

# frontier

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## *Climate Diplomacy*

**B** EING A PETRO-STATE IS NOT A CRIME. BUT HOW AZERBAIJAN'S fossil fuel wealth exacerbates the human condition at home and abroad makes its hosting of COP29 an Orwellian tragedy. While 95% of Azerbaijan's exports are oil and gas, the vast majority of the population is not benefiting from this wealth.

How did Azerbaijan ever become the COP29 host? The key to its success may well be how it has courted some of the world's elites in ways that have put Azerbaijan in the spotlight in recent years. This long-term charm offensive, which serves to deflect criticism of Aliyev's government and rebrand Azerbaijan as a vibrant destination, includes flying in celebrities and hosting international events like Formula 1. The practice is certainly not limited to Azerbaijan.

The country also recently launched a pandemic-era war of choice in 2020 in the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which ultimately pushed out the indigenous Armenian population within four years—in violation of International Court of Justice orders. The violent takeover followed a nine-month siege sugar-coated as an environmental protest. Azerbaijan then proudly declared Karabakh as the first region in Azerbaijan to become "net zero." In March 2024, President Aliyev celebrated the predictable and preventable forced displacement with a traditional spring equinox bonfire, calling it a "final cleaning."

Given Azerbaijan's use of environmentalism to justify what leading human rights groups consider ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh, COP29 for the regime is the final rubber stamp for its autocratic and hostile tendencies, including ongoing threats of invasion against Armenia.

Plenty of people have argued that a petro-aggressor should have never hosted COP29—but what's done is done.

Negotiators at this year's United Nations climate summit, known as COP29, struck an agreement on November 24 to help developing countries adopt cleaner energy and cope with the effects of climate change. Under the deal, wealthy nations pledged to reach \$300 billion per year in support by 2035, up from a current target of \$100 billion.

Every year diplomats from nearly 200 nations gather to try to agree on plans to combat climate change. But regardless of the final details of the deal, the major fault lines will remain: Vulnerable nations still need huge amounts of money to cope with global warming, and wealthy nations have

been slow to make those funds available.

The Paris Agreement puts the onus of generating climate finance solely on developed countries. As of now, they are under commitment to raise 100 billion dollars per year, a target that they have most not met. The Paris Agreement has a provision that says a new higher figure should be decided before 2025, a goal the countries assembled at COP29 tried to achieve but failed.

The small island countries rejected the proposal, saying it was an example of asking parties how low they could go in climate ambition. “This text will not be adequate to fully implement the Paris Agreement, to truly drive action to hold the 1.5° C limit. This is unacceptable,” the countries said in a statement.

Global warming means climate change and for the first time scientists have been able to calculate how much climate change impacts

the severity of cyclones and storms which are now frequent across the world.

The fiasco at Baku is the latest in a long line of disappointments that are now raising a serious existential question about the COP process. The dismantling of the framework of action to save the planet that was agreed upon by more than 150 countries at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 is virtually complete. □□□

[Contributed]

## COMMENT

### The Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024

THE QUESTIONING OF THE 2024 amendment bill is not about introducing change or a fear of change, as some have argued. The proposed amendments, unlike the previous ones to the waqf laws, instead of making a bona fide step to better the waqf law (an option that is always available to all legislations), aim to dilute the entire institution of waqf through a politically controlled legal and administrative process.

It cannot be denied that the institution of waqf in India is facing challenges. Encroachment is a serious concern.

The 2024 Waqf Bill makes the District Collector, a government employee, the de facto custodian of

waqf properties. The Bill further grants the Collector the authority to convert “waqf properties” into “government properties”.

From comparing waqf to ‘jihad’ (an Arabic word that in its most general meaning means ‘struggle’ but is often used to fan Islamophobic propaganda) to Hindutva organisations repeatedly targeting waqf, the proposed legislation diluting the waqf does not come out of the blue.

The 2024 bill not only substantively reduces Muslim representation in both the Central Waqf Council and the Waqf Boards; it arbitrarily mandates non-Muslim representation in both the Central Waqf Council and the Waqf Boards. Why is this a problem? The answer to this question has its roots in the constitutional promise on equal protection of the law and the guarantee under Article 26. Article 26 of the Constitution guarantees the fundamental freedom to every religious denomination to manage its own affairs in matters of religion. As such, there are laws in UP, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, etc. mandating the representation of a person professing the Hindu faith for managing Hindu Temples and their properties. The

Gurudwara Parbhandak Committee members must also be from the Sikh community. The Wakf amendment bill arbitrarily reduces Muslim representation and also mandates non-Muslim representation in the administration of the waqf.

The bill thoughtlessly erodes provisions which has the overriding effect on inconsistent laws in other statutes, removes of the application of the Waqf Act to evacuee property, and dilutes the punishment for alienation of Waqf properties.

The present Bill, ironically, limits Muslim women’s representation to “two,” which was earlier “at least two.”

The bill reduces the waqf tribunal membership from three to two members, and the provision of post of a member who knows Muslim law and jurisprudence has been omitted. It creates room for governmental interference in the waqf asset management system and the auditing of waqf through the CAG’s office. The bill replaces the ‘election’ of state waqf board members with ‘nomination’ by the state governments. □□□

[Contributed by M R Shamshad, a senior advocate at the Supreme Court of India and Nabeela Jamil, an advocate at the Supreme Court of India and an LLM student at SOAS University of London.]

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## NOTE

## Sammilita Sanatani Jote

**SS writes:**

**B**ANGLADESH REJECTED the remarks made by India about the arrest of Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, saying that the developments had been misconstrued. India's Ministry of External Affairs had said that it was concerned about Das having been denied bail in Bangladesh.

New Delhi had also urged Dhaka to "ensure the safety and security of Hindus and all minorities, including their right of freedom of peaceful assembly and expression".

Bangladesh's foreign ministry, however, said that the developments are the country's "internal affairs". Such "unfounded statements" by India "not only misrepresent facts but also stand contrary to the spirit of friendship and understanding between the two neighbouring countries."

Das is the spokesperson of Sammilita Sanatani Jote, an organisation that advocates for the rights of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh. He was arrested in a sedition case pertaining to a rally that the group held on October 25 in Chittagong city, and the mass mobilisation was remarkable. In truth the arrest of Das had come after "multiple attacks on Hindus and other minorities by extremist elements in Bangladesh".

"It is unfortunate that while the perpetrators of these incidents remain at large, charges should be pressed against a religious leader presenting legitimate demands through peaceful gatherings." It's a matter of concern that the attacks on minorities protesting peacefully against the arrest of Shri Das continue despite international outcry.

Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the statement by New Delhi did not "reflect the harmony" that existed between the people of all faiths, and the commitment and the "efforts of the [Bangladeshi] government and the people in this regard".

It stated that all Bangladeshi citizens, regardless of their religion, have the right to freely practise, maintain or express their religious beliefs "without hindrance".

"Ensuring safety and security of all citizens, particularly the members of religious minorities remains a duty of the government of Bangladesh," the statement said. "This was yet again vindicated by the peaceful observance of Durga Puja throughout Bangladesh only last month."

Bangladesh's judiciary is "fully independent" and the interim government was not interfering in the matter, the statement added.

Das is associated with the Hindu organisation International Society for Krishna Consciousness, or ISKCON, with its headquarters in the US. It has reportedly branches in about 138 countries.

The reports of Das being detained were disturbing, ISKCON had said in a press statement.

"It is outrageous to make baseless allegations that ISKCON has anything to do with terrorism anywhere in the world," the organisation had said, urging Dhaka to release Das immediately.

Following the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government in August, several parts of Bangladesh reported incidents of violence against religious minorities. Indian Prime Minister Narendra

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Modi had in August urged Muhammad Yunus, the head of Bangladesh's interim government, to ensure the safety of Hindus and other minorities. Yunus had claimed that reports of attacks on religious minorities in Bangladesh had been exaggerated.

But what dozens of TV channels in India are showing day in and day out betrays Yunus government's ignorance. Many think for the first time the minority community tried to protest against planned rioting and government's inaction, and ISKON functionary Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari emerged as the leading figure in mobilising the minority community people under the banner of Sammilita Sanatani Jote. And the interim government lost no time to arrest him under false charges. □□□

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 HUMRA QURAISHI'S COLUMN
 

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## Sambhal Violence: What Next?

*Humra Quraishi*

**W**HAT IS TAKING PLACE in Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh is not just too shocking but along the expected format of the Sangh's Agenda plans, getting executed in town after town. Pulling down age old historic structures, silencing voices of dissent, killing and destroying all those trying to come up with facts.

I'm writing this column in the backdrop of the communal violence that hit Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh. The context is the centuries old Shahi mosque of this town, which has suddenly come into focus with the Right-Wing alleging it was built on a temple site and a survey team was sent to the mosque.

Disturbing shots of the build-ups and of the very handling of the situation by the government machinery under the Right-Wing rulers of the day... Five Muslim men killed in the firing in Sambhal. And the latest news coming in is that lawyer Zafar Ali, chief of Mosque Sadar and Shahi Mosque Committee, representing the Shahi mosque side, has been detained for questioning by the police. Quite apparent, pressuring tactics used to make him keep shut. Just a day back he had spoken out in that forthright way that he overheard orders of the police firing, and with that it is the police force that killed and not the Muslims as alleged by the local administration. And now, with a man of the stature of lawyer Zafar Ali in the grip of the administration, the relays are just too un-nerving and shocking ... Leaving the Muslim minority community just too stunned and in a state of shock and dismay. They cannot even speak out and bare out basic facts!

Otherwise all possible charges could be heaped on them.

Opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh blamed the BJP for the violence in Sambhal, alleging the survey team was sent to the mosque by the ruling BJP party to nurture its "politics of hatred". Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav lashed out at the BJP, saying its government and the administration orchestrated the violence "to divert attention from electoral malpractice...A survey team was deliberately sent in the morning to disrupt discussions about the election. The intention was to create chaos so that no debate on election issues could happen,"

UP Congress chief Ajay Rai said the incidents of violence were increasing day by day in the state under the Yogi Adityanath government. "When the Chief Minister of the state himself gives statements like '*batenge toh katenge*,' then how can there be an atmosphere of peace in the state? This is a completely planned incident."

The core fact is that today communal unleashes and blatant targeted attacks have crossed all limits. Instead of trying to find a way out from this vicious atmosphere, the political rulers of the day have been coming up with hate-dripping speeches! There seems a well planned strategy to demoralise the Muslim community to such an extent they sit all too quiet and much too subdued in their mohallas and ghettos with just no relief. They are anyway facing severe discrimination on every possible front and the realities are only turning darker by the day.

This strategy of the Sangh has been on for the last several years. I

recall around the phase of the Babri Masjid demolition, Khushwant Singh had asked BJP's K.R. Malkani that how many more masjids would the Sangh target and demolish! Khushwant was far-sighted and with that certain that the Babri Masjid destruction was the start of the Sangh's Agenda plans to carry forward destruction of many more structures, human and otherwise.

And when I had interviewed Professor Irfan Habib he had gone on to warn: "such a post-factor rationalisation of what was done on 6 December 1992, would place in jeopardy the fate of numerous historical monuments all over the country, an increasing number of which are being targeted for destruction by the communal Right-Wing forces."

This Aligarh-based internationally known historian is the former chairman of Indian Council of Historical Research and also the former Professor of History at the Centre for Advanced Study in History at AMU; author of books on the Mughal rule; prominent amongst them, *Agrarian System of Mughal India, An Atlas of Mughal Empire, Prehistory*. He was forthright in his criticism of the Right-Wing forces and the destruction of the Babri Masjid that took place.

"There are no 'Left' or 'Right' Wing historians! All this is a creation of the BJP. If anyone speaks with a scientific outlook he's called 'Leftist' by them." He had gone on to say, "There wasn't a Hindu or Muslim reaction to the destruction of the Babri Masjid. The very destruction was an insult to the country and its citizens; an assault on the Indian secular consciousness. As an Indian I felt insulted ...it was a blow to the image of my country."

Professor Habib minced no words in stating that destruction could be repeated. And with that, chances of other mosques getting targeted ruled

out. During the course of the interview I had asked him to comment on the Babri Masjid, whether it was built on a temple site or did it exist for centuries on that very site? Did the ASI conduct the excavation independently? Also, why those claims by the Right-Wing parties that they do possess evidence that the Ram Janambhoomi temple was originally there?

“Can’t say much about the competence of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to conduct rigorous, scientific and impartial excavations. One must remember that the

archaeological finds are subject to a wide range of interpretations. If it is trying to find out whether the Babri Masjid was immediately built upon a temple than any stratum of lime-mortar bound rubble or medieval baked bricks or glazed pottery below the mosque should be enough to prove that such was not the case. If the search is on anything that could possibly belong to a non-Muslim shrine of any sort of any earlier time then almost anything could be defined as a temple relic: a pre-13 century carved stone or image or even a Kushana period brick, though

such might easily have come from a domestic house. In that case the dispute could be unending; or could simply give the VHP the benefit of doubt and declare that ASI has spoken and decided in its favour.”

Today, as 2024 is fast coming to a close, the Muslim community in the country is facing severe crisis as different alibis are being used by the rulers of the day to dent and demolish and destroy the very basics to a community. Day- to -day survival and its identity is getting targeted so very steadily and blatantly.

□□□

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#### POINT OF VIEW

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## Rise and Fall of a Paradigm: Post colonial Indian Sub-continental States and the Praxis of Agrarian Resistance

**Neshat Quaiser**

[This article is divided into a) Subjugated Past and the Free Present; b) Legitimacy of the states and the ‘unexpected’ behaviour of the exploited classes; c) Expedient Land Reform; d) Nationalist Movement and the Peasantry; e) General and Specific Dynamics of Domain; f) State and the Post-colonial Sub-continental Agrarian Resistance: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh; g) Concluding Remarks]

### **Subjugated Past and the ‘Free’ Present**

**T**HIS ARTICLE PRIMARILY deals with the theoretical issues relating to praxis of agrarian resistance, agrarian structure and relations of domination, and the character of postcolonial states in Indian subcontinent. These questions are now-almost-forgotten within social sciences. These questions constitute a complex whole influencing and altering the collective life of majority of the people in the region. The site of this complex whole is constituted by multiple metaphors. The article would briefly examine the ways in which these metaphors significantly contribute to the making of praxis of ‘peasant’ resistance to class-caste domination. Such an exercise demands an examination of the internal dynamics of the interplay of agrarian collective action and politico ideological discourses.

The issue is to be situated within the context of today’s po-litically divided Indian sub continent. However, in order to capture the internal dynamics of the domain of the con-temporary independent states of the Indian sub continent, its preceding and (in a way) continuing past cannot be ignored. Thus the interplay of the subjugated past and the ‘free’ present comes into force.

In the history of the Indian sub continent, 1947 emerged as a paradigm. This paradigm was concretised by the continuing ideological political discourses. The paradigm itself was projected as an ideology, with the promise that it would mitigate the existing relations of domination in all spheres. However, the internal logic of the discourse was to produce what was not projected. Hence, 1947 caused less civilisational ruptures and more of cultural traumas.

Be it the irony of history or the

inevitability of a particular course of history, the structures that sustain the relations of domination continues to operate in the ‘free states’. And hence challenges to the state also continue. Thus, the need to capture the components of the internal dynamics of the interplay of the state and the praxis of resistance to agrarian class-caste domination.

In the context of collective ‘peasant’ praxis of resistance in the Indian sub continent reci-procal interplay of ideology, class and agrarian collective action and the interplay between the agrarian collective action and politico ideological discourse are intrinsically linked with each other. In other words though the two themes do form two domains with their own internal dynamics and enjoy relative autonomy, empirical evidence concerning sub-continental post colonial collective ‘peasant’ praxis of resistance suggest that the internal dynamics of the two domains constantly acted as determinant for each other.

### **Legitimacy of the states and the ‘unexpected’ behaviour of exploited classes**

The colonial past of the Indian sub continent had direct bearing on its contemporary history in all its spheres including collective praxis of agrar-

ian resistance to class-caste mechanisms of domination, and is to be analysed at two levels: at the first level it is to be comprehended that the Post colonial history of Indian sub-continent is marked by a continuity of relations of domination. With the ouster of the British—the external enemy—the most difficult task that the post colonial states have been faced with is to *gain legi-timacy*. That is, to establish that the state is not external to its people as the colonial state was. But the fact is that the ‘free’ states along with supporting social structures continue to be external to the oppressed, exploited and disenfranchised classes and castes with still newer forms. Hence, the study of the collective praxis of agrarian resistance in the Indian sub-continent in effect is the study of the interplay of the subjugated past and the ‘free’ present, which would make it a study of the rise and fall of a paradigm.

At the second level, the issues concerning class consciousness and ideology are palpable with regard to collective praxis of agrarian resistance in the Indian sub-continent. It has been very forcefully (but contentiously) argued that if consciousness is constitutive of labour process through which men acquire consciousness of their existence in relation to the structure (economy) and the structure becomes undesirable, as they get totally alienated from it. In other words, consciousness of the existence in relation to the structure is inevitable. And that is how class-consciousness and ideology emerge and the oppressed and exploited people become capable of unmasking the ‘hidden structure’ beneath the surface of apparent social relations. As a logical corollary of this argument, class-consciousness and ideology then *should* necessarily come into force and give rise to class collective actions of resistance. Does this always happen in

such a neatly drawn linear order? Why do the working class and exploited-oppressed *peasants* not behave the way they should behave as now-classically prescribed? If so, why is it not happening? In other words, why do the agrarian oppressed and exploited classes not always throw challenge to the structures of exploitation and oppression? Why does the class-consciousness lie dormant? These questions have generated enough contentious debate for quite some time. Thinkers and political activists have made claims and counter claims alike. In order to address these questions, one must raise another question that: under what conditions do class collective action take place? One possible explanation has been given in the above argument, that the oppressive and exploitative structures should be enough to effect this. But it does not always happen. We argue that it is only in the domain of active politics and in other ideological forms (such as culture) that the class-consciousness gets crystallised and activated. Thus, the role of an active political consciousness and internal and external organisation become a necessity. Hence, active political consciousness, in this regard, becomes the principal generative principle. This active political consciousness may find expression either through an organisation or without, as is evident from the sub-continental experiences.

An active and conscious reciprocity between the domains of politics and economy is therefore a necessary condition for the manifestation of class collective action. The domain of active politics therefore is the *general* necessary condition under which class collective actions take place. Instances of *Naxalbari*, *Tebhaga* and *Hashtnagar* (organisational) and *Bhoomi Sena* (non organisational) are obvious examples in this regard. Organisation

is one form of its expression. There may be other forms in which class collective actions take place, as we shall see in the pages to come. At the moment we are discussing party/organisation. How does the oppressed class mould itself into a political organisation or politically organised force as the case may be? Timpanaro (1980:195) has argued:

“However, even the moulding of the proletariat into a political party was always seen by Marx, Engels, and Lenin (as it still is today by Mao...) as an objective, ‘caused’ process and not as a mere act of will...”

How is it caused? We argue that it is caused by the same reciprocity between the domains of politics and economy. That is, how a structural issue obviously becomes a political issue. For instance, the question of differentiation of agrarian class structure is essentially a political question as it acquires centrality in any given scheme of agrarian transformation of a fundamental nature. The meanings that a social category (for instance ‘*peasant*’), attributes to its situations of existence and life under those situations are not structured only by its location in that structure but also by its reciprocal interaction with the domains of politics and culture. Hence, it operates at two levels: firstly, the structural location contains the seeds of an alternative ideology. Secondly, this alternative ideology as opposed to the dominant ideology acquires relevance and meaning in ideological forms. Hence the response of different agrarian classes, during the colonial and post colonial phases of Indian sub-continent, to the process of change differed depending upon their location in the structure and ideological forms they endorsed. Thus the intermediary agrarian dominant classes, in order to maintain their hegemony, collaborated with the anti colonial nationalist leadership representing

dominant classes, while on the other hand the 'peasants' distanced and acted according to the structural imperatives of their own situations of existence. It is obvious, therefore, that the structural imperatives rest both on economic and social-ideological domains.

The ruling classes control these domains. It is the historical task of these classes to see that persistence of their dominance is not threatened. However, as has been stated, it is in these very domains that the ruled acquire consciousness of the *given meaning* of their existence. Manifestation of class behaviour, for instance, class collective action of the 'peasants', is linked with a class coming to terms with its own consciousness. Ideology appears as a window, a possibility. Hence, the ruled strive to reconstruct the ideological forms to change the relations of domination.

#### ***Expedient Land Reform***

What we are suggesting is that though the class-consciousness is ineradicably engrained in the labour process, which is situated in the domain of economy, its full meaning is gained in all its manifestations in the ideological forms. Experiences of the oppressed in the domain of economy acquire specific meaning, with regard to the emergence of alternative ideology, only in the ideological forms. It is in this that the base and superstructure acquire specific meaning through ideology.

The point can well be elaborated in the context of various land reform measures adopted by the state in the colonial and post-colonial Indian sub-continent and elsewhere. An agrarian structure marked by relations of domination rests essentially both on economic structure and its supporting ideological structures. Both these structures interact reciprocally whether to maintain it or change it. Various land reform measures adopted by the state

in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have to be seen from this perspective. Some commentators on the issue have argued that the land reform measures in the post colonial states have essentially been initiated by the ruling elites (see for example Joshi, 1974; though elsewhere he has taken a contradictory position as well, see Joshi, 1972). Various land reform measures in these countries such as *Zamindari Abolition Act* and other tenancy acts in India; enactment of SPSATA of 1950 and various other land reform measures in united Pakistan were in fact the product of wide spread agrarian unrest and intense peasant struggles. However, it must be noted that these land reform measures adopted by the state were in many ways safety valves and had become historical necessity for the state to meet the challenges thrown by the oppressed at different periods. These measures were the mechanisms to contain and diffuse the challenges that the power structures faced. It was a case of political expediency. It has been evident from the experiences of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh that these measures did not yield desired results because either they were designed in such a way that they should not affect the existing agrarian power structures or, in case of those measures which clearly favoured oppressed, they were not allowed to be operative. However, certain 'unintended' consequences of such measures too should be kept in mind – for example land reform and the production of Mandal Commission in India. Moreover, this question of 'unintended' consequences contains certain philosophical connotation with far-reaching implications.

The point is that the oppressed did challenge the existing relations of domination and their challenges did affect not only the economic structure but also its supporting ideo-

logical sub structures. And this was possible because of the reciprocal interplay of the domains of economy and active, organised politico-cultural consciousness.

#### ***Nationalist Movement and the Peasantry***

We have talked about direct organisational collective actions for the immediate conditions of existence. In other words, collective actions of immediate class situations. What are the other conditions under which 'peasants' act collectively and apparently not for immediate class purposes? Take the case of nationalist movement in Indian sub continent. It has been argued that the 'peasantry' participated fully in the anti colonial nationalist movement (see, Chandra, 1979; Oommen, 1990; Deva, 1946; Ranga and Sahajanand, 1981). The thrust of this argument is that the principal task during the colonial period was to eliminate the external enemy, i.e., the colonial state, and that is why a grand alliance of all classes was a must to achieve that goal. We would argue that the 'peasantry', which 'wholeheartedly' participated, was essentially the intermediary dominant agrarian classes that stood to benefit from the nationalist movement. Blanket use of the term 'peasantry' by some social science commentators has caused much damage to the understanding of this phenomenon. However, there have also been instances of *peasants* – the actual producer – poor peasants, agricultural workers etc., – revolting against

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**ALAIGAL VELIYEETAGAM!**

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the immediate native oppressors and at the same time waging struggles on certain issues or forces under the leadership of their oppressors or organisations representing the interests of the dominant classes. Sub-continental experiences show that the *peasants* did so to get rid of abject poverty and other forms of social oppression. *Peasants* many a time formed the backbone of the anti colonial struggle giving it a mass character and providing it sustenance, which was so crucial to the nationalist leadership. They did so with the hope that once the external enemy is eliminated, the agrarian relations of domination will also disappear as had constantly been promised by the principal anti colonial mobilising agencies such as the Congress, Muslim League, Unionist Party, Praja Party etc. However, once the external enemy was out and the transfer of political power achieved, it soon became clear that these promises were nothing but part of political expediency. It was the fall of a paradigm glorified, and soon *peasants* in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh rose in revolt. An expedient grand 'nationalist' umbrella alliance soon came to an end.

#### **General and Specific Dynamics of Domain**

We have so far talked in terms of generality of class, class-consciousness, and ideology as generative principles for the expression of class-consciousness in the form of collective actions. However, at this point the question of specificity needs to be raised. How to look at this? Let us first put the argument and then pose the question. The argument is: consciousness is constitutive of labour process, class is product of production process, and ideology is concretisation of class-consciousness in a specific form, thereby, ontologically speaking, these categories are of trans historical nature.

The Question is: do these categories act in all situations and times in the same fashion? Or do these acquire a specific form, sign, code and meaning system, or get moulded in a specific spatio-temporal situation? And if so, how and under what conditions?

To address this question, we have employed the concept of *dynamics of domain*. The most important feature of a domain is that, it contains two opposing forces. The two interact. The nature of interaction depends on who dominates the domain. Each domain has its own *internal dynamics*, which sustain it. However, although each domain is exclusive in terms of its internal dynamics of sustenance, no domain is completely autonomous or independent of other domains existing at a given time of history. Dynamics of each domain constantly knock at each other's door. In other words, external forces do affect the domain in different capacities in different times. For instance, the domain of economy is constantly threatened by the domain of politics and culture and vice versa. That is, though the domain is sustained by its own internal properties, its existence largely depends on the existence of other domains also. That is the logic of the survival of the society in its totality. So far it was the generality of the *dynamics of domain*.

*Specificity of the dynamics of domain*: Domains of society exist in all situations and every-where. Does the internal dynamics of domain and the contingent external forces are of the same nature? History tells us that it is not so. And here comes the question of specificity of the dynamics of domain. Societal domains that existed during the colonial Indian sub continent had their own internal dynamics. But what we are suggesting is that those domains were not of universal character in the whole of

colonial India. It is on this basis that we would argue that colonial India was divided much before its formal declaration in 1947. This division was marked not only by difference in economic domains but also, more importantly, in terms of domains of politics and culture. Specific domain of a divided sub-continent generated specific type of politico ideological discourse. This discourse, in turn, affected the domain of economy. There was an obvious reciprocity between the two. Politico ideological discourse represented the elements of the domain of economy manifested in the forms of various contending classes, as the domain itself contained in it opposing forces. Hence, the structural imperatives for the agrarian collective action during the colonial period was marked by the reciprocity between the *specific* domains of economy and politics of each divided region of the colonial India which we have identified as the mainland India, the North-West, and the peripheral Muslim Bengal. *Peasant* collective actions in each region had different course and character. In other words, it was not of a single sub continental character. 'Nationalism' was of course not the single integrating force for whole of the sub continent. However, one must exercise utmost care in understanding the above-mentioned division. Two most important factors in this regard must be kept in mind: (1) All the three regions had different mobilising agencies that came to occupy almost the whole of the political space in their respective regions, and emerged as the principal intermediary and negotiator on behalf of the 'people' with the colonial state.(2) Aspects of culture (religion, language, nationality), for reasons of specific course of history constituted parts of structural imperatives for collective action including that of agrarian collective actions. The structuring principles of



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this situation continued in post-colonial sub-continent.

**State and the Post-colonial  
Subcontinental Agrarian  
Resistance**

The specificity discussed above is evident from the experiences of post colonial sub-continental states and societies as well. Post colonial states in Indian subcontinent are marked by a continuity of the relations of domination. Hence, these states are constantly faced with the crisis of legitimation, as the Free State is not *expected* to behave the way the subjugated state behaved. Be it the irony of history or the inevitability of a particular course of history, the structures that sustained the relations of domination continued to operate in the 'free' society and state.

There are sharp differences of opinion on the precise characterisation of the state in India subcontinent. However, one thing is clear that the oppressed and exploited people do not view the state as their redeemer and it largely remains external to them.<sup>2</sup> And thereby challenges to the state also persist. Understandably, the history of the post colonial states in the subcontinent is full of peasant revolts. However, despite the structural commonalities found in all the three independent states of the post colonial Indian subcontinent, there are specificities as well, which have given rise to differential collective 'peasant' praxis of resistance.

**India**

In the post 1947 India we find a three-tier structure with regard to collective 'peasant' praxis of resistance. They are: (a) reinforcers, (b) reformists, and (c) challengers. The content and forms of agrarian collective actions in the post colonial India are largely the responses to these three types of structure. An attempt, in this context, would be useful to analyse the relative ab-

sence and presence of the independent Indian state with reference to various agrarian social categories.

Specificities of the post colonial India with regard to peasant collective action can be summed up as follows: (a) The political question and vision of future society are central to the whole issue; (b) After independence, the Indian National Congress came to power. The point is significant as it was the Congress party, which had claimed as the principal mediator and mobiliser in much of the subcontinent on the promise of mitigating the agrarian relations of domination once the external enemy is eliminated; (c) The post colonial subcontinent remained multi religious and multi-national; (d) The strength of the Communist Party was mainly confined to India as most of its leaders and activists from North West and East Bengal migrated to India in the wake of partition; and (e) Hence, the modes of challenge and mechanisms of state control and power are also marked by multiplicity.

**Pakistan**

The trajectories of collective praxis of agrarian resistance in the postcolonial Pakistan signified the complete fall of the ruling paradigm. The ruling paradigm that had come to exercise determining role in the decade preceding the formal formation of Pakistan was, however, different from that of mainland India. The paradigm had evolved over a fairly long span of time. Pakistan was formed with the Muslim majority provinces of undivided India. It was perceived to be home for the Indian Muslims where they could manage their own affairs free from the domination of Hindu zamindars, moneylenders, traders, industrialists and the Hindu dominated political spaces. Religion was marshalled as the unifying force cutting across deep-rooted class, caste and ethnic divi-

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sions among the sub-continental Muslims. However, during the course of Pakistan movement itself and immediately after its formation, it became apparent that religion was employed as an instrument to legitimise the leadership of Pakistan movement, which was dominated by the feudal, commercial and industrial interests. Intended ideological import of this paradigm was further confirmed when Pakistan broke in 1971. It has been argued that the oppressed *peasants* had played a crucial role in the formation of Pakistan in the hope of getting their inhuman conditions of existence mitigated. To *peasants*, Pakistan was a paradigm of hope. To leadership, it was a paradigm of continued domination over vast masses in a new political setting. The paradigm of hope was to be shattered soon. We find large-scale agrarian unrest immediately after the formation of the new state. It became clear that the structures of domination were to continue.

Specificities that affected the agrarian collective actions in post colonial Pakistan can be summed up as follows: (a) religion did not act as a binding force (b) a specific character of a state is not either conducive or detrimental to the growth of conscious peasant collective actions. This is evident from the persistence of various types of discourse representing different politico-ideological streams. This reality questions the implicit argument that in a society like Pakistan the state, under the control of a 'bureaucratic-military oligarchy', sets the terms for what may be called the *dominant discourse* for whole of the politico ideological spaces. For instance, the dominant scholarship has viewed the post colonial Pakistan society and politics primarily in terms of religion, Islamisation or ethnicity. Hence, the *peasant* collective action in Pakistan

has largely been unstudied by scholars. Peasant collective action therefore, is a challenge to the dominant discourse. (c) Rise of regional ethnic conflicts and nationality movements has adversely affected the peasant collective actions.

Hence, with regard to peasant mobilisation in Pakistan, we find a three-tier structure i.e., a) the re-enforcers; b) the ethno-nationalists; and c) the challengers, which is significantly different from what we find in India.

### **Bangladesh**

With the partition of India in 1947, an independent state of Pakistan came into existence of which the present Bangladesh as an independent county was a part. Structural specificities of this region—known as East Bengal/East Pakistan—with regard to politico ideological discourse and agrarian collective action during the colonial period have been briefly discussed above. This Muslim majority region had become independent on the strength of popular movements of the toiling *peasants* and the intermediary agrarian classes against the domination of Hindu *zamindars* who had dominated the rural East Bengal ever since the promulgation of the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 that fundamentally changed the socio-political landscape of the India subcontinent. The decade preceding 1947 had witnessed meteoric rise of a paradigm namely Pakistan that sought to challenge the colonial authority and its modes of agrarian domination through immediate native Hindu oppressors. However, the paradigm witnessed a sudden fall immediately after 1947 when this very 'Muslim' leadership continued with the same modes of agrarian relations of domination which they had earlier sought to challenge. Hence, *peasants* immediately after the transfer of power in 1947 rose in revolt in East Paki-

stan. Owing to certain specific course of history, it was the central ruling elite of West Pakistan that dominated the domains of economy, politics and culture in the independent East Bengal/East Pakistan. Not only the *peasants*, but also the rising Bengali middle class and the nascent bourgeoisie felt suffocated. This gave rise to a *New Nationalist Movement* against the domination of West Pakistan ruling elite. The New Nationalist Movement was first concretised in the form of 1952 language movement. The period between 1952 and 1971 was marked by intense constitutional- political crisis. The peasant collective action in this period was largely subsumed under the new nationalist feelings and movements. However, *peasants* continued to display visible or invisible protests against the relations of domination even in the midst of heightened *Bengali* nationalism.

The '*peasant*' movement in the post 1971 Bangladesh was a case of completing the full circle. Hindu oppressive *zamindars* had gone, the oppressive and exploitative rule of West Pakistanis also had come to an end and the rule of Bengalis has been established. The country has been liberated from the yoke of West Pakistan colonialism. But the conditions of the *peasant* masses remained as they were, and the struggle goes on.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The following conclusions can be drawn:

- (a) Structural location of a social category is a necessary but not always a sufficient factor for the display of class collective action. It is in the domain of active politics and in other ideological forms that class-consciousness gets crystallised and activated;
- (b) Class collective action does not follow any neatly drawn linear pattern;

- (c) Though the class collective actions are caused by structural location of a social category, it is realised through mediation of politics, culture, religion etc. These supposedly non class factors play very significant role in initiating the pattern of class collective actions. It is not that a particular class, for instance *peasants*, is always a plaything in the hands of these non class domains, but peasants also act within these domains to wreck them from within. These domains have very significant metaphorical importance;
- (d) The ideology is also endowed with de mystificatory and emancipatory force. Hence, an ideology is also a metaphor of no to everything that oppresses me; no to everything that robs me of my human dignity;
- (e) Forms of collective action directed against the relations of domination have direct co relation with ideology. Such forms of collective action represent forms of social/class consciousness concretised in ideology and operationalised through organised spontaneous responses. It is objectively caused and subjectively realised. Forms acquire specific meaning only in terms of its ideological content. Hence, a form of collective action is not merely a political act, but becomes a cultural act in a wider sense. It therefore becomes a means of discourse with the wider social world. Forms of collective action are a means to effect not only intra-class but also inter class discourse. Struggle itself becomes a discoursing act;
- (f) The state with its supporting ideological structures, in the post colonial Indian sub continent, is one of the principal agencies for the persistence of relations of domination. Hence, the oppressed people do not view it as their redeemer;
- (g) The everyday resistance perspective particularly the ideas of Foucault and his followers in the light of above discussion has assumed significance. This perspective fails to examine the idea of replacing the orders of domination and hegemony, exploitation and oppression. People seem to be content with everyday resistance that does not threaten the system's persistence and continuation for the assumption that "most subordinate classes are, after all, far less interested in changing the large structures of the state of law..." However, the idea of replacing the orders of domination and hegemony remains active beneath the surface of everyday resistance and practice. It would be useful to note that having been fully aware of conservative nature of folklore and popular morality Gramsci had argued that there would also be a "series of innovations, often creative and progressive, spontaneously determined by the forms and conditions of life in the process of development..." The spontaneous, we argue, is not necessarily unorganised. Spontaneous everyday acts are cumulative expressions of accumulated experiences within relations of domination. Beneath the calm surface lies the uneasy lull, always finding a way out to surface. Zones of silence closely border the zones of violence. □

[Dr Neshat Quiser, Associate Professor, Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH-Delhi)

## WAR IN DANDAKARANYA

### 'Operation Kagar'

**Harsh Thakor**

REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS Association or *Virasam* has compiled a set of essays in a booklet '*Operation Kagar.-The Combined Assault of Corporatisation, Militarisation and Hindutva*' unravelling the barbaric attacks of the Indian government, to alienate the Adivasis in the forests, as part and parcel of a broader goal of suppressing the aspirations of millions and targeting all who resist methods of criminalisation. It has analysed the co-relation between Corporati-

sation, Militarisation and Hindutva and explained the phenomenon of 'Operation Kagar' within the broader framework of saffron fascism and Indian people's democratic movements, particularly highlighting the inter-relation of the Framers movement in Delhi from 2020. Most penetratively it explores the socio-economic and historical background as well as the intensity of barbaric oppression unleashed in recent times, particularly with the advent of saffron rule in Delhi.

Dandkaranya in its decades long revolutionary process, pioneered several enriching social and cultural experiences. It bore the brunt of unparalleled violence for four decades and now immersed in the mist of a ruthless battle. 'Operation Kagar' is mercilessly extinguishing the indigenous people, deploying more than one hundred thousand paramilitary forces, backed by drones, helicopters and satellite surveillance.

Historically, the Indian State alienated the Adivasi community, with the objective of accumulating forest wealth and natural resources. In spite of their great role in sustaining the economy and ecology, they

remained largely invisible, with their traditional way of life underappreciated, rather denied.

It is absolutely imperative for all democrats to bang every nail in the wall to terminate this all-out war of the Indian state. The Modi regime represents the interests of the Corporate Capital and Hindutva agenda, while Adivasis relentlessly wage defiance to preserve their lands and constitutionally guaranteed rights.

In the age of finance capital, the state and its administrative machinery are operating under a modern constitutional democracy as simply technological managerial brokers for mega corporations. The resistance in Dandakaranya against large scale corporatisation of the natural wealth has converted the region into one of the most extensively militarised zones in India, after North East and Kashmir. The aim of the operation is to capture vast swathes of natural resources for Adanis, Ambanis and their foreign collaborators. The Adivasi movement has in the very thick of the spine posed a challenge to the State-Corporate-Hindutva Nexus.

There is a clear political orientation that the Maoist movement is the biggest obstacle to corporatisation with Minister Amit Shah like his Congress predecessor Chidambaram, vociferously categorising it as the

biggest enemy of development and how the state would liberate the country soon. "We will liberate the country from the Maoist movement".

Immediately after capturing power in Chattisgarh, Modi's party—the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) faced two views— State Home minister wished to resolve the issue of tribal dispossession with talks while Union Home minister Amit Shah was bent on extinguishing the Maoists who have been fighting for Adivasi rights for more than four decades. In essence both were similar. Hundreds of thousands of CRPF, BSF and other local forces, including vigilante groups like **Salwa Judum** were sent to Dandakaranya to comply with the sole aim of destroying the Adivasi community.

The Sangh Parivar perceives the Maoist movement as an obstacle to the objective of "New India" based on corporate Hindutva. It is not just an ideological, cultural strategy for the Sangh Parivar, but a political, administrative and military strategy for the BJP.

Central India has been the scene of fourteen major mass struggles in the last three years. Silger's unarmed struggles in Bastar are fermenting with Adivasis understanding the risk of displacement posed by the Indian State and for environmental, cultural and geographical reasons to save forests, water and lands. Millions of people have been engaged in battle on issues like better roads and bridges, opposing felling of trees, mining, tourism and anti-constitutional laws. It has made the state all the more determined to crush the mass movement by enforcing **Operation Kagar**.

The dark decade of saffron rule has been more reactionary or subversive than the post-liberalisation period of Narsimha Rao. With the destruction of constitutional bodies,

the emergency of 1975–7 has long been overshadowed.

The state of Bastar accounts for approximately India's 38% of iron ore, 18% of manganese, 20% of bauxite, 17 % of coal, 11% of dolomite, and 4 % of diamond resources.

The Centre's strategy is based on privatising existing public sector mining corporations and providing licences to open new mines. Its objective is to construct specific zones for extraction of minerals. It undertook three major steps for this. First was to create favourable policy environment or greater corporate involvement in mining operations. Second was constructing extensive infrastructures like roads, railways and airports etc. Third was through militarising the entire region with police and military camps.

From 2013 to 2018, the Chhattisgarh government signed 272 Memorandum of Understanding with public and private sector corporations, entailing investment of around RS 16.6 billion. To enforce these MOUs and extract resources, the state has tried to uproot the Adivasis from the lands. No political party, barring the Maoist party, has tried to oppose it.

The 1990s marked the era of advent of imperialist globalisation, which reduced federalism, creating smaller states, smaller districts and a stronger centre. Three special states were created in 2000. Unlike Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand; Bastar had a rich tradition of popular mass movements. Brothers Sidhu and Kanhu waged a heroic struggle against British colonialism, while the Santhals and Mundas fought for a separate state before the Simon Commission. Imperialist globalisation policies were the main reasons for the formation of Jharkhand and even Chattisgarh.

In the early 1980s the Maoists

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sowed the seeds of revolutionary movement penetrating Bihar–Jharkhand region, and in Bastar forests, cutting across from neighbouring state of the then United Andhra Pradesh.

From 1990–2014 the state has deployed a series of counter revolutionary manoeuvres to displace people from land and disrupt their social networks. Extrajudicial killings, faked surrenders, forced displacement and attacks on civil liberties, have been a routine feature, for a long period.

In 2009 Operation Green Hunt was introduced to eliminate the Maoists.

Since 2014, the Modi led NDA govt., has intensified brutalisation at heights unscaled. In 2017 it crystallised **Operation Green Hunt** into **Operation Samadhan** aggravating scale of aggression. However it failed to eradicate the Maoists. Despite setbacks they continue to hold the fort.

From January 2024, the state escalated repression through declaring ‘Operation Kagar’, eliminating

over 150 people, to take major leap to break the backbone of the Maoist movement.

The government is continually terrorising and eliminating the Adivasis in the name of containing Maoists in a planned way and yet the mainstream media has remained relatively silent while local media outlets are subjugated to constant threats from disseminating information. □□□

[Harsh Thakor is freelance Journalist who is in touch with civil liberties and Adivasi movement. Thanks information from Virasam Booklet on Operation Kagar.]

BIDROHI

## Of Nazrul and Vara Vara Rao

*Moumita Alam*

[Following is a speech delivered by Moumita Alam at the launch of Vara Vara Rao’s translation of Kazi Nazrul Islam’s collection of poems—BIDROHI]

THESE DAYS THE CHILDREN studying in English medium schools are fast becoming oblivious to the contribution of Nazrul Islam. Others, who are still dependent on the public education system, are victims of inequality due to the deteriorating public educational infrastructure, thanks to neo-liberalisation. It’s very saddening to say Kazi Nazrul Islam in his own birthplace is fast becoming only a thesis topic for research scholars. At this juncture when I got to learn that Vara Vara Rao is working on translating Nazrul Islam’s poems, I was more than happy. What can be better than Vara Vara Rao translating the poems of Nazrul! Thanks to Gita Ramaswamy and Hyderabad Book Trust for publishing the collection—**BIDROHI**.

When our jungles, rivers, mountains, lands are being occupied by ten billionaires and the government works as a midwife felicitating the smooth transition of the occupation, when the gig workers are working like slaves of the neo-liberal market

economy, our children are the worst victims of climate crisis, the relevance of Kazi Nazrul Islam, the relevance of Varavara Rao’s poetry can never fade. We need Nazrul more than ever before.

In recent times the optics of students and youth participating in what’s now called Bangladesh’s second freedom struggle against the autocratic Sheikh Hasina regime, reciting Nazrul’s immortal verses facing bullets and shells of the fascist state, have deeply affected me, a Bengali, a teacher of a government madrasa near the Bangladesh border.

Coincidentally, I was about to start a new chapter in the class on one of those days and the first question I asked my 5th standard students was, “Do you know Kazi Nazrul Islam and the students went silent. It was so disheartening. When on the other side of the border, the Bengalis were celebrating and drawing strength from the songs and poems of Nazrul’, on this side of the border Nazrul is still not being discussed much. I returned to the teach-

ers’ room after the class and narrated my colleague about the incident and the colleague too was not surprised and asked which Nazrul! Is he not from Bangladesh? It broke my heart once more.

On one hand, the upheaval created by majoritarian Hindutva fundamentalism and, on the other, the rise of conservative elements inside the minority community are occupying the space of resistance and the dream of revolution that Nazrul talks about.

Does a poet have a nation? Does a poet have a country? A true rebel poet who fought his entire life for the marginalised, for the downtrodden is now being compartmentalised into a particular place, a particular nation, is being reduced into his immediate religious identity that Nazrul always disowned and attacked through his works.

Dear friends, forgetting rather I should be allowed to say that pushing Nazrul Islam into oblivion is not an aberration, this is a rule in a fascist regime, it’s a fascist cultural project. When we witness how a poet like Varavara Rao, perhaps the most jailed poet has to spend most of his life in jail. And how free he is now? He still can’t move outside Mumbai, far away from his home in Warangal. But as Nazrul Islam is still relevant

for the dreamers who dream for a change, Varavara Rao is the same breathing, living hope for us, the dispossessed, the marginalised, the downtrodden, the nameless and the people who are only numbers in the eyes of the state.

When I was informed that our dear Varavara Rao is going to translate the poems of Nazrul Islam, the immediate thoughts that came to my mind was who could be a better translator than VV is! A revolutionary translating the poems of another revolutionary—the readers and the dreamers like us have nothing more to be joyous for. When a revolutionary translates the poems of another rebel poet, he touches all the strings, the words behind the words and the emotions behind every poem. How similar their poems are in spirit, in their dedication to the idea of Revolution. In the poem, *Bidrohi*, Nazrul writes,

*I am the unutterable grief,  
I am the trembling first touch of the virgin,  
I am the throbbing pen,  
I am the wild fire of the woods,  
I am Hell's mad terrific sea of wrath!  
I ride on the wings of lightning with joy and profundity,  
I scatter misery and fear all around,  
I bring earth-quakes to this world! "*  
(8th stanza, Wikipedia)

And with the same spirit, Varavara Rao writes in his poem, *Chains Write Now*,

*Even your shadow may not tell you the truth.  
It may be saying what you want to hear.  
But you are alone in the outside world.  
Here inside, I am among countless people.  
I am with the strength of my beliefs  
With the power of people, like a volcano  
That will erupt lava and fumes in the future*

*Even if it appears silent today.*

*In this long, silent imprisonment  
I am sharpening my thoughts.  
Dictator, now my chains are writing  
Tomorrow I will sing full-throated in freedom.*

This undeterred faith and dream for freedom guides both the essence of the works of Nazrul Islam and Varavara Rao. Their hell bent determination for the idea of a free mind and soul and their fearless advocacy for the peasants and labourers land them in jails. But who doesn't know, history is witness those who are in power are always afraid of the unchained, strong voice. Nazrul's *Bisher Banshi* (The flute of Poison) was banned by the British.

Nazrul was a stern critic of imperialism. He never stopped only by being a critic. So is Varavara Rao. In the poem (Captain Beware), Nazrul writes,  
*The hapless nation drowns, for swim it cannot  
O Captain! Today you shall be watched  
For determination and love  
Hindu or Muslim? Wait! Who asks?  
Captain! Proclaim: My Mother's children are drowning, Human all!*

Varavara Rao has been charged in over 30 separate court cases and survived countless attempts on his life. As Nazrul was the chronicler of his time, so is VV. From Emergency to the Operation Green Hunt to the oppression of the common people and Adivasis, VV's pen has flared up against every injustice.

In the translation collection, VV has translated 64 poems of Nazrul. It is the need of the hour.

The main cultural project of a fascist regime is to wipe out history, the legacy of rebellion. A rebel Poet's word can give the mass the needed strength and zeal to rise, to fight back. In the post- nineties economic

liberation and the rise of Hindutva fascist neo-liberalisation, the common people have forgotten the idea of mass struggle, the idea of freedom. The jungles are being handed over to the giant companies. Democracy has been turned into a corporate funded democracy. All the brilliant minds and sharp tongues are being put behind the bar. The neoliberal education policy making the younger generations the slave of the market. The hard earned eight hours working policy is being enervated. Every day religious fanaticism and binaries push the minorities of all types—gender, lingual, religious sexual etc into the verge of precarity. Narrative is being set into Hindutva laboratory and is being circulated by the Whatsapp universities. The income gap between the have and the have-nots have never been so wide. The class politics is being weakened by the deep state funded identity politics, when we need to embolden class politics taking identity politics under its ambit. The translations of Nazrul's poems would give the young Telugu readers the hope, the strength to fight against the fascist corporate regime which is now lashing on people's rights with projects like 'Operation Kagaar'. Civil rights are being curtailed.

Nazrul was always vocal about class politics. His poems testify that.

The translation is more important as the birthplace of Nazrul, West Bengal is in a state of limbo, a upper class bhadraklok hegemony of left movement that too completely based in Kolkata is failing to make the new generation the dream of a better world, the dream of Resistance. □□□

**For Frontier Contact**

**DHYANBINDU**

COLLEGE SQUARE

## LETTERS

**EVM Controversy**

There's no concrete evidence of EVM manipulation. Only assumptions and presumptions. During the last parliamentary poll, despite the shrill cry of "over 400 this time", the BJP was actually reduced from 303 to 232—unanticipated by any exit poll—well below the majority mark of 272. Narendra Modi's victory margin was drastically slashed. Rahul Gandhi and Mahua Moitra—the two most vocal voices persistently raising the "Adani" issue who had been thrown out of the parliament for committing that unpardonable crime—scored handsome wins. Smriti Irani lost!

In the just over assembly polls, defying predictions and overcoming vicious polarising campaigns, the INDIA alliance has scored a big win. In Karnataka, Congress has won all the three assembly seats including a very prestigious one. Even in Maharashtra, despite the debacle, the state Congress chief has won with a margin of 208 votes. Aditya Thackeray has also won.

In between, the BJP had lost hands down two most bitterly fought assembly polls—in West Bengal and Karnataka.

Under the obtaining power equations, what's going to happen if polling is done with ballot boxes has been very effectively demonstrated during a Chandigarh Mayoral poll. Even the panchayat polls in West Bengal graphically demonstrate how rigging would be done both at the points of vote casting, via booth capture and bloc stamping of ballot papers, and also, though less frequently, even at the points of counting.

Not to forget, *the EVM was introduced under MMS, and not Modi*. The BJP was quite vocal then asking it to be trashed. Yet, Modi won. With EVM under MMS. The table turned. The last parliamentary poll appeared to have buried the issue.

But, no! Maharashtra preceded by has again revived it and given it a powerful (suicidal?) push! Of course, *EVM is hightech. And the regime would manipulate it the moment it's able to. No doubt about that. Hence calls for constant monitoring. The point is that as yet there's no evidence, just none that it's able to do so. And the alternative of the ballot box is just insane.*

**Sukla Sen**

**Expel Israel**

To: **Antonio Guterres**

Secretary General, United Nations, New York

Date: 29 November, 2024

**Dear Mr. Guterres,**

The genocide—the ongoing Holocaust in Gaza—and who stands in clear opposition to that—is the defining moment today for anyone with a moral conscience. For 415 days now—the Israeli regime, its Zionist citizens and its entirely amoral supporters in the West, have been aiding and abetting this blood-letting. Upwards of 200000 Palestinians have been slaughtered, 70% of whom are women and children. And it's now just how they are being murdered—by siege and starvation, as well as deliberately imprecise aerial bombing of buildings, hospitals, and displaced tents—using US-made and Indian weapons (Hermes-900 drones made by Adani Elbit Defence Systems in Hyderabad), it's also the arbitrary detention of thousands of civilian males, their subsequent torture and custodial killings. Such is the recent case of Dr Adnan al-Bursch, a noted surgeon in Gaza, who was abducted, sodomised and then brutally left to die within the prison. His murder—is not an isolated case—and helps illustrate how Israel and the US regimes see the Palestine people.

Israel, the Occupation government of Palestine, has blatantly ig-

nored calls from peoples of the world, the UN, to stop the killing and the ICC has now called for the arrest of its ring leader Netanyahu and his henchman Gallant. All the while, Mr Biden in the USA—a lame duck literally demented President—has extended American taxpayer dollars and weapons to the Israeli thuggish regime—which flouts international laws and the Geneva convention. None of this is controversial, indeed—the outspoken Ms. Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur has published a fully annotated assiduously documented report detailing Israeli criminal behaviour. Large numbers of people in the world have noticed—from social media not from legacy media—that the moral-free Israeli occupiers have also killed hundreds of journalists, civil rescue workers, and international kitchen workers delivering food aid within Gaza. The 'Israelis' and their backers seem to simply not care. There is little doubt in the world's collective minds that Israel needs to go, and be dismantled. The time for Palestinians has come. Just yesterday, the Irish barrister Blinne Ní Ghrálaigh KC who was part of the team at the ICC for South African said this in a two minute speech.

We urge the UN to expel Israel from its rolls.

Thank You, Sincerely,

**Sandeep Pandey**

National General Secretary

Saleem Khan

Uttar Pradesh General Secretary

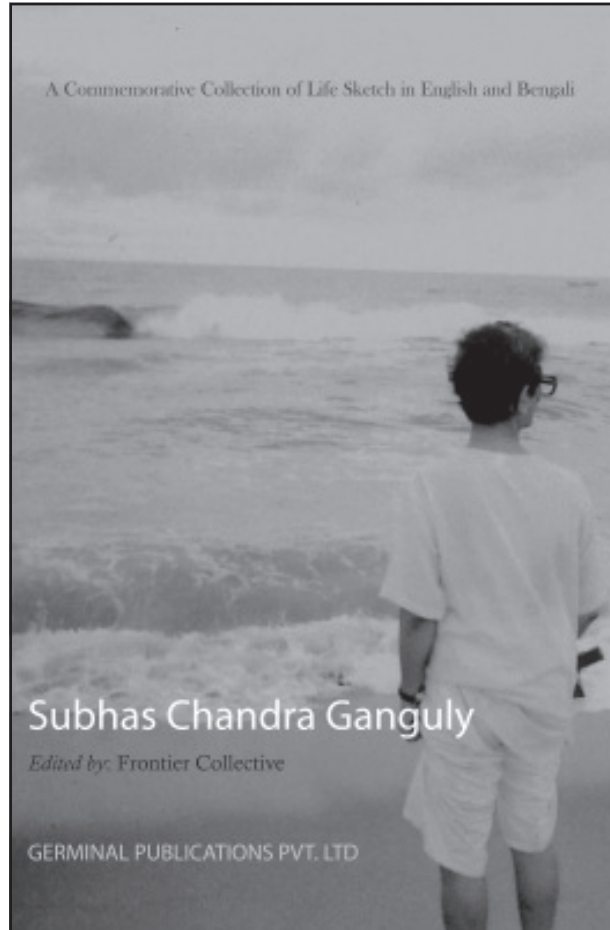
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