's death anniversary at Chaityabhoomi, Mumbai, or in Nagpur commemorating the day of mass conversion to

Buddhism led by Ambedkar. These bookstalls occupy an important place in the make-up of Ambedkarite gatherings. This writer's father Milind Yengde was one such book hawker who sold books on the streets at Ambedkarite gatherings.

The recent upsurge in the number of attacks on the people's constitutional rights since the Modi government's tenure from 2014 has suddenly put Ambedkar back into everyone's view. Protesters took the assault of the state on constitutional liberty as a sign of impending fascism.

The protest against the current government and other Brahminical forces could be possible while upholding the constitutional virtues deftly laid out by Ambedkar. Thus, the inevitability of Ambedkar and his political pragmatism became a weapon for the struggling masses of the country. Every ideology acknowledged Ambedkar and embraced his uncompromising radical-humanist vision. Ambedkar is difficult to fit into canon of non-Dalit ideologies. He does not parley without putting the rights of untouchables at the centre of nationalist or civil and political rights struggles. By appropriating and iconising him in the

pantheons of the Hindu right and making him a nationalist figure fighting on the side of the Hindus, the current government took the offensive against every dissenter. The Shaheen Bagh protest of 2020 partly re-appropriated Ambedkar through its symbols and literature and through the act of carrying his photographs with a collective call of 'Jai Bhim', reclaiming his constitutional legacy to rescue him from the misappropriation of the Modi government.

Despite being a deft pragmatist and a non-dogmatic democratic socialist, Ambedkar has become the most celebrated figure across the political spectrum in India in contemporary times. Everyone tends to display their admiration for his intellect but have a reserved appraisal of his political work. Therefore, to downplay his complicated and at times controversial vista, it is safe for the non-Dalit sphere to present Ambedkar as a sworn constitutionalist. Earlier, the caste-hegemonic discourse of India refused to grant the pedigree of India's Constitution to Ambedkar's scholarly toil. In some instances, it actively worked to denounce elements of Ambedkar's influence and politics. Arun Shourie, a liberal right-winger, is a case in point. His book *Worshipping False Gods* became a bone of contention over the authorship of India's Constitution and calling out Ambedkar for being in conversation with the British government and thus a collaborator of the Raj. The same was done by the dominant caste Hindu, Muslim, Sikh leaders of the Congress, however, they do not receive similar treatment as Ambedkar. Ironically, they are revered as nationalists. Many commentators who replied to Shourie's book commented that Ambedkar was now being 'elevated to the pantheon of nation leaders'. This means it was still unacceptable for the liberal and other

non-Dalit spheres to accept him as a national figure towards the end of past century.

For one thing granting the wholeness of the Constitution to Ambedkar alone eventually worked in favour of the ruling castes and class. They found an impeccable hero who would uphold the missives with all its positives and drawbacks. The propertied class found it appropriate to let their control on the assets go unquestioned for the articles protected their interests (Article 31).

The other stories of warring groups found it objectionable to accept it as their constitution. Therefore, a new movement to overthrow constitutional principles was carried forward religiously by the deployment of Adivasi youth under the tutelage of Bengali Brahmins, Bihari Kayasthas and other dominant castes.

Therefore, people now face a few complicated hurdles. One is the adherence to Ambedkar as an individual with his merits and limitations. Another is to deify him and to stop investment in critical thinking around his passionately curated oeuvre.

The one who believes in Ambedkar as an individual and in his artistry of uniting a huge, segregated mass under one banner and making them a political missile identifies with Ambedkarite-ness. So does the one who takes Ambedkarism as an eventual philosophy to develop progressive and broader hermeneutics in the construction of a thematic approach to problems. These thematic approaches rely on issue-based politics with a strong undercurrent of inaugurating an anti-caste politics towards the annihilation of caste dialectics.

Ambedkar is the most mesmerising anti-Brahminical weapon, and no other community could produce another like him. His forthrightness in calling out the callousness of Brahminical elements woven in the Indian republic was astounding. His

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## **WITH THE PASSING TIME**

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work takes shape in many forms. Aside from writing the destiny of his people, Ambedkar was also fighting to get their rights in place. For this, he chose every option available. He started off as a rights advocate in a social movement, later went on to petitioning the government as a lawyer and people's leader, then toyed

with the idea of claiming power through mass struggle and culminated in the political apparatus bargaining for more powers. After him, Dalit politics was open to be exploited. Many political parties, from the Congress to the socialists, tried to own his legacy by promoting Scheduled Caste leadership that was not

entirely attuned to his radical programmes such as a separate electorate, separate settlement and nationalisation of important sectors—land and industry being the most prominent. A firm believer in socialism, Ambedkar saw State socialism as 'essential to the rapid industrialisation of India'. □ [Courtesy: *The Print*]

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Encountering the Adivasi Question

C R Vijoy

**T**HE DISCOURSE ON THE Adivasi Question usually treads two beaten tracks; sometimes they are intertwined. The first track combines their primitive traits, distinctive culture, low levels of education and technology, anti-development world view and lack of awareness with geographic isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large, backwardness and innocence resulting in their being unfortunately left behind in civilisational progress, and becoming particularly vulnerable. Yet they are miraculously believed to come easily under the spell of extremists and anti-nationals. Put together, they constitute a stumbling block to the progress of the nation. The solution to this is their mainstreaming and co-option by assimilating and integrating them through welfare, development hand-outs, affirmative action through reservations, assorted privileges and concessions and even recognition of 'rights'. Showcasing their culture, dress, songs and dances, and arts and artefacts on important national occasions and events are now a matter of pride. These, along with infrastructure development and wealth generating development projects, both agrarian and industrial, and carbon sequestering afforestation in the regions where they dwell, will positively wean them

### \*ENCOUNTERING THE ADIVASI QUESTION: SOUTH INDIAN NARRATIVES

By P Bandhu and T G Jacob  
 Studera Press, New Delhi, 2019  
 ISBN: 978-93-85883-92-7  
 356 pp. Hardcover, Rs. 1795.00  
 [Available as e-book also]

away from their isolation in the jungles into modern civilisation, and from the vice grip of anti-nationals. This mainstream perspective of the State and the ruling class is the predominant one that is widespread across varied sections of the society.

The second track asserts that Adivasis, the first settlers in the sub-continent, have unique traditions, customs, languages, religions and knowledge. Organised in autonomous villages on their ancestral lands, they have diverse nature-dependent sustainable livelihood practices. Their communitarian mode of production resulted in relatively an egalitarian community who refuse to be assimilated into the mainstream. They resist incursion into their homelands, or withdraw into secure tracts rather than be assimilated. Their autonomous existence was tacitly recognised, and got reflected in laws, both colonial and post-colonial. Criminalised by various laws and policies of the State, they are deemed to be encroachers on their own ancestral lands. Excluded and systematically deprived and displaced from their

source of livelihood, they now constitute the most marginalised and impoverished. Their assertion of rights and resistance to oppression leads to persistent confrontation with the arms of the State. They demand the right to self-determination. This counter narrative has inched ahead getting reflected in international laws, though not as much in domestic laws.

Both these narratives are widely prevalent; the former much more powerful and wider in its reach and hold. Decisions taken and actions executed based on these perceptions then shape the Adivasi existential reality. These perspectives cut across social groups, the Adivasis included, sometimes confusingly inter-mixed. Encountering the Adivasi question requires going beyond these narratives to understand the processes that give rise to these narratives in a specific ecological and historical milieu, subject to the regional, national and global forces and their impacts on the local. It also requires outlining the complex socio-political processes where Adivasis were and are active participants. These determine the concrete living reality of their relationship with nature, with others and within themselves in their specific ecological setting at any point of time. The authors attempt precisely this in their \*book *Encountering The Adivasi Question: South Indian Narratives*, confining to a geographical region, much more than the Nilgiri Biosphere, the tri-junction of the three southern states. This book is a sequel to their earlier book of 2009, *Reflec-*

tions on the Caste Question: The Dalit Situation in South India.

The book begins by briefly exploring and examining the discourses within the written traditions, from the ancient to the colonial and post-colonial, within the context of the times. The concerns that propelled these to be written, the interests that they were intended to serve and possibly actually served, are attempted to be traced from the manner in which history actually unfolded. The possible linkages between the texts, the times, the events and the peoples are underlined as an explanation of both what was written, the people and the interests involved and how it could have played out. These provide the coordinates of the social and ideological location of Adivasis of the times.

Portraying the status of the Adivasis at the all-India level from within the frame of development indices often projected as Adivasis problems, when these are but the out-

comes of what they were and are subjected to. Even though most are marginalised, there are sections that are better-off, even well above the national average of the general population, such as the tribals of the North-East. On the other, the denotified tribals, declared inherently criminal since colonial times, are at the worst receiving end. Moving on to the southern region, from the less contacted and vanishing tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the militant uprisings in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, the more recent struggles of Karnataka and Kerala are captured. Not just as reportage of what happened, but also indicating the process that led to these outcomes. The responses of those in powers of influence ranging from the State and the political parties, particularly the different Left parties; NGOs to global capital and their international instruments are all critiqued with a view to expanding the domain of the Adivasi question.

The book then completes its cycle by reverting back to the Adivasis, to the way they organised their production and life that permeates and becomes the core force that gets expressed in culture, religion, art, language, world view and values. The authors argue that within this great tradition of civilisation lie vast meanings and constructs of life that indicate a shining path towards the future of humankind itself, and is, therefore, of great value to the conceptualisation of revolutionary change itself.

Unlike most writings on the Adivasi question, more often caricaturing the observable couched in clichés, the authors of this book put blood and breath into the body to bring alive the multifarious dimensions of Adivasis' lives through history, social relationships and the material base objectively. This adds immense value, not just in understanding the Adivasi question, but in confronting it as well. □□□

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#### AN OPEN LETTER

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## Doctors in Defence of Assange's Freedom

*Oscar Grenfell*

**D**OCTORS FOR ASSANGE, a group of more than 300 medical experts from around the world, issued an open letter on Monday to British Home Secretary Suella Braveman and US Attorney General Merrick Garland, insisting that they immediately halt the state persecution of WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange and free him unconditionally.

The doctors' organisation, which has campaigned in defence of Assange since late 2019, explains that it is now composed of psychiatrists, psychologists and other respected and highly qualified healthcare professionals from more than 35 countries. They write that

they are "deeply concerned" that the ongoing extradition of Assange from Britain to the US, and his related imprisonment in London, "threatens not only the health of Julian Assange, but also the health of our democracy."

The letter was sent in the aftermath of news that Assange had tested positive for COVID-19 on October 8.

The doctors' note: "Given his chronic lung ailment, Mr Assange may be at increased risk of serious illness resulting from Covid infection. In addition, Mr Assange's mental health is placed at further risk by the solitary confinement that he has been forced to endure since his positive Covid test."

Assange's wife Stella, who reported the positive COVID result, explained on Twitter that the response of the Belmarsh Prison authorities in London was to isolate Assange in his cell 24 hours a day.

Several days ago, Stella reported that Assange was still testing positive for the virus and was enduring his 10th day of solitary. Yesterday she tweeted the welcome news that Assange had tested negative, meaning that his full-time isolation will be ended and he will be able to again receive visitors, including his family.

As the WSWS noted when it first reported Assange's COVID infection, the exposure of the WikiLeaks publisher to the potentially deadly virus was the deliberate and predictable outcome of the actions of the British authorities.

They had rejected the warnings from 'Doctors for Assange' that the

December 4-10, 2022

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WikiLeaks founder would be at heightened risk of succumbing to COVID and the accompanying calls for his release from prison in the earliest stages of the pandemic.

As repeated COVID waves swept through Belmarsh and the British prison system as a whole, claiming dozens of lives, Assange was excluded from a prison-release programme for vulnerable, non-violent “offenders.” He has been kept in Belmarsh without charge, solely to facilitate the US extradition attempt. The District Court rejected a bail application, even as it initially blocked extradition on narrow health grounds early last year.

While Assange has tested negative, there is a growing body of evidence linking COVID infection to long-term health risks, including the heightened danger of heart attacks and strokes. A study published in the journal of the American Medical Association last year found that people who had experienced a bout of the corona virus were twice as likely as a comparable cohort to suffer from a stroke.

Assange, prior to his infection, had already suffered a minor stroke during extradition proceedings last November. In addition, COVID infection can damage the lungs, under conditions where Assange already has a protracted lung ailment. Long COVID, which studies indicate can affect anywhere from 5 to 40 percent of those who have been infected, cover a debilitating series of conditions that can involve almost every organ in the body.

Whatever the outcome of his COVID infection, as the doctors note, Assange’s health and his very life remains in imminent danger as long as he is imprisoned and the US pursues extradition.

Significantly, the doctors present not only a medical indictment, but also a strong political condemnation

of the treatment of Assange, with the two elements of his plight inextricably connected.

They write that the “threats to Mr Assange’s health are the cumulative result of extraordinarily cruel, unusual, degrading and inhuman conditions imposed on him.”

These include “more than ten years of arbitrary detention,” including his current confinement in Belmarsh, sometimes described as Britain’s Guantanamo Bay; “character assassination campaigns in the media”; “a relentless persecution that systematically violated the rule of law and due process”; “illegal surveillance in the Ecuadorian embassy,” and “being targeted in plans of the CIA to kidnap and assassinate him.”

The letter includes a sharp precis of the lawless US campaign against Assange which has involved the “firepower of at least three government agencies...including the Department of Justice overseeing the attempted prosecution, the CIA drawing up plans for kidnap and assassination, and the FBI overseeing and greenlighting computer crimes in Iceland committed by a hacker in a scheme to falsely implicate Mr Assange, as corroborated by the government of Iceland.”

The latter is a reference to Sigurdur Thordarson, a convicted Icelandic hacker and child molester, who also served as a key witness for the indictment that forms the basis of the US extradition request. Last year, Thordarson admitted that the information he provided largely consisted of lies, proffered in exchange for immunity from US prosecution.

The doctors note that Assange’s suffering has been exacerbated by the knowledge that he would never receive a fair trial in the US.

The letter cites the assessment of former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture Nils Melzer 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.

this treatment constitutes “psychological torture.” Melzer’s finding, first made in 2020, was based on rigorous medical examinations of Assange.

The doctors state that as medical experts, they have a responsibility to speak out against and oppose state torture. They conclude by calling for the recipients of the letter, the British Home Secretary and the US Attorney-General, to “urgently intervene to end the extradition process and ensure Julian Assange is promptly released.”

The letter is the latest in a series that Doctors for Assange has issued to the governments and authorities responsible for the persecution of Assange in the US, Britain and Australia, where the WikiLeaks founder was born and holds citizenship.

All previous letters, despite the credentials of their authors and the weight of their indictment, have been either blithely dismissed or simply ignored, as were Melzer’s findings of psychological torture. That response itself underscores the barely-concealed lawlessness of the US-led campaign to destroy Assange for his exposure of the war crimes of the US and its allies in Iraq and Afghanistan. □□□

[Originally published in WSWs.org]

**For Frontier Contact**

**BOI-CHITRA**

College Street Coffee House 2nd floor

## LETTERS

**6,500 Workers Died**

Imagine being so desperate for work that you left your family behind to live in a squalid camp, toiling in the desert heat for as little as \$1 an hour. Then you died, alone, and your family got nothing.

Imagine that those who treated you like a slave would rake in billions while the family you left behind spiraled down deeper into poverty.

FIFA decided to let Qatar's despot regime host the World Cup, and since then thousands of desperate and vulnerable migrant workers have reportedly died.

That's 39 modern-day slaves who died for every goal expected to be scored. More than 6,500 modern day slaves are reported to have died since Qatar was awarded the 2022 World Cup. Hundreds of thousands more still toil for as little as a dollar an hour.

FIFA is under pressure to set aside \$440 million for these workers—the same amount that will be awarded to the competing teams. Rights groups, footballers, and even some of the World Cup's top corporate sponsors are part of the push. But with less than two weeks until kick-off, we need to make this call massive to get FIFA to do the right thing. So sign now and we'll deliver your voices straight to FIFA.

Despite warnings, FIFA chose a host country well known for using forced labor and for abusing poor and desperate migrant workers. FIFA helped create this problem, and now it has to help solve it.

Getting a huge organization like FIFA to do the right thing can feel like an uphill battle. But public pressure works, especially when it starts to hurt profits. Even four of the World Cup's top corporate sponsors—Budweiser, McDonalds, Coca Cola, and Adidas—support compensating workers. And so do 84% of football fans who are likely to tune into the

matches, according to a recent poll.

Avaaz stands up for human rights and workers' rights around the world. Already in 2015 Avaaz urged Qatar to end its modern slavery ahead of the World Cup, receiving almost a million signatures. In the years since, the Qatar government has taken steps to address these issues, but more can be done!

Bieta, Nate, Christine, Miguel, Ahmed, Luis, Marta and the rest of the Avaaz team

**"... SMART AS HELL"**

On July 17, 1945, President Harry S Truman records his first impressions of Stalin in his diary.

Truman described his initial meeting with the intimidating Soviet leader as heartfelt.

"Just a few minutes before twelve," the president wrote, "I looked up from the table and Stalin was at the doorstep."

Got up and headed to meet him.

He reached out his hand and smiled. I did the same thing, we shook and sat. "

After exchanging friendships, the two began to discuss post-World War II politics in Europe. The U S was still engaged in a Pacific war against Japan, and Truman wanted to get a read on Stalin's plans for territories he now controls in Europe.

Truman told Stalin that his diplomatic style was direct and precise, an admission that Truman noticed had significantly pleased Stalin.

Truman hoped to get the Soviets to unite in the US war against Japan.

In return, Stalin wanted to impose Soviet control over some early-war annexed territories by Japan and Germany. Truman hinted that though Stalin's agenda was "dynamite" or aggressive, the U S now had the ammunition to counter the Communist leader.

Truman had refrained from briefing the Soviet leader on the Manhattan Project, which had just successfully tested the world's first atomic

bomb, but knew the new weapon strengthened his hand.

Truman referred to this secret in his journal as "a dynamite that I am not blowing right now."

After their meeting, Truman, Stalin and accompanying advisers "had lunch, talked in the community, [and] put on a real show, toasting everyone" and posed for pictures.

Truman closed his entrance for the day on a note of confidence.

"I can deal with Stalin," he wrote.

"He is honest, but smart as hell."

Stalin Society

**Losing Tropical Forest**

An aerial view shows a deforested plot of the Amazon rainforest in Manaus, Amazonas State, Brazil July 8, 2022. REUTERS/Bruno Kelly

LONDON, Sept 12 (Reuters)—Industrial-scale mining for materials such as coal, gold, and iron ore is spurring tropical deforestation, with once-impenetrable forest cleared for mines and access roads, new research shows.

In the first study to quantify the impact of industrial mining on tropical forest loss, an international team of scientists found that just four countries are largely to blame: Brazil, Indonesia, Ghana and Suriname.

Together, the four forest-rich nations accounted for roughly 80% of tropical deforestation caused by large-scale mining operations from 2000 to 2019, according to a recent study published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

While at least 70% of deforestation is done to clear land for agriculture, the scientists called out industrial mining as an emerging concern due to the growing global appetite for minerals used in so-called clean-energy technologies to combat climate change.

"The energy transition is going to require very large amounts of minerals—copper, lithium, cobalt—for decarbonised technologies," said co-author Anthony Bebbington, a geographer at Clark University in Massa-

chusetts. "We need more planning tools on the parts of governments and companies to mitigate the impacts of mining on forest loss."

Already, mines worldwide extract more than twice the amount of raw materials than they did in 2000, the study said.

For the study, the researchers studied global satellite images and data tracking forest loss alongside location information for industrial-scale mining operations from the past two decades. The study did not measure the impacts from small-scale and artisanal mining, which can also be a challenge as pollution goes unregulated.

Overall, there were 26 countries responsible for most of the world's tropical deforestation since 2000.

But around industrial mining sites, the four countries dominated. The biggest losses were in Indonesia, where coal mines on the island of Borneo have expanded to meet fuel demand from China and India.

Ghana and Suriname also showed high deforestation rates around gold and bauxite mines delivering material used in aluminum and other products. In Brazil, gold and iron ore extraction drove mining deforestation. Whether Brazil's newly elected leftist President Lula could reverse the trend is open to question.

Mining operations often clear forests to make room for expanding extraction sites and tailing storage facilities, as well as to build access roads and settlements for miners.

Road-building and development activities are often not included in environmental impact assessments, conducted before a mine is approved, said environmental engineer Juliana Siqueira-Gay at the sustainability nonprofit Instituto Escolhas in Brazil, who was not involved in the study.

Gloria Dickie

## Electoral Bonds

Law that permits electoral bonds is the most immoral and unjust law in India. Unjust law is no law. Parties that accept anonymous corporate

donations cannot be trusted because they act as slaves. Promoters of UID/Aadhar/NPR are slaves of their donors.

1. Immorality, thy name is Bond, Electoral Bond.
2. Avarice, thy name is Bond, Electoral Bond.
3. Absence of shame, thy name is Bond, Electoral Bond.
4. Absence of embarrassment, thy name is Bond, Electoral Bond.
5. Concealment of wrongdoing, thy name is Bond, Electoral Bond.

Gopal Krishna, LL.M., Ph.D  
UGC-NET (Law)

Fellow, IRGAC-Berlin

## Documentary- 'Jai Bhim Comrade'

[Film Awards: Best Film-Films South Asia, Kathmandu, Nepal, Best Film-Mumbai International Film Festival?, Best Documentary-Hong Kong International Film Festival?, Bartok Prize-Jean Rouch International Film Festival, Paris, France?, Special Jury Award-National Awards, India?, Golden Camel-Jaipur International Film Festival]

For thousands of years, India's Dalits were abhorred as "untouchables", denied education, and treated as bonded labor. By 1923 Bhimrao Ambedkar broke the taboo, won doctorates abroad, and fought for the emancipation of his people. He drafted India's Constitution and led his followers to Buddhism. His legend still spreads through poetry and song.

In 1997 a statue of Dr Ambedkar in a Dalit colony in Mumbai was desecrated with footwear. As angry residents gathered, police opened fire and killed 10 people. Vilas Ghogre, a leftist poet, hung himself in protest.

'Jai Bhim Comrade' shot over 14 years, follows the poetry and music of people like Vilas and marks a tradition that, from the days of the Buddha, has fought superstition and religious bigotry.

"Far-reaching, and by turns pensive and engaging... 'Jai Bhim Comrade' could be seen as a capstone to

Patwardhan's extraordinary career."—Sukhdev Sandhu, The Guardian

"Legendary director Anand Patwardhan's epic doc about Dalit people is a massive, musical, magnificent, masterpiece"—Mark Cousins, Filmmaker, Critic

Anand Patwardhan, India's leading documentary filmmaker, is known for his socio-political, award-winning films. He has spent decades capturing Mumbai's slum dwellers, the reality of the caste system, the rise of Hindu nationalism, and tensions between India and Pakistan. He is a member of the Oscar academy, and his films have earned more than 20 international awards.

For a list of upcoming CSAS screenings, including other films from Patwardhan, please visit our website's event page. For more information on Anand Patwardhan and his films, please visit his website.

CSAS, Mumbai

### 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.

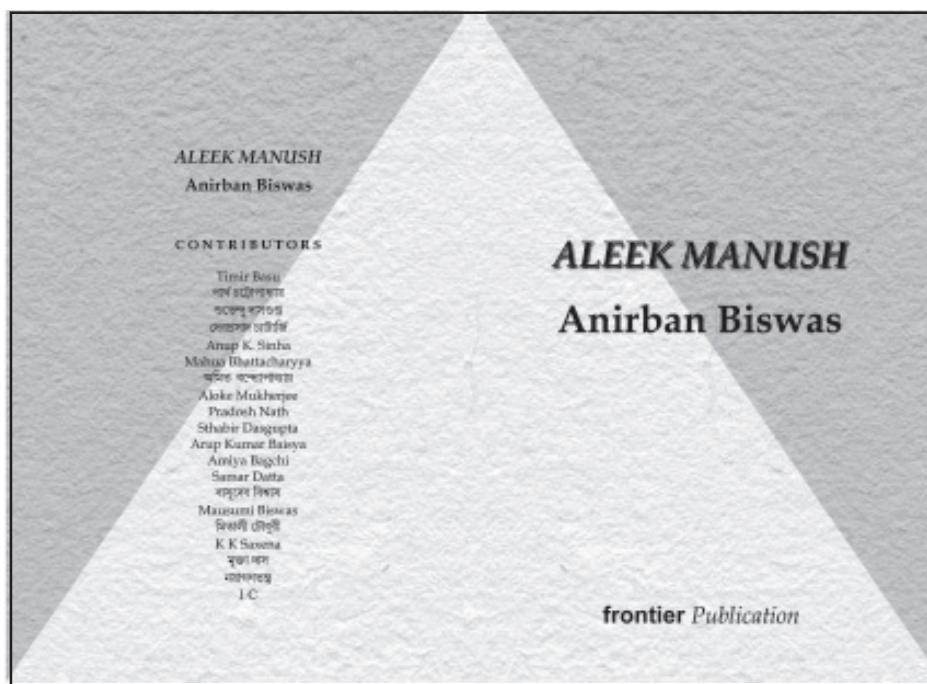
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