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On Other Pages

Comment	2
Note	3
HUMRA QURAISHI's COLUMN Kashmiris say 'No' to the Rightists Humra Quraishi	4
A PIONEER IN INDIAN HISTORICAL STUDIES An Assessment of a Revolutionary Activist—11 Amit Bhattacharya	5
59, 79, 50 AND COUNTING..... Anatomy and Social Agency of the RG Kar Movement Arindom Mookerjee	9
THE FACE OF NEO-NAZISM Threat Culture Pradosh Nath	13
Letters	14

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Prize for Peace

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR 2024 HAS BEEN AWARDED TO Nihon Hidankyo, an organisation representing more than 300,000 survivors of Hiroshima—Nagasaki bombings, known as the *hibakusha* in Japanese. By the time the US developed the bomb, in July 1945, Germany had already been defeated, and the Japanese Empire had been pushed all the way back to its home islands. The Japanese were retreating on every front. But America under Harry Truman decided to make experiment of destructive power of bombs on the yellow people, not the white-men. Thus Germans were lucky to avoid the tragedy of the century.

On August 6, the Americans dropped a bomb named “Little Boy” on Hiroshima. The destruction was unthinkable and unimaginable as well.” Those closest to explosion died instantly, their bodies turned to black char.... nearly every structure within one mile of ground zero was destroyed...”; more than 70,000 people died instantly, with death toll going beyond 100,000 later. Then on August 9, before the scale of the disaster could even be comprehended, the US dropped “Fat Man” on Nagasaki, killing at least 40,000 people instantly, and tens of thousands more in the days and weeks to come.

In his surrender speech Emperor Hirohito said, “Should we continue to fight, not only it would result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to total extinction of human civilisation”. With deadly wars raging in different parts of the world the very survival of human race is in question. Today war is everywhere. The Russia-Ukraine war may go nuclear any time. Then the recent escalation in the Middle East has every possibility of turning into nuclear as both Israel and Iran are ready to settle score by using the ultimate weapons. Russia has been threatening right from the beginning of the war in 2022 that they won't hesitate to use nukes in case they faced existential crisis. Surprisingly, critics in the West are dismissing Moscow's threat as a *nuclear bluff* but they will have to eat their words if NATO-backed Ukrainian push inside Russia advances further.

For one thing they have already nuclearised war in a limited way by using depleted uranium pellets in Iraq war. And now Israel is reportedly using it extensively in Lebanon. Israel is not sparing even UN offices and staff. ‘Over 100 medics and emergency workers killed in Lebanon conflict’, UN rights office says. World Health Organisation spokesperson Christian

Lindmeier said that since September 17, there had been 18 attacks on health facilities in Lebanon, killing 12 health workers.

This year there were 286 candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize—197 individuals and 89 organisations. Last year the award for peace work went to Narges Mohammadi, a jailed Iranian rights activist, 'for her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all'. There is politics, if not hypocrisy in choosing awardees for 'peace Nobel'. So in 2009 it went to President Barack Obama. It was awarded to the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso in 1989. But they never recognised

Tibet's independence movement for which the Dalai is in exile.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee said that Nihon Hidankyoo, a grass-roots movement of atomic bomb survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki was recognised "for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony that nuclear weapons never be used again".

Incidentally, Nihon Hidankyo, founded in 1956, is "the only nation-wide organisation of A-bomb survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki". The group has worked towards "telling stories of the Hibakusha to make known to the

people their experiences, actual damage and after-effects of the A-bombing, both within and outside Japan and sending A-bomb sufferers to the UN, nuclear weapons states and other countries".

More and more states even in the poor third world are trying to acquire nuclear technology, rather 'nuclear toys' at the expense of people's interests. Nihon Hidankyo apart, the international Campaign to abolish Nuclear weapons is working to mobilise public opinion against weapons of mass destruction but nuclear stockpiling is on the rise. No major power is listening! Prize or no prize, it is business as usual. □□□

15-10-2024

COMMENT

A Willing Belligerent

DURING A NEWS BRIEFING AT the White House, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan announced that US naval destroyers had "joined Israeli air defence units in firing interceptors to shoot down in-bound missiles". Praising the "professionalism" of the Israeli military, Sullivan also lauded the "skilled work of the US military and meticulous joint planning in anticipation of the attack".

Of course, not once has it occurred to the Biden administration to meticulously thwart Israel's ongoing genocide of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, where officially more than 41,000 people have been killed in less than a year although the true death toll is without a doubt exorbitantly higher. Nor has the 'so-skilled' US military deemed it necessary to interfere in the wanton butchery currently going down in Lebanon, where Israel just killed more than 700 people in less than a week.

And while many an international observer has sounded the alarm that

the US could now be "dragged" into a regional war—warnings that will only increase after the Iranian missile attack—in reality the US is not really being "dragged" anywhere.

Rather, the US is in a position entirely of its own making. And the fact of the matter is that the US is already at war. US troops are very much in action in Israel as they would manage advanced air-defence systems supplied after Iranian retaliation.

To be sure, even prior to the launch of the genocide, the US habit of flinging billions of dollars at the Israeli military on an annual basis long ago made it transparently complicit in Israeli efforts to disappear Palestine. Since October 7, 2023 the billions have only multiplied, despite Biden's intermittent squawking about cutting off the supply of certain offensive weaponry to Israel.

In August, the Biden administration approved a \$20bn weapons package to its Israeli partner in crime.

And on September 26, the Reuters news agency reported Israel's announcement that "it had secured an \$8.7 billion aid package from the United States to support its ongoing military efforts and to maintain a qualitative military edge in the region".

The package was said to include "\$3.5 billion for essential wartime procurement... and \$5.2 billion designated for air defence systems including the Iron Dome anti-missile system, David's Sling and an advanced laser system". The United States has so far spent \$22.76 billion in military aid to Israel after the start of the Gaza War.

In other words, Israel will be increasingly well-poised to "defend" itself against legitimate responses to its own actions—actions that quite literally qualify as terrorism.

In the end, it's not rocket science: the financial and military support consistently extended to Israel

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by the US does not denote a country that is being “dragged” into a conflict. It denotes a country that is, for all intents and purposes, an active belligerent in the conflict.

And although the Biden administration continues to claim ad nauseam that it desires a ceasefire in

Gaza, the road to a ceasefire in a case of genocide does not go through billions upon billions of dollars in weaponry to the genocidal party.

In the fog of the latest war one thing, at least, is clear: the US is already a primary belligerent. □□□

[Contributed]

NOTE

Yet another Regime Change

I Mallikarjuna Sharma writes:

THE AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS, though become downgraded in their power and influence as the unchallenged single superpower in the world and with rise of Russia and China the world is becoming more and more multipolar, still tenaciously cling to their past aspirations and atrocious conduct and are plotting and arranging ‘colour revolutions’ for regime change in various countries of the world and Bangladesh is the latest victim of that.

What happened in Bangladesh is clearly an Islamic fanatic uprising in the guise of and also behind the cover of a widespread students protest. What were the students agitating for? Quotas in employment and other requisite facilities—to whom? Even to the horrible Islamic fanatics who opposed the Bangladesh liberation movement and supported and actively colluded with the Pakistani genocidal army in exterminating lakhs of Hindus and freedom seeking Bengali Muslims during the 1970-71 liberation war times. Sheikh Hasina, whose entire family, including the supreme leader of the liberation movement Sheikh Mujib, were cruelly killed by a dastardly military coup way back in the 1975s and a dirty Islamic fanatic supporter regime, was established for considerable period which carried out atrocities on the families and supporters of the liberation movement. Fortunately the Bangladesh people at large later overthrew this regime by peaceful elections and with overwhelming

majority Sheikh Hasina and her led Awami League were brought to power—a historic justice to the betrayed family and party. The American imperialists, who everywhere created or supported Islamic fanatic movements for their ultimate gains and in case of any jolt in that regard again decimated them in all ferocity with high ideals sounding propaganda, the real creators of al-Qaeda and the cannibalistic ISIS, were never happy at this turn of events. Though they pulled on with outward support to Hasina for decades, covertly they nourished, pampered and raised to elevated positions one Muhammad Yunus—a pro-American at heart but posing as a liberal and people friendly economist with devising various schemes for the help of poorer sections—and got him get the Nobel Award even. Also they were plotting with various disgruntled Islamic fanatic sections of Bangladesh and finally brought forth this coup in Bangladesh under the garb of a student protest uprising. Then they sent this Muhammad Yunus with all honours to head the new government in Bangladesh in the garb of Chief Advisor.

Hasina refused quotas to the Islamic fanatic traitors of Bangladesh and offered to give such quotas to liberation fighters’ families. But when the student protests grew in vigour she even offered to abolish all quotas and consider employment or other facilities only on merit. Even then the already planned out schemes

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did not stop and the conspirators finally succeeded in driving her out with the army support or instigation.

After her taking shelter in Delhi, Hasina revealed that all this has been plotted by the US because they were quite sore at her refusal to give them an island near Chittagong on lease to them for establishment of an American military base. There is not an iota of doubt that what happened in Bangladesh is a blatantly anti-Indian, anti-liberationist Islamic fanatic uprising succeeding by a coup of the military under the garb of a student protest and in no way to be supported by progressives.

Bangladesh was previously East Bengal where great struggles for the liberation of the motherland from the British imperialists was carried out, and supreme sacrifices were rendered by many youths of both communities for the cause of freedom—e.g. the 1931 Chittagong Uprising and the various ‘terrorist’ actions all over East Bengal and scores of youths embracing gallows, etc.. □ [I Mallikarjuna Sharma, Advocate, Editor, LAW ANIMATED WORLD, Hyderabad.]

 HUMRA QURAISHI'S COLUMN

Kashmiris say 'No' to the Rightists

Humra Quraishi

THE RSS-BJP COMBINE HAS been so far kept out of the Kashmir Valley. In these latest elections, every possible effort by the masses to keep the Right-Wing out of the power, at least in their home territory—the Kashmir Valley.

In the recent years Kashmiris of the Valley have been witnessing the worsening of their situation ...well, worsening to such an extent they have even fearful of talking aloud their apprehensions. Keeping their anger all too shut and tight, for fear of the aftermath.

I had been reporting from the Kashmir Valley for years. Looking back, I could see signs of conditions deteriorating right from the early '90s but couldn't have ever imagined that the State unleashed havoc would compound to extent that there'd be nothing called free speech or even free movement or free living! All too fearful!

The shocking extent of the political deterioration in the Valley hit, when the Muftis, Mehbooba and her father Mufti Mohammad Saeed joined hands with the BJP to form the government in the state of J&K, in 2015. Several prominent members of the PDP had been extremely upset with this alliance, though the Muftis continued claiming that the alliance was for the so-called 'development' of J&K, for the 'modification' of the Valley!

One of the prominent faces of the PDP, Tariq Hameed Karra, was upset to the extent that he resigned. Karra, a well-known political figure in Kashmir with the 'giant killer' label prefixed to his name ever since he defeated Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) leader

Farooq Abdullah in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. In fact, I had met Tariq Hameed Karra in September 2016 that is just days after his resignation from the PDP and also from the Parliament. My first query to this former Member of Parliament (MP) was: Why did he have to resign when he could have stayed on and spoken out in the parliament? He detailed he been feeling 'suffocated' ever since the PDP decided to form the alliance with the BJP. "For the last several months, I had not been attending any of the party meetings. This decision to resign from the PDP was a difficult one for me, as I'm one of the founding members of the party, but I just had listened to my conscience! How could I justify to my people that we had formed an alliance with a communal party—the BJP? I had been upset and pained by this alliance. The way the situation was handled in the Valley left me feeling outraged. So many Kashmiris killed...worst form of human rights violations. Mosques locked and closed by the government on Fridays and even for the Eid namaaz! I didn't want to be a part of this government. From day one I had been against the PDP's alliance with a party like the BJP, but thought Mehbooba ji would realise the folly and break the alliance, but she's going ahead, deceiving our people."

Karra had minced no words, lashing out: "It's high time the government stopped its practice of looking at Kashmir as a territorial issue. It is about political aspirations. Don't overlook the fact the state has its own flag and Constitution. This reality cannot be blanketed by the

economic or developmental or administrative issues. And where's the so-called development taking place? Nowhere! Could you see any traces of development?"

I saw the ground realities for myself as I went around Srinagar city and then had travelled further, towards the adjoining districts. Couldn't see any signs of development. Only sorrow and despair spread. ...Valley looked overburdened with anger.

Needless to add that Burhan Wani's killing by the security forces provoked anger and restlessness amongst the Kashmiris. No amount of speeches or announcements of relief packages could help contain the indignation as protestors were hit by bullets...One couldn't have imagined that the violence would peak to that horrific level, where even young children and teenagers would be battling for survival, with impaired vision and lifelong disabilities... Photographs of brutality unleashed on humans—eyes, face, ribs, chest, stomach, lungs, limbs ruptured by pellets and bullets. This fuelled apprehensions of what further disasters could follow in the Kashmir Valley.

Apprehensions had more than persisted amongst the citizens of the Valley as communication lines and also newspapers and connected offices were made to remain shut. Questions and queries did the rounds: Why should news get murdered by the political rulers of the state? Why crackdown on the media? What was the establishment trying to conceal or throttle?

The establishment seemed somewhat determined to worsen the mess, as additional security forces were sent. Instead of banning newspapers, efforts should have been made to publish them against all odds; after all, newspapers play a vital

role in connecting the masses with the ground reality and help curb rumours and apprehensions... To compound the mess, numerous television discussions came up where the so-called experts dwelt on the use of bullets and pellets to 'settle' the crisis. Why didn't those 'experts' travel to the Valley and see for themselves that the Kashmiris could no longer contain their anger and disgust? Why didn't the political rulers move around Srinagar city and around the outlying rural stretches? None of the VVIPs could be seen flying from New Delhi to the Valley to be there with the local population during the crisis.

None of the sarkari officials were charged for crimes ...for killings, for inflicting injuries on the young of the Kashmir Valley? This, when most of

the protestors were young and naive, unarmed and clueless as to what the future holds for them.

And as the establishment tried to crush the uprising, the anger of the people couldn't really get crushed.

Simmering to this day. And with no outlet, no platform, no forum, no leader or statesman at the Centre in New Delhi, where can the Kashmiris talk aloud their grievances.

The results of the latest elections have more than held out that the Kashmiris of the Valley do not want to see any of the Right-Wing politicians around them. Though they, the Right-Wing politicians, are lurking not too far, as the Jammu election results have shown!

And as the political orders and commands come from New Delhi, the vital questions to be asked are

these: Do we want to bypass the Kashmiris or start the crucial dialogue process? Do we want to know the 'why' to this increasing alienation of the young Kashmiris? Why do we insist on aggravating this anger and alienation that has been increasing every single day? Do the political rulers in New Delhi realise the human disasters that the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) drags along? Who is answerable for the fake encounters, unmarked graves, illegal detentions and hundreds of missing Kashmiris? Why should Kashmiris become victims of political games? Why should this generation of Kashmiris be ruined because of political treachery? Why the ongoing persistent dislike for the New Delhi politicians?

□□□

A PIONEER IN INDIAN HISTORICAL STUDIES

An Assessment of a Revolutionary Activist—11

Amit Bhattacharya

ONE OF THE MOST revealing portions of the book is that where the author dwells on Gandhi's own philosophical justification of violence. It is here that the so-called 'apostle of non-violence' entered the stage as the apostle of violence, defending the use of violence not only in practice, but also in theory. This philosophical justification of violence has never been mentioned in the vast literature on Gandhi either by conventional historians of 'right' or 'left' varieties and the Congress. It was in 1918 when Gandhi was serving as a recruiting agent in defence of the British empire that he came out as a champion of violence. Let us quote extensively from the book as these are quite illuminating.

"Replying to C. F. Andrews who had doubts about his role as a recruiting sergeant, the mahatma wrote:

"You cannot teach *ahimsa* to a man who cannot kill. You cannot make a dumb man appreciate the beauty and merit of silence. Although I know that silence is most excellent, I do not hesitate to take means that would enable the dumb man regain his speech" (CWG, XIX, p.444, cited in Ghosh, p.134).

"Interestingly, Andrews argued: "I cannot see the analogy of the dumb man in your letter. It seems dangerously near the argument that the Indian who has forgotten altogether the blood-lust might be encouraged to learn it again first and then to repudiate it afterwards of his own account" (*Ibid*, 444,foot note 3, cited in *ibid*, 134-35).

"While recruiting in a village in Kheda, Gandhi said at a meeting: "The ability to use physical force is necessary for a true appreciation of satyagraha. *He alone can practise*

ahimsa who knows how to kill. i.e. knows what himsa is" (*Ibid*, 454, cited in Ghosh, *ibid*.p.135).

"Again, he said: 'To him who wants to learn the art of fighting, who would know how to kill, I would even teach the use of force... He who does not know how to lay down his life without killing others may learn how to die killing' (*Ibid*, p.469, cited in Ghosh, p.135).

"In a letter of 31 July 1918 to Ada West, Gandhi, referring to his recruiting campaign, wrote: 'The ancients in India knew the art of warfare—the art of killing—and yet reduced the activity to a minimum... Today I feel that everybody is desirous of killing[sic!], but most are afraid of doing so or powerless to do so. Whatever is to be the result I feel certain that the power must be restored to India. The result may be carnage. Then India must go through it' (*Ibid*, p.520, cited in *ibid*, p.135).

"Hailing the Montague-Chelmsford Report of 1918 in a letter of 10 July to V. S. Srinivas Sastri, Gandhi asserted: "The gate-

way to our freedom is situated on the French soil. *No victory worth the name has yet been won without the shedding of blood*" (*Ibid*, p.489, cited in Ghosh, p.135).

While denouncing the use of force against the British raj, Gandhi always claimed that violence was incompatible with India's past history and culture. That was one of the stock arguments he used to condemn the revolutionaries. However, writing to C.F. Andrews on 6 July 1918, Gandhi asserted that such a view was wrong and argued that the *Mahabharata*, Tulsidas's *Ramayana*, Manu and Sankaracharya extolled violence. He also referred to the 'Mahomedan' and 'English' periods of Indian history to drive home his thesis that the Indian people had never repudiated violence or 'blood lust' (*Ibid*, pp.474-5, cited in Ghosh, p.135).

In another letter to Andrews, dated 29 July 1918, Gandhi wrote: "War will be always with us. There seems to be no possibility of the whole human nature becoming transformed... there is real *ahimsa* in defending my wife and children even at the risk of striking down the wrong-doer" (*Ibid*, p.509, cited in Ghosh, *ibid*, p.136).

If that was the realization of

Gandhi, if one has first to know the art of violence before practising non-violence, if one can practise real non-violence by striking down the wrong-doer to defend one's wife and children, as Gandhi himself stated, then why did he pour out endless homilies that no hand should be raised against the imperialist powers who had brought hunger, deprivation and ruin for millions of our countrymen? Is there thus any way of denying the fact that the creed of non-violence was designed to deprive the oppressed of the weapon the oppressors freely used?

It thus seems to be clear that according to the needs of the hour, the apostle of non-violence could change into an apostle of violence—as Ghosh asserts, "in theory as well as in practice" (Ghosh, *ibid*, p.136).

What is worth noting is that, while preaching the virtues of violence, the mahatma saw to it that it was never directed against the British raj, but against the its enemies for, to him, India's salvation lay in standing by the side of the raj.

Ghosh argues strongly that what Gandhi aimed at accomplishing and succeeded to some extent in doing by his experiments with non-violence was the emasculation of the anti-imperialist militancy of the people and spread of confusion among them. These, no doubt, helped the British raj, ideologically and politically to isolate and suppress the revolutionary forces whom Gandhi often denounced.

On several occasions, Gandhi talked of the importance of soul force. Ghosh argues that those who believe that force, physical force, is the midwife of the old society pregnant with a new one are no less conscious than at least people like Gandhi—"who glibly extol the virtues of non-violent satyagraha and have at the same time self-aggrandizement as the soul aim of their

lives"—of the need for soul force. It is they who realize that without soul force millions of people dare not fight against powerful enemies and prepare to lay down their lives and risk the lives of the near and dear ones, which a genuine revolution demands. "It is the experience of all peoples throughout the world, those who have made history as well as those who have as yet failed to do so, that soul force must be wedded to physical force, that peaceful struggle must be combined with non-peaceful struggle, in order to abolish the regime of the imperialists and domestic exploiting classes and, in the process, to cleanse society of the accumulated filth of ages. All else is camouflage and deception and is intended to hoodwink and divert the oppressed masses from the road that leads to their emancipation", Ghosh observes. (Ghosh, pp.136-37).

Thus Gandhi's creed of non-violence, as Ghosh asserts, seems to be both a shield and a sword. "As a shield, it was non-violence in thought, word and deed to be scrupulously practised by the enslaved and the oppressed in their struggles with the raj and native exploiting classes; as a sword, it was violence in defence of the imperialist order and in defence of the interests of the domestic sharks" (*Ibid*, p.137).

In fact, Gandhi's strategy and tactics, as Ghosh asserts, were an ideal counterpart of the British imperial strategy of devolution of power by successive stages to "friendly and reliable hands", who have been tested and found worthy of trust.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (13 April, 1919)

At Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar, defenceless people—379 according to the official estimate and nearly 1,000 according to the Congress Working Committee's report—were butchered and many hundreds seriously wounded by General Dyer and

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soldiers. The Congress Enquiry Committee, which inquired into what happened in the Punjab in the wake of the Rowlatt satyagraha, estimated about 1,200 men were shot dead, at least 3,600 wounded and some permanently disabled (CWG, XVII, p.287, cited in Ghosh, p.193).

On 30 May 1919, in an indignant letter to the Viceroy, Rabindranath Tagore sharing “the universal agony of indignation” and wishing “to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings” gave “voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen” against the horrors perpetrated by the raj in the Punjab and renounced his knighthood.

It is quite illuminating, as Suniti Kumar Ghosh points out, that on the same day—30 May 1919—Gandhi was writing to the Private Secretary to the viceroy: “It is within His Excellency’s knowledge that I have made no public declaration regarding the events in the Punjab...I was not prepared to condemn martial law as such: I was unwilling to do anything calculated needlessly to irritate local authority”. He was sure that if a committee of enquiry was appointed by the government, “it would calm the public mind and restore confidence... in the good intentions of the government” (CWG, XV, p.334-5, cited in *ibid*, p.194).

Earlier, on 10 May, Gandhi had sent a telegram “strongly” advising C.F. Andrews not to proceed to Lahore “without sanction” (CWG, XV, pp.334-5, cited in *ibid*, p.198). Significantly, even earlier, on 20 April 1918, Gandhi had written to Sir Claude Hill: “You will admit that the leaders have *with remarkable self-restraint*[!] hushed all the tales of the forcible recruitment that is reported to have gone hitherto. I

venture to think that the danger point has been reached” (CWG, XIV, p.373, cited in *ibid*). “This also clearly shows on which side leaders like Gandhi stood in those tumultuous days” (Ghosh, p.198).

Ghosh refers to a letter to Srinivasa Sastri, dated 6 June 1919, in which Gandhi criticized Rabindranath’s “burning letter”, which “the Punjab horrors have produced” as “*premature*”. It is interesting to reproduce here what Andrews wrote from Lahore to Tagore about the effect of the letter described by the mahatma as “*premature*”. “Everyone knows how from that time forward, the reign of terror was broken, insidious dread, which was hanging over them like a pestilence was lifted from them” (Rajat Kanta Ray, *Social Conflict and Political Unrest In Bengal, 1875-1927*, Delhi, 1984, cited in Ghosh, p.198).

It is important to remember that the AICC at its meeting held on 20 April, had demanded an enquiry into the Punjab wrongs and “*pressed Gandhi to proceed to the Punjab immediately in disregard of consequences*”. According to Tendulkar, Gandhi wired to the Viceroy for permission, which was refused (See: D.G.Tendulkar, *Mahatma, Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol.I, New Delhi, 1969, p.262, cited in Ghosh, p.198). Ghosh, however, notes that no such telegrams or letters seeking the Viceroy’s permission (or conveying the Viceroy’s refusal to grant it) can be traced in CWG. This appears to be a deliberate omission, for obvious reasons).

In *Young India* of 11 June, Gandhi justified his “*complete silence*” over “the Punjab disturbances” “though he “allowed myself to be misunderstood by many friends” (CWG, XV, p.356, cited in Ghosh, p.198). He felt proud of the fact that ‘I enjoy fairly intimate relations with him [the Private Secretary to

the Viceroy] and we often freely write to each other” (*Ibid*, p.391).

Ghosh points out that while perpetuating a regime of terror, the raj reciprocated Gandhi’s feelings of warm friendship. Congratulating him on his “calming influence”, the Viceroy’s Private Secretary advised him: “Don’t do too much fasting! You are not strong enough yet and I am sure yours is an influence which we all shall want at full horse power” (J.L. Maffey to Gandhi, 20 April, 1919, SN No.6551; cited in Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi’s Rise to Power*, Cambridge, 1972, p.179, cited in Ghosh, p.200).

Later, at about the middle of June 1918, when there was considerable criticism of his manner of conducting the satyagraha, Gandhi proposed to launch civil disobedience. The executive committee of the Satyagraha Sabha entrusted Gandhi with full powers to guide the movement. Gandhi decided that he would start after taking “every precaution against violence breaking out” and after all demonstrations including hartal and that it would be “*confined only to myself*” (p.201).

From Cooperation to Non-cooperation Gandhi welcomed the appointment of the Hunter Committee to inquire into the “disorders” and asked people to trust the Commis-

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sion and “respond to the Viceregal appeal for a calm atmosphere” (*ibid*). He did not forget to add: “If there has been a plot really to wage war against the King or to overthrow the Government, let those who are found guilty by a properly constituted court be hanged”.

Ghosh points out: “It was characteristic of the votary of non-violence to prescribe shooting and hanging for all those who dared to challenge the raj. On the other hand, in the days of the Jallianwalla Bag massacre and the martial law, he advised the oppressed that, in order ‘to regulate the relations between rulers and the ruled’ they should apply ‘the standard that we apply to the regulation of domestic relations’ (*ibid*, p.202). One can multiply such instances.

Why was the Non Co-operation movement launched? In a letter to *The Times of India* of 3 April 1920, Gandhi wrote: “The country requires some definite action. *The forces of violence cannot be checked otherwise*”. According to Ghosh, it was suggested in a confidential Government Note of May 1921 that Gandhi opted for non-cooperation in order to save India from Bolshevism (p.205). Interestingly, in reply to questions put to him at a meeting in Bombay on 18 June 1921, Gandhi claimed that “his movement was a great bulwark against Bolshevism” (p.205). The fact is that the mahatma, who was “ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is”, as he confessed soon after (CWG, XXV, p.424, cited in *ibid*, 206), felt alarmed at the prospect of an upsurge of mass unrest, especially Muslim unrest, and the challenge it might throw to the established order. Interestingly, as Ghosh points out, after the Russian Revolution, the official writings, including intelligence reports, as well as writings of Congress leaders like Gandhi show that the spectre of Bolshevism was haunting them,

though no Communist Party existed in India. They seemed to see the Bolshevik spectre behind every popular upheaval.

As Gandhi repeatedly pointed out, non-co-operation that he proposed was intended to forestall violent struggles against the raj. “I am convinced”, said Gandhi, “that had there been no move for non-co-operation, violence would long since have broken out. *It is non-co-operation which has prevented violence*. The Muslims are boiling over, but they have kept their patience in the belief that the Hindus are with them” (*Ibid*, CWG, XVII, p.415; see also 390 in Ghosh, p.206).

While moving a resolution at a meeting in Bombay in April 1920, asking every Indian to withdraw co-operation from the government, if the Khilafat question was not properly solved, Gandhi declared: “When they in India asked for self-government it did not mean that they did not want British rule. *There was no Hindu or Mohammedan who was against the British flag waving over India*” (CWG, XVII, p.310, cited in Ghosh, p.207). Ghosh remarks that truly Indians like Gandhi were happy to see the British flag flying over India. Gandhi was quite categorical: “...the movement [proposed non-cooperation] is not anti-British. *It is not even anti-Government*.” (*Ibid*, 389; also XX, 122,408).

Paradoxically, as Ghosh asserts, Gandhi served the interests of the raj by offering co-operation and rendering obedience as well as non-cooperating with it or civilly disobeying it. “Satyagraha”, he said, “consists at times in civil disobedience, other times in civil obedience” (CWG, XV, 264, cited in Ghosh, p.208).

At the special session of the Congress, held in Calcutta early in September 1920, Gandhi’s resolution on progressive non-violent non-co-operation faced strong opposition

from C. R. Das, Vijayraghavachari and Motilal Nehru, but was ultimately adopted.

The non-co-operation programme included surrender of titles and honorary offices conferred by the raj, resignation from *nominated* seats in local bodies and refusal to attend official and semi-official functions—all these items, as Ghosh mentions, concerned the members of the upper classes who were particularly noted for their loyalty to the raj—and gradual boycott of government schools or aided schools and colleges, law courts and legislatures and boycott of foreign goods. Besides, “the military, clerical and laboring classes” were advised to refuse “to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia”.

Interestingly, *elected* members of local bodies like municipalities, district and local boards were permitted to co-operate with the raj.

It is worth pointing out that the basic masses—the peasants and workers—had hardly any role to play in the proposed movement except by boycotting foreign goods. The participation in the programme was confined only to a microscopic minority—members of the middle and upper-middle classes.

Although the non-co-operation movement included the boycott of foreign goods, Gandhi went on denouncing it. He wanted the boycott *only* of foreign cloth. He argued that “boycott of British goods has been conceived as a punishment and can have no place in non-co-operation which is conceived in a spirit of self-sacrifice and is a matter of sacred duty”. He also criticized it on the ground that “boycott of British goods is thoroughly unpractical, for, it involves sacrifice of their millions by millionaires...” (CWG, XVIII, 199, cited in Ghosh, p.210. For more detail, see p.211). □□□

[To be continued]

Anatomy and Social Agency of the RG Kar Movement

Arindom Mookerjee

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already"

—Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

[The brutal rape and murder of a young doctor in the premises of RG Kar hospital and the subsequent safe of misdeeds that has flung open has aroused the conscience of the city of Calcutta and awakened the spirit of righteousness like no other events in recent past. The quest for a fair trial has morphed into a demand for justice and as the dialectics of domination and resistance rages on in the streets of the city, a Movement has taken shape and fledgling by all accounts. The secrets of coordinated collective action with a capacity to threaten, if not disrupt, the established status quo lies as much in the 'collective identity' constructivist approach as in its Marxist credentials, the latter not being a proxy for CPIM sympathisers but rather of the greater renaissance ethos of Bengal.]

The Movement, led by junior doctors, has developed a wider ecosystem and found legitimacy from the moral authority vested in them by the people of Bengal. Those rattled by it scoff at any talk of its transformative potential, let alone change. After all, the Anna Hazare (Lok Pal) movement's most recognisable outcome was Arvind Kejriwal. And people know how that has panned out. Even the anchors of the Movement have never alluded to transformative aspirations. Justice is all they want. Yet, to the optimist, the dusts of change is within the realm of imagination. There is palpable realisation that the system, in its present disposition, cannot be 'just'. In fact, it is doing everything in its power to thwart and distort the course of justice. Although not high-pitch, the imperative of change is implicit in their demand for justice.]

IN CAPITALIST AMERICA, THE *Occupy Wall Street* movement began on 17 September 2011 and continued for 59 days till 11 November 2011. It was a populist movement against economic inequality and corporate money-politics nexus. Thousands of people moved into NYC's Financial District, set up tents and organised a system of communication. The protest spread nation-wide and more than a thousand cities and towns had Occupy demonstrations. In communist China, the *Umbrella Movement* occupied the streets in Hong Kong for 79 days in 2014. Protestors were mainly university students and the younger generation, who camped in the populated streets and demanded fully free democratic elections in this Chinese SAR (Special Administrative Region). Calcutta has been on occupy mode for more than 50 days now.

All three are non-violent protest movements. Hong Kongers occupying the city's financial district, sang 'Do You Hear the People Sing?' from *Les Miserables*. School and university students demonstrated by day and were pictured doing their homework in their tents by night. OWS protesters picked up litter from the demonstrations in order to keep the streets and parks clean. The protesters in Calcutta sang 'Karar oi Louha Kopat'. Senior doctors managed Emergency and other hospital functions as the junior doctors staged the protest. In Shyambazar, alternate outdoor clinics were organised to provide service to the needy. Calcuttans poured out on the streets and protested through the language of poetry, song and dance in peaceful sit-ins and marches.

All three had to face brutal police action and state-sponsored repression. For OWS, declassified gov-

ernment documents reveal extensive surveillance of OWS-related groups across the country and a tally of almost 8000 Occupy-affiliated arrests. The umbrellas that were used for passive resistance against police tear gas, pepper spray and batons became international symbols of peaceful protests. Calcutta police, who are complicit with and part of the state machinery to destroy evidence, has also reacted with similar violence and brutality with a litany of threats, fake cases and unlawful arrests.

All three movements received and has been sustained by a surge of popular support, making them people's movements 'from below'. OWS protesters acted on consensus-based decisions made at the general assembly whose meetings involved OWS working and affinity groups and open to public participation. The Zuccotti Park camp evolved to include such amenities as free meals, wireless internet and a lending library. Facilities that the park lacked, such as bathrooms and laundry machines, were donated by local residents. The Movement in Calcutta is also being guided and enriched by a series of mass conventions. Every time the Hong Kong police tried to control, there was a surge of public support for the core protest groups, mobilised by social and other forms of media.

It is interesting to note the constituents that have propelled the Movements. Scholarship around collective discontent, inequality and authoritarian leadership transitions have tended to draw on the Davies' inverse J-curve hypothesis (James C Davies, *Toward a Theory of Revolution, 1962*) which argues that collective rebellion of individuals are more likely to take place when the gap between expectations and reality widens. It is extremely unlikely those

in extreme poverty will be able to overturn a government. Change comes not from the very bottom of the social hierarchy, but from somewhere in the middle. The *Arab Spring*, for example, was driven by people from the younger age group who experienced a chasm between what their education promised and what autocratic governments delivered. The core of the *Umbrella Movement* was middle to upper middle strata educated by liberal curriculum and exposed to democratic principles. 'Occupy Wall Street' too came from people in the middle. More than a third of the demonstrators on the May Day 'Occupy' march in 2011 had annual earnings of more than \$100,000 (Richard Reeves, Brookings Institution). The RG Kar protests are being led by the medical fraternity in Calcutta and the Movement is being swelled not by the traditionally marginalised but by educated city-dwellers who form the bulk of the 'middle-class'.

Using a Marxian lens to study the on-going Movement has a dual purpose. First, it establishes the fact that this is not a narrative about the Left revival in the state. That objective is nested in the students and youth movement that is being pursued in support of the doctors' movement by SFI and DYFI. The second objective is to underscore the fact that the Left has had a profound influence (in content and grammar, norm and form of the Movement) and that the Movement draws heavily from Leftist tenets, philosophy and organisation. While the conditions and context of the Movement is not out of classical Marxian understanding of deterministic history and economic cycles, the composition and class character that it has assumed and the trajectory it has followed has the looming influence of the Left.

Raat Dokhol (Reclaiming the

Night) had brought out the people from the home to the streets. Led by the women of the city, the people, cutting across age, gender and socio-economic position, occupied the streets at night in a spontaneous expression of indignation and empowerment. This at a time when the ruling dispensation was proclaiming work restrictions on women. The stand was deliberate and the position of the ruling party was spelled out from the highest level—the CM, who besides being the health and police minister, is a woman no less. The alienation was complete. The protests assumed a *mass character*.

Raat Dokhol catalysed resentment and triggered a deluge of revelations on the misdeeds of the ruling class widely known to all but seldom attributed. While justice for the raped and murdered doctor was at the centre of the coalescence, it also was a mirror to the systemic and organised corruption and malpractices the TMC had brazenly institutionalised. The masses that had gathered for the doctor now had more reasons to stick together. They too are victims; they too are sufferers and they too have been stabbed again and again in practically every walk of life by the regime of miscreants. On one hand, the constituents of the Andolan have, through political enfranchisement, entered into a social relationship with the ruling dispensation. On the other, they as active, reflective beings navigate the dialectics through their lived experience. They regularly run up against features of the systems that impede them in the pursuit of their needs and goals. The masses thus imbibe a *class character*.

In the writings of Colin Barker, "...As they seek to resolve these engendered problems, they act in ways that are liable to disrupt existing patterns, generating conflicts that potentially reconfigure both their

social relations and themselves as actors..... Class struggle' is inherently a process involving (at least) two sides. One side involves multifarious forms of resistance to exploitation and oppression; the other includes the equally varied means by which ruling groups work to maintain their positions and to contain such resistance"

The participants of the movement—the rank and file—are a microcosm of Marx's Capital. At a more grounded and intimate level on the streets of Calcutta they are also trying to understand and control their material and social conditions. Their protest against corrupt TMC and state-led corruption and repression have emerged as specific form of social and political activity. Their movement has become un-interceded expressions of class struggle.

Under the present regime, big manufacturing in Bengal is passe. Able-bodied, productive labour, both skilled and semi-skilled, is passe (out-migration). So, classical labour movement with welfare considerations and active trade unionism is passe. Yet at the heart of the RG Kar movement lies the *crème de la crème* of the organised working class—junior and senior doctors, nurses, paramedics, medical educators and hospital workers. This is among the best of organised sector employment the country has to offer. This is their movement. And it is being propelled and sustained by blue-collar workers and their solidarity. When a packet of drinking water bottles addressed to 'All Doctors Protesting There Continuously' is paid for and sent by delivery personnel, it is reflective of the ownership of the agenda by the broad working class. They all want a safe workplace and respectful working conditions.

Revisiting Gramsci-winning the battle of ideas

Has the movement invoked and

November 3-9, 2024

FRONTIER

11

adapted the Gramscian template? Antonio Gramsci's insights into why capitalism is inherently exploitative and why changing it will require movements from below to engage in a contest of power, rather than buying into the idea that the system can be successfully tinkered (such as the transfer the Commissioner of Police) by technocratic reformers with clever policy ideas has core implications for the Movement's trajectory. Gramsci believed that only through determined organising and the strategic application of human will would the fundamental structures of society change for the better. If progressive movements are to create change, they must win over large segments of the public to their way of thinking about the world. And that organizing must take place on multiple fronts—cultural, political, economic—requiring engagement with many different institutions of society. He encourages movements to accept responsibility for organising, educating and preparing a base of people that can be ready to act when opportune moments arise.

And the Movement, it seems, is accepting this responsibility. West Bengal Junior Doctors Front is leading the Movement and has resorted to cease-work to press for their demands of safety. Their senior counterparts are coming together under the aegis of the Joint Platform of Doctors, West Bengal in which several organisations have joined up. They include the AHSD (The Association of Health Service Doctors, the largest association of doctors in state-run medical facilities in West Bengal); SSU (*Shramajibi Swasthya Udyog* is an organisation of doctors and health workers); WBDF (West Bengal Doctors Forum, a forum for protection of rights of doctors and patients); DFD and HAS. It is participating and helping coordinate the response on the street and in court.

The *Rasta Dokhol* (Reclaim the road) call for the citizen's march on 1 October 2024 mobilised the support from 60 organisations and the participation of more than 100,000 people.

The TMC can only remain intact through the maintenance of hegemony. This entails not only the use of force, administrative machinery and legal instruments, but also by ways in which ruling class ideology is disseminated through society, creating an illusion of consent for the rule of the dominant group—syndicates, threat culture, cut-money and *LakshmirBhandar* (*Rs 1000 transfer scheme for women*) being some of them. The power of the ruling party seeps through the institutions of, education, medical, religious, media, civil society and other institutions but most vociferously through party channels and agents' illegitimate usurpation and vilification of governance mechanisms. The battle for resisting and overturning hegemony is a long one waged through many spheres of social life. The streets of Calcutta is but one such theatre.

Agency of the Movement

Movements are framed around antagonists. What you are fighting for is as important as what you are fighting against. If the goal is clear, anyone who gets in the way is, by definition, an antagonist. The social agency of the movement is revealed in the unequivocal identification of the antagonist—the corrupt CM and the party she heads.

The social agency of the movement is revealed in the rejection of the fissiparous right. By summarily asking agents of the footage-craving and byte-propelled co-opters with a dubious and tainted record with rapists and abusers to "go back", the Andolan has reaffirmed its higher moral imperative of women's safety and dignity.

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Marshall Ganz (*Leading change: Leadership, organization, and social movements in Handbook of leadership theory and practice: A Harvard Business School centennial colloquium*) talks about transformational vision occurs at the intersection of two factors: criticality, which is perception of the world's pain, and hope, a sense of the world's possibilities and of its promise. "One without the other doesn't yield the energy for change." The social agency of the Movement is gained in being present at the interface facilitating the terrain for greater collective action.

The social agency of the Movement is derived from and discharged through the fact that movement participants come across not as reformers but as part of an effort to build the intellectual and moral leadership required for a progressive narrative of change.

Last, but most importantly, the agency of the Movement lies in holding the antagonist accountable. The central demand of the Andolan–Justice–is simply a form of accountability. And while parties and cabinets can be held accountable, the purest and most immediate form of accountability is individual accountability. Hold the health minister accountable for the malpractices of government hospitals and for fostering and flourishing a culture of debauchery and fraud. Hold the police minister accountable for brutality, vandalism and destruction of evi-

dence. Hold the chief minister accountable for failures of the administration. If justice is redemption, then the CM and TMC are the opposition.

Accountability and alliances
While the fulcrum of demanding and reinstating accountability currently resides with 'apolitical' participants inside the movement, those outside, particularly the Left parties have a shared responsibility. If the legitimate demand of the Movement is systemic change, then it must extract political accountability from the ruling disposition. In order to navigate and reshape accountability relationships in favour of those demanding it, the CM must be held answerable and sanctioned politically. The dislodging of an administrative order is an electoral exercise in a democracy. The demand for courtroom trials is a legal one. The Right to Information legislation adopted in 2005 was the outcome of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan's success in scaling accountability mechanisms through a large campaign which uncovered corruption in state services and schemes. The Left parties, with their rich legacy in this domain will be a vital determinant of how the angst and indignation from the Andolan platform is carried forward and channeled towards delivering on the Movement's goals and objectives.

Movements deal with foes but they have to deal with friends as well. Some scholars caution of the "inner life" of movements being made up of an intense internal political life, where deliberations, strategies, splits and co-appropriation take place. Building a new 'common' sense requires combating the divisive ideology of vested interest and co-opting agents that have the potential to demobilize. The Movement must, therefore, create a big enough "we" to change the very

way in which people think about themselves and their connections to others. It is to build the collective will for action.

The conjunctural agitations in Bengal such as those on education recruitment scam, government employees struggle with dearness allowance, the ruling party and the state administration being complicit to cross-boundary, illicit transfer of natural resources and the failure of the state machinery to provide disaster relief (state currently ravaged by floods) and their past history of embezzlement of disaster-relief commodities and cash on an unprecedented scale and illegally profiteering from natural disasters at the expense of affected people—create conditions of broad-basing coalitions to press for political accountability. People's action on the streets have to translate to commensurate and decisive verdict at the hustings and EVMs. The art of political and popular messaging and coalition-building will have to rely on and tag with competencies and capabilities from other organised groups. It is important for the Movement to retain its core—the constituents and the charter of demands. The alliances they shape and friends they choose will determine the pathway and the algorithm for political accountability and thereby their quest for justice. □

[Arindom Mookerjee is an economist and a former Head of External Relations and Partnerships with WHO and UN OCHA in Geneva. His earlier commentary on the Movement was published in The Wire on 16 September 2024 (<https://thewire.in/politics/august-deaths-and-an-andolan-sublime-the-left-is-right-again>). The views expressed are personal.]

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DHYANBINDU

COLLEGE SQUARE

THE FACE OF NEO-NAZISM

Threat Culture

Pradosh Nath

NOW DOCTORS ARE BEING threatened to sign a document declaring that there is no threat culture in the workplace. 'Threat Culture', now the buzz word resonating every nook and corner of the state of West Bengal, exposes more than what eyes and ears can capture. A wider perspective may reveal that the so called Threat Culture is a feudal mode of extracting rent using neo-Nazi instruments institutionalised in a post ideology socio-political environment.

Rent is extracted for access to the services of the power of the political authority (power of the soil— in Ricardo). It has several layers— from the supreme authority down to local authorities. But unlike Ricardian rent that is paid for the use of original and indestructible powers of the soil, here the power is intangible, and it is neither original nor indestructible. Therefore, it is more repressive and virulent in maximising rent in the shortest period of time. Unlike power of the soil, political power is not inert, it is to be continuously exercised, not only to keep it alive but also to create space for its actions. Accrual of rent depends on the quality of the power, which in turn depends on the trust of and loyalty and proximity to the political authority at the top. There could be petty rent (sometimes as intangible as the public image of having access to power) to as hefty as a mountain depending on the art of capitalising the access to power. It also depends on business acumen and innovative ways of creating space for rent.

Wherever there is government fund and /or services there could be

opportunity of earning rent. Crudest and dirtiest variety would be taking a (say) 50% cut for enrolling the name of a woman beneficiary for a monthly allowance of say Rs1000. Rent for arranging transfer to a preferred location, or arranging a job might be seen as lesser evil due to mutual interest. Education could be one of the most fertile areas. People were all against the practice of mass copying. Strengthening vigilance in the exam hall has been the solution. The solution also opened a new window for earning rent. Allow only those who can pay rent. Create the necessary power nexus required for that. Then there are even better innovations. With right connectivity and rent sharing arrangement, accrual of rent could be much higher in an arrangement where enrolling for a particular exam would be good enough, while rest would be taken care of in the final result sheet.

The problem is, given the bleak employment scenario, getting employment with degrees acquired through such innovative ways appeared to be difficult. Only opportunity, even though limited, in government and government aided schools, where appointments are made through the government created agencies. A more attractive opportunity thus innovated. For example, a teachers' job requires a B.Ed degree. In no time across the state mushroomed B.Ed colleges. Accrual of rent from admission in the college, for ensuring degree, for good grades in the exams for recruitment, and finally for getting a job. This route to innovating new sources of rent income can be chalked out in any sphere of social and economic

lives where govt administration has even a marginal presence. It appears that medical colleges and hospitals are the gold mines. It could be anything from dead bodies, medical wastes, medicine, construction, and of course, giving grades to the students.

It does not require great insights to understand that the execution of the above mentioned innovative ways of extracting rent requires invincible network at the levels of govt. administration with the patronage of the ruling political dispensation. This nexus functions through a neo-Nazi modus operandi. Hitler, the original executor of Nazi mode of operation, planned mass killing of Jews as the way to social cleansing. Mass killing is a condemned way of cleansing social or economic opponents. Alternative is, instead of killing, keep the undesirables on tenterhook, - either you live the way the ruling dispensation wants you to live, or leave, or live with misery. Spreading fear that one would be either killed or harmed in case of disobedience is the neo-Nazi instrument. Palestine situation can broadly be narrated with this neo Nazi modus operandi.

Here in this land, however, neo-Nazism has taken an interesting incarnation. It is secular in nature – in the sense that it is apparently not against any caste, creed, religion, or community. It operates through subjugation of the masses. Subjugation is perpetrated in two ways: Granting favour for a price. Since it is hush money it is never talked about, and remains an open secret for ages. And making access to normal life, or legitimate right difficult so that asking favour paying appropriate rent becomes the destiny. Mass killing is not the agenda, selective killing is, in case subjugation is questioned.

This Indian version of neo Nazism gets expression in the phrase—

Threat Culture. The above understanding leads to a considered guess about the recent rape and murder (or murder and rape) of a lady junior doctor in R G Kar Medical College & Hospital, Kolkata. There was an all-out effort to destroy traces of evidence was it a case of defying the subjugation? Was it perpetrated for questioning the practices of the

culture of rent maximisation, the Threat Culture?

The softer and passive form of rent seeking political culture has been there for quite some time. How it evolved in its present form is an interesting part of post-70's socio-political history of the state. But it is believed that it has not been absent even in pre-70 days. The culture has

matured, and has become endemic in the present political eco-system. This is a post ideology political eco-system, where politics is nothing but the problem of management for retaining power and maximising rent income in a short period of time. If ideology is at all talked about, it is only to ensure a façade that can cover the ugly face of neo-Nazism. □

LETTERS

NIA Raids

On August 30, the NIA conducted raids on the homes of democratic rights activists, lawyers, Farmer leaders, and student activists across nine locations in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. The targets included Advocate Mandeep (President AFDR Chandigarh/Mohali), Advocate Ajay Kumar (Democratic Rights Lawyer and Anti-Displacement Activist), Sukhwinder Kaur (General Secretary, Bharti Kisan Union Krantikari), Davinder Azad (Student Activist, Inquilabi Chhatar Morcha Allahabad), and Advocate Pankaj Tyagi (Renowned Lawyer, Sonipat). Following these raids, the NIA issued interrogation notices, summoning them to Lucknow on various dates. Advocate Ajay Kumar was interrogated extensively at the NIA office in Chandigarh and was officially arrested at 3 AM. He has since been transferred to Lucknow.

Law and order are state matters, yet the Union Government, through agencies like the NIA, is encroaching upon state powers, as part of the BJP government's sustained endeavour to suppress democratic and dissenting voices on fabricated pretexts. The NIA, along with agencies like the ED and CBI, has become a primary tool for the Union Government to stifle opposition and silence progressive voices.

Ironically, the Aam Aadmi Party which heads the Government in

Punjab has failed to speak out against this even though its own leaders have been jailed by the Modi regime.

AILAJ

The Mute Community

Traditional nomadic Tribes have been the protectors of Hindu religion and culture. William Booth Tucker, a British ICS officer, formed the Salvation Army on the lines of South Africa, on the pretext of development and welfare of the Denotified and nomadic Tribes. The real objective was to convert these communities to Christianity! Despite all the temptations, the Denotified and nomadic tribes did not adopt Christianity.

After India's independence, it was hoped that they would be given human dignity. But alas, they do not have any place to live during their lifetime! Never mind! The aspect that puts humanity to shame is that after death there is neither a crematorium nor a graveyard for them. They dig a pit and bury the dead in the same tents in which they live. There are some nomadic tribes who carry the dead on a donkey in the dark of night and bury them in faraway forests.

Society not only considers them untouchables, but also considers them born criminals. Despite being untouchables, most of them are neither included in SC nor ST nor OBC! The crime may be anywhere! The

criminal may be whoever he is! The police authorities frequently put them behind bars. Even in jail, as per the jail manual, they are made to clean the toilets. On this the Supreme Court declared it inhuman and unconstitutional on 03 October 2024.

Extreme poverty, helplessness, police harassment and penury have forced them to adopt Christianity and Islam in some regions.

Bara or Barah Samaj [i.e. Denotified Tribes] initially had 12 clans (W. Crooke-1800) which are now divided into about 112 clans. Their dialect, language, lifestyle, culture are all the same. They call themselves 12 people among themselves. Wherever they are, people understand from their dialect that this person belonging to the 12-people. They are spread across India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Afghanistan. Hindus and Muslims will be found in the same family. All of them have the same caste panchayat. And they get married in all the countries mentioned above. Their condition is the worst in India. The government is not ready to give them certificates of Vimukta and Nomadic caste. While without the certificate they cannot get the benefit of any schemes. Due to their very weak economic conditions and dispersion they cannot organise and start any agitation for their legitimate demands. They are called mute community.

Dr B K Lodhi, DNT Activist

November 3-9, 2024

FRONTIER

15

Murder of a Dalit family in UP

A person from Dalit community has been shot dead along with his family in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh. The deceased include a young man, his wife and two daughters. The brutal murder of four members of the same family has created a stir in the entire state. Serious questions are being raised on UP Police in this case. It is reported that Sunil's wife Poonam Bharti had complained to the police on August 18 about molestation and death threats in Rae Bareilly, but the police did not take it seriously.

Nagina MP Chandrashekhar Azad said that if the police-administration had taken action on Poonam Bharti's complaint of molestation and death threats one and a half months ago, then four lives would not have been lost today. Chandrashekhar Azad has demanded CM Yogi to take the matter seriously and arrest all the accused within 48 hours and take strict action against the insensitive policemen. If this does not happen, he has threatened to go to Amethi and sit on a dharna at the Amethi District Magistrate's office to get justice for the victim's family.

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Prof G N Saibaba

With the deepest sorrow, Civil Liberties Monitoring Committee mourns the passing of Professor G N Saibaba, a warrior who carried the weight of his people's pain even as his own body struggled against overwhelming odds. Bound to a wheelchair, he fought not only the physical limitations of 90% disability but the chains of unjust imprisonment, held captive by a system that feared his voice. Despite all this, his heart remained with the oppressed, never ceasing to advocate for their rights, even from behind bars.

His life was not just one of resistance but of unshakable belief in justice. Through years of isolation

and suffering, denied basic medical care, he never wavered. His struggle for the marginalised will not fade with his passing; it will bloom in the hearts of those he touched. His loss is a monumental blow to the suffering masses of India. But his spirit, his sacrifice, and his enduring fight will live on; his life's work will bear fruit long after his death, guiding countless others in the quest for a more just and compassionate world.

On this sad occasion, Civil Liberties Monitoring Committee expresses solidarity and stands firmly with his family. Professor Saibaba's name will forever be etched in the annals of history as a symbol of undying hope, resilience, resistance against American imperialism, Hindutva fascism, and the relentless pursuit of justice.

**Lateef Mohammed Khan,
General Secretary
Civil Liberties Monitoring
Committee**

Call for Papers

World capitalism is going through the first great depression of the Twenty-first century since 2006-07. The social-economic and political insecurity created due to the capitalist crises gave impetus to the reactionary forces owing to the weakness of the subjective forces of revolution. Consequently, people have been witnessing the rise of various far-right movements including fascism in different countries.

Fascism is not just any far-right reaction. It is a particular type of far-right reaction. In various sections of the communist movement of the world, the tendency of carelessly characterizing any kind of reaction as fascism has been prevalent. The task of formulating an effective proletarian strategy and general tactics against fascism cannot be fulfilled without understanding the general particularities of fascism.

It is also necessary to understand the changes taking place around the

world. The changes taking place in Turkey, Brazil, Philippines, Russia, Middle-East Region, the US, Britain or France need to be comprehended. What is the character of the Erdogan regime? What is the character of Putin's regime? How do people understand the character of the regime of Marcos Jr. and Duterte and similar forces? What is the nature of National Rally in France? What is the nature of forces like Golden Dawn of Greece? What kind of political tendency is represented by Bolsonaro in Brazil? How do we understand the Trump phenomenon in the US? What is the character of the regime that came into being following the Khomeini-led revolution in Iran? These are living questions for Marxist and progressive political activists as well as academics.

It is precisely for a detailed and satisfactory dialogue, discussion and debate on these questions, that Arvind Institute of Marxist Studies is organising the *Seventh International Arvind Memorial Seminar from 29th December 2024 to 2nd January 2025 in Hyderabad (India)*. The Institute extends invitation to left groups, organizations and parties, Marxist intellectuals, progressive and anti-fascist academics, researchers and students of the country and the world to take part in this seminar. During these five days, the arrangement for accommodation and food will be made by the Arvind Memorial Trust.

Important Dates :

15th November 2024: Paper submission deadline

1st December 2024: Information of accepted papers to the senders

Organising Committee

Seventh International Arvind Memorial Seminar (Hyderabad)
Arvind Institute of Marxist Studies

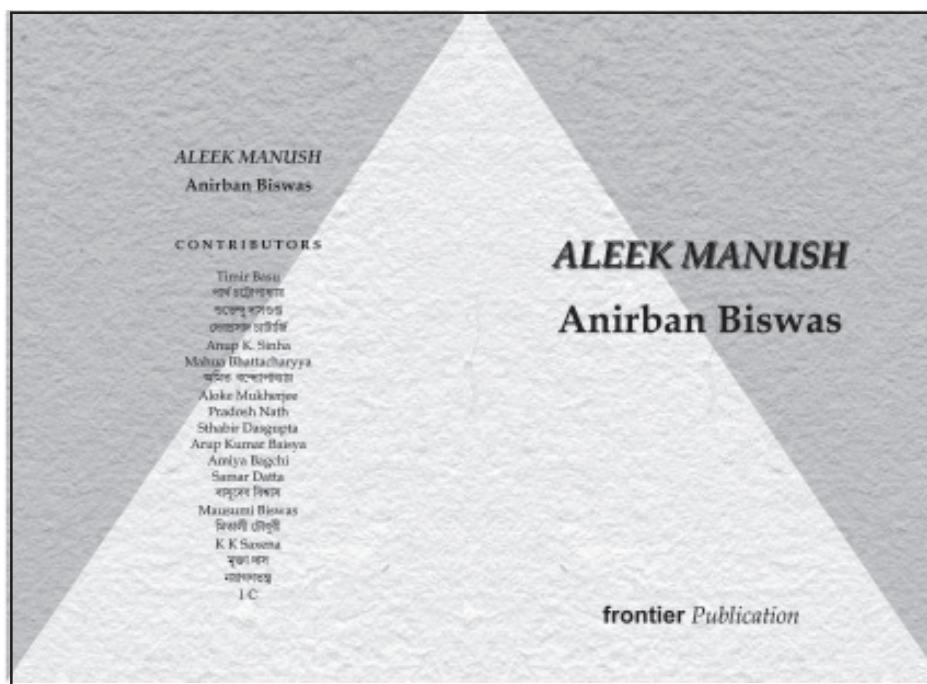
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