

FOUR ARRESTED FOR INTRUSION,
protests inside and outside House

SERIOUS INCIDENT: SPEAKER
calls meeting to step up security

FIR TO HAVE UAPA SECTIONS;
breach probe to be led by CRPF DG

Dec 13 anniversary, big breach

2 men jump
from visitors' gallery in Lok Sabha, open smoke cans, cause panic

LIZ MATHEW &
MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 13

REDS BOMB INDIAN LEGISLATURE

BLAST FOLLOWING SHARP PARLIAMENTARY CRISIS CAUSES INJURY TO MANY

Sir George Schuster, Finance Member of Governor General's Executive Cabinet, Among Those Wounded by Explosion

SIR JOHN SIMON ESCAPES UNHURT

Socialist Literature Hurled With Bombs Into crowded Chamber, Two Men Arrested Are Said to Have Confessed to Outrage

DELHI, India, April 13. Two bombs exploded in the Indian legislative assembly today, sharp on the heels of a parliamentary crisis. Several persons were injured, causing a panic among the assemblymen.



Among the injured was George Schuster. One of the others injured was taken to a hospital. Mr. John Simon, India's chief advisor with the president, was at the assembly when the explosion occurred, but was not injured.

Others injured were Mr. Ramaiah, Mr. Khanakar, Rao Rao, Mr. Duley (injury), L. N. Nay, deputy secretary of the Indian Central Committee, who was sitting in the gallery. They live probably,

3 GOVERNMENT BENCHES WRECKED

Three government benches were torn to bits by the bombs. Two men were arrested and were reported to have confessed and were other bombs and pistols were found on their persons. They gave their names as Butukumar Dutt, from Bengal, doctor at Calcutta, and Balraj Singh from Punjab.

Thrust into the crowded assembly with two bombs was a red-pamphlet entitled "Bengal Marxist republicans Army" and signed by Balraj, honorary chair. Police who locked the doors to prevent the capture of the revolutionaries had given

orders to fire if any explosion had taken place, but the rebels had just rushed in and been allowed until Captain Jagat Singh, already arrested. The government power to bar

Sir John Simon, a former member of the Simon committee, organized in 1927, called for self-government was suspended from its start by nationalist opposition who took the form of partial strikes. The nationalists demanded Indians should have greater representation on the

DISSENT & DEMOCRACY

50 yrs ago, young turks led by Prof MDN threw pamphlets from Assembly gallery

over not getting jobs, say families of accused

FB, plan in jail recco in mobsoon session

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The security breach in Parliament on Thursday has brought back memories of a five-decade-old incident in Karnataka when a young man, identified as Lalit Jayaraman, leapt from the chamber balcony and landed on the floor below, and Neelam Avani Shinde, a member of the opposition, threw a pamphlet from the gallery in what is believed to be the first such incident. "We were 21 or 22 years old. The police had us inside a small room. We were treated like animals and rest came and told us," he

them in the lock-up, ordered snacks for all of us, and spoke encouraging words," he said.

Krishnamurthy, however, said the then speaker K S Nagarathnamma took a kind view of the whole situation.

"We were 21 or 22 years old. The police had us inside a small room. We were treated like animals and rest came and told us," he



MD Nanjundaswamy

Spark

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UPDATES ON STUDENT MOVEMENTS

Students at Maharani Cluster University, Bangalore Protest for basic amenities

Students of Maharani college in Bangalore came out in hundreds on 18th December to stage a protest demanding basic amenities and highlighting issues such as poor infrastructure, irregular classes, delayed exam results and lack of water both for drinking and in washrooms. The recent state-wide strike of guest lecturers further aggravated the already irregular class hours. The entire collegiate system requires an immediate overhaul.



Students of Jawaharlal Nehru University Protest Against New Chief Proctor Office Manual

Students at Jawaharlal Nehru University rise in rage against the new dictatorial CPO Manual which imposes stringent measures like penalising protests in selected areas of the campus. Under the new rules, students can be fined up to ₹20,000 for protesting in prohibited areas and ₹10,000 for raising "anti-national" slogans. Students from JNUSU and other student organizations like participated in the protest. "We will resist this CPO manual and if need be sit on a hunger strike to safeguard the democratic ethos of the university," JNU Students' Union president Aishe Ghosh said.

Students of Government Girls Middle School in Bihar Stage Protest After Finding Insects in Mid-Day Meal

In a Government Girls Middle School in Bihar, students have found insects in their midday meals multiple times. Concerns have been raised for over a week but no action was taken. Following this, the students staged protests.

Gilgit-Baltistan: University students protest against unprecedented fee hike

Students of Karakoram International University in the Gilgit-Baltistan region protest against an unprecedented massive fee hike. There has been a 135 per cent increase in the fee per semester since 2020, as opposed to 10 per cent increase per year that's allowed as per the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) Policy. The University has allegedly increased the fees by 25 per cent twice in a semester in several courses. Students have boycotted classes and are demanding a roll-back of this decision as most students come from economically weaker sections of the society.

Serbian Students Blockade Government Ministry, Protesting 'Election Theft'

Students under the banner 'Borba' (Fight) organized a 24-hour blockade of the street in front of the Ministry of State Administration to protest against the alleged mid-December rigged elections in the capital Belgrade.

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CONTENTS

1. Updates on Student Movements	...2
2. Unravelling of a 'Democracy': India 2024	...4
3. Industrial Training Institute Fiasco	...5
4. Government Breaches Trust, Citizens Breach Security	...6
5. India's Fascist Democracy Anand Teltumbde	...7
6. Deconstructing New Education Policy: Karnataka in Context	...8
7. RELEASE BK16! REPEAL UAPA!	...10
8. The Hon'ble Supreme Court Blesses the Abrogation of Article 370	...12
9. Election Commission Appointments Hijacked	...13
10. The Temple Run: 2024 Edition	...13
11. Updates on People's Movements	...14
12. Velu Nachiyar: A True Saga of Courage	...15
13. Why is Darwin's Theory of Evolution an Anathema to the Religionists?- Part IV	...16
14. Origins of Caste- Part I	...18



"Imperialism has laid its body over the world, the head in Eastern Asia, the heart in the Middle East, its arteries reaching Africa and Latin America. Wherever you strike it, you damage it, and you serve the world revolution."

-Ghassan Kanafani

“ Spark is a monthly magazine run by students and youth. Today, the state and the corporate controlled media are constantly propagating lies and fabricated news that suit their interests which makes exposition of the truth an imminent task. The intention of Spark is to provide an alternative perspective on issues that affect the masses. ”

Please send your valuable opinion, comments, criticism and articles to spark_karnataka@protonmail.com
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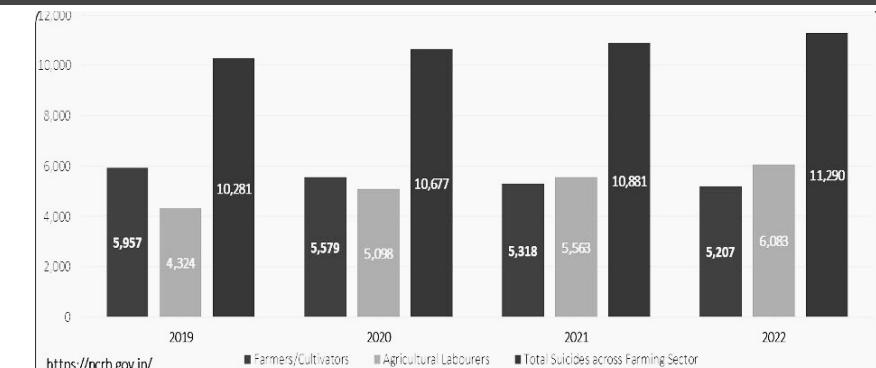
UNRAVELLING OF A 'DEMOCRACY': INDIA 2024

"A Single Spark can Start a Prairie Fire"

So goes the old Chinese saying much popularised by Comrade Mao through his writings. When we ideated and realised this magazine a year ago, the inspiration for the name was due partly to this saying and partly to the organ of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) named 'Iskra' (meaning 'Spark' in Russian), started by Comrade Lenin and others in 1900. The history of the Russian socialist revolution teaches us the catalysing effect of an organ. For instance, it shows how an organ nucleates an organisation around it. Essentially, our inspiration was not merely confined to a word, rather it emerged out of a historical duty to carry forward the torch of the world communist movement. With this dream, some of us came together to flag off the journey of Spark aimed at inculcating an alternate lens to look at the world. In a period of intensifying fascism, it becomes an even more urgent task to bring the truth to people. Within our limited capacity, we try our best to counter the pro-establishment narrative put forth by mainstream journalists.

As we walk into the election year, it is particularly important to understand where the state and (not) its people stand right now. Recent headlines like the 2022 National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, the suspension of 146 MPs, and bulldozing of changes in the criminal law show the direction we are hurtling towards. Let us start off with the 2022 NCRB data released on 3rd December, 2023. The data has brought up certain very disturbing trends that paint a picture of a society bursting at the seams with discontent.

First and foremost, it reveals a harrowing surge in crimes against women and children in India. With 4,45,256 cases registered in 2022 alone, the data shows an escalation of ~4% as compared to 2021. As many as 1,62,449 cases of crimes against children were



registered during 2022, showing an increase of 8.7% compared to 2021. Almost 40% of the total cases were filed under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Secondly, there has been a 24% increase in the number of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) cases compared to 2021. Out of the 1005 cases registered in 2022, almost 76% came from Assam, Manipur, UP, and J&K. While activists across the country have vehemently opposed the Act itself due to its clear cause of suppressing dissent, where the process becomes the punishment, the state has not just made its provisions more stringent, but also intensified its (mis)use.

Thirdly, a total of 1,70,924 suicides were reported in India in 2022, an increase of 4.2% as compared to 2021. Daily wage earners accounted for the highest number of such incidents with 44,713 daily wage earners (26.4% with 41,433 male and 3,752 female daily wage earners) ending their lives in 2022. Moreover, 1,09,875 suicide victims or almost 64.3% of the total number were reported to have an annual income of less than Rs. one lakh.

"We have no money, moneylenders are not ready to wait. What should we do? We can't even afford to take onions to the market. You are just thinking about yourself, Modi saheb. You must provide the guaranteed price for the produce... The finance guys threaten, and the patpedhi (cooperative society) officers abuse. Who should we go for justice?... Today, I am forced to commit suicide because of your inaction."

These were the last words of Dashrath Lakshman Kedari before he died by suicide in 2022 in Pune. Numerous such instances of bankruptcy and indebtedness added to the cause of suicides and was higher compared to the previous two years. The numbers clearly indicate that the systemic neoliberal dismantling of the agricultural sector has gotten worse in the Modi years. Besides, daily wage earners, student suicides have also shown an alarming increase accounting for 7.6% of all suicide deaths in the year 2023.

Summing up, the NCRB data shows a worsening condition of workers, women, students, and anyone who dares to point out these issues.

The same week that the NCRB data was released, the Parliament experienced an intervention by a group of youth inspired by Bhagat Singh's act of Assembly bombing. These six youths came together from different parts of India, united by the common causes of fascism, rising unemployment, price rise, unending violence in Manipur, and agrarian distress. The incident of them setting off smoke canisters in the parliament led to them being slapped with UAPA, thus equating this act of legitimate dissent as an act of terrorism. In the next few days, the MPs who demanded a statement from the Home Minister, were simply suspended from the parliament in big batches leaving millions of Indians without a representative. In their absence, a host of contentious bills were passed unopposed. Some of these are the

Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, the Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill, and the Telecommunications Bill, 2023. Each one of these has been designed to facilitate fascist onslaught through legal means. No wonder, the opposition had to be ousted from the parliament to prevent any objection.

At this point, where does an analysis of these objective conditions take us? As many of our readers might know already, the people responsible for Spark have been also trying to build a place for democratic dissent in Bangalore by forging a workers'-students'-farmers' unity. It is only through massive street actions that the times can be changed. Spark has been designed to supplant this process by sparking new ideas within the student and youth.

On behalf of the editorial board, I heartily thank you for helping us morally and financially to continue this initiative. This is not just a non-profit framework, rather we subsidise every copy of Spark to keep it within the reach of general student masses. This would not have been possible without the support of well-wishers in the city and outside.

I will end with saying, we will keep the Spark alive.

Long live revolution!

Recently, a disturbing incident of a worker being held captive in a silk factory in Ramnagara came to light. The said worker took a loan of Rs. 1.5 lakh from the factory owner. On being unable to repay the loan, the owner tied the worker's feet in chains and held him captive in the factory for more than a week. On receiving a complaint from the other workers, the police intervened. An FIR has been lodged against the factory owner and his associate.

Industrial Training Institute Fiasco

Sharath

Industrial Training Institutes or ITIs are extorted by faculty members to conduct institutions to render industrial training to rituals like Saraswati pooja and Ayudha students who are going to become pooja on campus. They also rely on productive forces in different industries students' money to repair the instruments across the country. The course is given to instead of government funds. The faculty post-secondary students ranging for a year acts in this manner out of impunity since to two based on the trade. The government the students here are from marginalized ITIs come under the Ministry of Skill sections of the society.

Development and Entrepreneurship. These ITIs face the same fate/set of problems as rights of students. They are abused with other government institutions in the country filthy language by sections of the faculty where the lack of funding adversely affects and are humiliated on a daily basis. The infrastructure and the education of system is built in such a way that they are students. Similarly, the Government ITI trained to work like machines without college of Peenya in Bangalore witnesses questioning while losing their human many gross violations of student rights, dignity. Separate well-equipped some of which may even fall under the washrooms are maintained for the staff that category of crime.

The college is just corridor Peenya washrooms of students do not even have Industrial Area, one of the largest industrial water supply, thus maintaining an areas in Asia. The students here apartheid policy.

predominantly come from working class families. Most of them work after college traced back to the neoliberal policies of the hours due to the economic necessities of government. The lack of funding in their families.

These issues faced by students can be threat to the education of students. In agitated against the mishaps happening in Peenya ITI, the double burden of public this campus. Basic instruments required for fund crunch and a feudal repressive the courses like voltmeter and ammeter management weigh on the students. The were not provided by the college, thus conscious weakening of government putting a grave burden on the already educational institutions in order to help the economically weaker students to buy flourishing of private institutions needs to textbooks and other instruments. There is be stopped. Only through this can the no library despite having 1500+ students. lower-middle sections of the society, who The college also has very few benches and constitute the majority of the population in resting places. They also questioned the the country, get their basic right to lack of adequate number of washrooms and education.

water filter systems.

It is through an elected student body alone that students can have a say in educational institutions. The students are now in a are treated brutally and beaten with pipes subjugated position as the power lies with and rods by certain lecturers close to the the management who often misuse it. It is administration. The college staff teach for essential for students to form their own only two hours out of eight hours a day. student bodies to keep this in check. They The students are given so many must strive to ensure a democratic assignments to write for the rest of the day environment in educational institutions and that some even said they finish a ball pen in student bodies play a vital role in doing so two days. This way, they are pressurized by by addressing student concerns the work evasive faculty. Moreover, collectively. students have reported instances of

Government Breaches Trust, Citizens Breach Security

Sreeganga

On 13th December 2023, a loud and clear statement was made by four youths when two of them opened smoke canisters inside the Parliament chamber and raised slogans against dictatorship, highlighting farmers' concerns, the ongoing Manipur conflict, unemployment and the pathetic state of affairs in the country. The other two outside the Parliament building sprayed coloured gas and raised slogans against dictatorship and the ongoing violence against minorities. All six of them have been arrested and charged with multiple sections from the Indian Penal Code including sections on criminal conspiracy and causing riots—along with the draconian UAPA being slapped on them. The RSS-BJP government has unjustly labelled and dealt

with this demonstrative act as an act of terror. This baseless characterisation aims to subject these youth to repressive UAPA measures, thus diverting attention from the crucially significant issues raised by them; issues that have been resonating nationwide. Even the opposition parties fixated on the matter of 'security breach' rather than pushing for shifting attention to the issues raised. The young individuals hail from different parts of the country and none of them are formally employed. They got acquainted through 'Bhagat Singh Fan Club' on social media. They were influenced by the historic acts of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt, who, on 8th April, 1929, threw leaflets and smoke bombs from the gallery onto the Central Legislative Assembly. "It takes a loud voice to make the deaf hear..." the pamphlet Bhagat Singh and Dutt threw into the house

began. The intention was to put out a point that would resound across the empire of the colonial exploiters. This demonstration was against the introduction of two bills, namely the Public Safety Bill, which allowed the detention of suspects without any trial (a bill introduced as Communist Deportation Bill, later revamped as Public Safety Bill), and a Trade Dispute Bill, which allowed the Britishers to

demanding more powers to the Lokayukta—a state-level body that handles complaints about corruption and mismanagement from the public. They were also arrested by the police.

Incidents like these are a clear reflection of the youth's disillusionment with the false promises made by the government. The people do not have an avenue to express their discontent with the state. The reaction we saw—of the RSS-BJP

government, of the opposition parties, and of the media, right after the incident reinforces the core issues they were raising, indicating that the reaction itself is a part of the problem. These acts should be seen as an expression of collective anger generated upon being subjected to everyday exploitation by the ruling classes.

Cumulative rage spills out through such lone acts of dissent, sometimes as part of a greater political foment, sometimes without. Instead of treating the recent incident as a legitimate act of dissent, the youths have been arrested under UAPA, an act that has given the government extensive powers, leading to the arbitrary targeting of individuals daring to dissent. Every citizen should actively demand the repeal of UAPA, as it is a tool that is being rampantly used to suppress all anti-establishment political activities.

All progressive and democratic forces should strongly condemn the use of the unjust UAPA on the protestors who were raising people's issues, and demand their immediate release.



declare any kind of protest as illegal, especially strikes, thus curbing the hard-earned rights of workers.

In a similar incident around 1972-73, numerous young activists demonstrated dissent by throwing pamphlets from the gallery in the Karnataka legislative assembly. The protestors threw pamphlets and raised slogans against MLAs who had neglected their constituencies during times of drought. They were immediately arrested. They were led by Prof M D Nanjundaswamy, who was a leading voice against globalisation. He strongly stood against the World Trade Organisation and multinational companies in developing countries. In the 1990s, he took a firm stand against neoliberal reforms brought forth by the Indian government.

In 2013, in the same place, six activists raised slogans against the government and threw papers inside the House,

India's Fascist Democracy

Anand Teltumbde | 19 Jul 2017

On May 2, 2017, the present ruling dispensation eventually confirmed the suspicions of sceptics about India being a democracy. The Attorney General, Mukul Rohatgi, told a Supreme Court bench of Justices, A K Sikri and Ashok Bhushan, that citizens could not claim "absolute" right over their bodies. He waxed eloquent with examples – such as the laws against committing suicide, termination of pregnancy and drinking – embarrassing even the Supreme Court. But it did, incidentally, bare the fangs of the beast in the garb of democracy. In effect, Rohatgi's statement meant that the Indian people, who are supposed to be sovereign, could be sacrificed at the altar of the State at its sweet will.

This is precisely what Mussolini proclaimed in his fascist doctrine. It emphasised the importance of the State, and accepted the individual only insofar as his/ her interests coincided with those of the State. We were supposed to be a liberal democracy that granted citizens certain rights which could not be overridden by the State. Fascism rejects this liberal notion and reasserts the rights of the State. "The concept of freedom is not absolute because nothing is ever absolute in life. Freedom is not a right, it is a duty. It is not a gift, it is a conquest; it is not equality, it is a privilege." These familiar phrases being thrown around these days by our Jaitleys and Rajnath Singhs are actually the Doctrine of Fascism. In their adoption and reiteration, the Indian State has come to affirm the same fascist doctrine.

Until now we have been told that we have certain rights which were enshrined in the Constitution as fundamental. Article 19 of the Constitution speaks of six rights: the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right to assemble peaceably and without arms, the right to form associations or unions, the right to move freely throughout the territory of India, the right to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India, and right to

practise any profession or to carry on any occupation trade or business. We knew they were not absolute, in the sense that they could be circumscribed by legislature in certain circumstances which were spelt out in the Constitution. For instance, Clause (2) of Article 19 of the Indian Constitution enabled the legislature to impose certain restrictions on free speech under the following heads: security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency and morality, contempt of court, defamation, incitement to an offence, and sovereignty and integrity of India. These restrictions were numerous and vague enough to be potentially misused by the rulers who, were, however, expected by the Constitution makers to be gentlemen with a minimal level of morality. The restrictions could be imposed only by a duly enacted law, and not by executive action. But we see this has degenerated to the level where they simply shut people up.

If you say anything which is not a song of praise for the government, you risk your life. You could be easily charged with sedition or under any of the many draconian laws; and imprisoned for life, if not hanged. Sixty six students of the Punjab University were booked on sedition charges merely for protesting against a huge rise in fees. If you speak against the hanging of Afzal Guru or Yakub Memon; or protest against the hooliganism of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), as the Ambedkar Students Association in the Hyderabad Central University dared to do, and subsequently the Left wing students of the Jawaharlal Nehru University and others repeated; you could be pushed into becoming Rohith Vemula. Or suffer incarceration as Kanhaiya Kumar, Anirban Bhattacharya and Omar Khalid did. If you speak against the anti-labour policy like the contracting of regular work, if you criticise the management, you could

meet the fate of Maruti Suzuki workers, who were incarcerated en masse for years, and are now sentenced to life imprisonment. If you speak against the land grab operation of the government, you could be labelled as Maoist and simply done to death. The Muslims, the "other" of the junta, are, anyway, the anti-nationals and terrorists. The Adivasis in Bastar or Niyamgiri merely spoke out against the unlawful handing over of their forests to the capitalists to incur the State's dirty war on them. The security forces were unleashed on them to rape and maim their women, and kill their youth with impunity. If you take up cudgels against the State for its crimes against human rights activists, you could meet the fate of Dr Binayak Sen, Soni Sori or GN Saibaba. Last December, a seven-member team of the Telangana Democratic Front (TDF), on a fact finding mission into incidents of human rights violations in Bastar, was arrested on the way. The team is still in Sukma jail, having been denied bail. There is not a shred of evidence beyond the police concoction. These are not isolated examples; they pervade the country.

Indeed, it has degenerated to the level where the State tells people what to speak and to whom; what to eat and where; where to stand and when to sit; whom to love and whom to hate; effectively moulding us into automatons in service to the State. It has raised jingoist nationalism above people and unleashed the Hindutva gangs to carry out its writ, reminiscent of the Blackshirts of Mussolini and the Brownshirts of Hitler. Notwithstanding a plethora of details about the affinity of Hindutva progenitors such as Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Balakrishna Shivram Moonje, or Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar to Mussolini and Hitler, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, its organisational fountainhead, echoes the Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale

Deconstructing New Education Policy: Karnataka in Context

Shared by a faculty member teaching at a Bangalore college

(MVSN, "Voluntary Militia for National Security"), which was originally the paramilitary wing of the National Fascist Party and, after 1923, an all-volunteer militia of the Kingdom of Italy. For the last two and half years, we have seen a working prototype of what a fascist regime is like. It almost echoes ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer – "One People, One Empire, One Leader."

India's claim to democracy or, rather, the world's largest functional democracy, rests solely on its record of regularly held elections. Although they are more of a ritual observed with massive money and muscle power, and less of an expression of the will of the people, they have sustained the illusion of democracy. In reality, the entire framework, given by the much eulogised Constitution of India, betrays the intrigues of the native ruling classes against the people. The illusion was reinforced by projecting Dr Ambedkar, the messiah of the downtrodden, as its chief architect. His coming out of the dazzle of praise within two years of the working of the Constitution, and disowning it in the strongest possible words, did not help. His warning that what the Constitution gave was just political democracy, and unless it was supplemented by social and economic democracies, the former would not last, also did not work. The de jure democracy has always been de facto plutocracy, the rule of the moneybags. It was a matter of time before it would be transformed into an organised, centralised, authoritarian democracy, which is what fascism is.

The oxymoron in the title sadly characterises this reality of India.

(This article was previously published in NewsClick, republished with author's permission.)

Recently, Dalit schoolchildren have been made to get down into and clean a septic tank at the Morarji Desai residential school at Yeluvanahalli in Malur taluk of Kolar district. A police probe has been requested by the NCPCR.

In the following decade after the second World War, one of the most baffling hierarchies, perpetuate hatred, humiliate questions which haunted many thinkers and demonise the marginalised. Theodor was something to do with German W. Adorno of the Frankfurt School Masses. How could the Germans be so rightly asserted in a radio talk easily brainwashed into believing the so-called ideals of the Nazis? How could "The premier demand upon all education the Germans give tacit approval to a is that Auschwitz not happen again." In genocide? How could they turn a blind spite of such cautionary appeals, eye to human suffering?

Noted philosopher Hannah Arendt spoke of the banality of evil highlighting how even an ordinary individual, committed family men, dotting fathers of were absolutely capable of carrying out divisiveness.

something as ghastly as Holocaust! She took the aid of a highly publicised trial of Eichmann to prove her premise. Moving further it is now very clear that Nazis had set in motion a systemic process to instill racial science and anti-Semitism in the very young many years before the Holocaust.

With such a great onus put on the education sector, how should one perceive NEP-2020, India? Central Cabinet approved the New Education Policy (NEP-2020) when the country was reeling under a series of lockdowns. Economy was brought to a grinding halt. Lakhs of migrant workers were returning to their natives on foot deprived of even the barest incomes. Schools and Universities were shut down for months. Majority of the students were either science was tampered with. There was coerced or threatened to attend the online excessive emphasis on racial purity and classes when the technology needed was outright rejection of difference and almost inaccessible for many. Under variation. The curriculum in itself was a such trying circumstances the cabinet cult! It was instrumental in constructing passed the NEP without presenting and the image of the infallible leader. It debating it in Parliament. NEP was thus foregrounded the vision that there was passed without observing basic only one leader who could lead the democratic niceties and since any nation to its glory. His image was democratic resistance to NEP wasn't imprinted in the minds of the schools' permitted, it was accepted by the people wards. Pedagogy and curriculum were as "path-breaking!"

therefore the essential preliminary steps in educating the German youth towards the Holocaust.

Once the public perception in favour of NEP was manufactured via propaganda, the servile academia took over. Gone are the days when people naively believed that education was benevolent. Schools, pedagogy, and curriculum heaping praises on the NEP. The voices during the Nazis proved that education of academicians who raised alarm bells at the behest of a dictator can be lethal. about NEP being detrimental to

establishing an equitable system of quality education in India and helping commercialisation of education were silenced. The scholars who could see through this facade and commented about "skills approach" rather than acquiring knowledge as a resource for critically comprehending the existing society and value system were also snubbed. It is this NEP-2020 which the then Karnataka Government decided to implement!

The then BJP led Karnataka Government decided to implement the NEP in a haste. It was probably doing so in order to garner the praise of the all-powerful central leadership. It went on to pat its own back as the first state in the country to have implemented NEP-2020 "successfully." Can there be a better example of ingratiating? With no necessary infrastructure in place, right curriculum, nor the apt pedagogy in sight, the government went ahead with utter disdain for the future of thousands of students.

As per the new NEP curriculum students were asked to choose core subjects and open electives. Students were neither informed nor oriented regarding the same. In fact many of the university faculties themselves were not in a state to explain the changes ushered in by NEP.

Previously if a student pursued Humanities, say BA, he would choose combinations HEP, HES, HEE* and so on. With the dawn of NEP, arts students were allowed to choose two core subjects from the discipline of Humanities and an open elective from commerce or science streams. The colleges offering graduate courses went into a dizzy state. Many of the colleges (especially government colleges) were not equipped to offer multidisciplinary courses. With the majority of the government colleges offering exclusively commerce/science or arts courses, they had no faculties to offer multidisciplinary courses. In the ensuing confusion students who could afford to shell out considerable money, abandoned

government colleges and joined private institutes and on the other hand students who could not afford to pay exorbitant fees abandoned the studies all together. The dropout rates in government colleges after the implementation of NEP stand testimony to it.

It is interesting to note that now students from the humanities stream have to study two core subjects and can pursue their post-graduation only in one of these subjects. In essence students have lost out on an option due to a farce called open-elective. Can a student comprehensively learn science, commerce or arts choosing them as an open-elective is a question to which many scholars, VCs, principals are reluctant to provide a convincing answer. Confusion was created

Critical thinking, scientific temper, rationalism and harmonious co-existence were presumed to be unimportant during the designing of the text books. Such is the pathetic plight of higher education in Karnataka courtesy NEP!

regarding the number of years students have to study in order to get a degree certificate too. It was stated that a four years honours degree is the desired degree over the current three years graduation degree. Can an ordinary student hailing from low class or lower middle class pursue four years Honours course in an era of the pandemic which has put a lot of families under emotional and financial stress?

Adding to the existing quandary, a new centralised admission system was introduced in all government colleges. It was named as UUCMS (University and College Management System.) It is a software for college affiliation and admission. Technical issues such as system crashes, software bugs, or compatibility problems have since

disrupted the affiliation and admission processes, causing delays and frustration amongst students. Cyber centres and computer operators in colleges and universities have fleeced the students with this pretext further adding to the misery of the students.

The curriculum offered was nothing but a sham. There are numerous examples of university textbooks taking materials directly from google without even acknowledging the source! The texts on caste issues, plurality, rich tapestry of overlapping religious/cultural practices were largely ignored from the text. Critical thinking, scientific temper, rationalism and harmonious co-existence were presumed to be unimportant during the designing of the text books. Such is the pathetic plight of higher education in Karnataka courtesy NEP! Adding insult

to injury, students were and still are coerced to log into LMS- Learning Management System to view online contents made using the same sub-standard textbooks. Most of the content has not gone through any kind of systematic quality checks either. Students and the faculties are still being threatened and made to log into LMS. For the concerned authorities the log-in numbers are crucial to keep the golden goose

called LMS alive. LMS IS A SHAM. It has to be scrapped and an enquiry should be initiated to expose the money laundering of the SHAM.

It is in this context, the newly formed governments decision to scrap NEP is welcome. The new government has also set up a committee to study and draft a new state education policy. No doubt it's a daunting task to set the house in order. To start with, the state government will do a world of good just by assuring students that sanity will eventually prevail! Hope the present government will instill confidence amongst despondent students and teaching fraternity soon.

*History Economics Political science, History Economics Sociology, History Economics English



VARAVARA RAO



GAUTAM NAVLAKHA



VERNON GONSALVES

RELEASE BK16!

On 1st January 1818, a small battalion of 800 men including many Mahars, a Dalit sub-caste defeated a massive army of over 25,000 men headed by Peshwa Bajirao II. Although the battalion was headed by the British, the locals of Koregaon saw it as a victory against their immediate oppressors, the Peshwa. Dalits under the brahminical rule of Peshwa were forced to carry a spittoon on their neck and a broom on the back so that even their dust couldn't pollute Brahmins. Every year, on the first of January, thousands of Dalits from across the country gather in the village of Koregaon in Pune to commemorate this battle. On 1st January 2018, a

meeting of all progressive activists and intellectuals was held to observe the 200th anniversary of the Bhima Koregaon battle.

Hindutva leaders Milind Ekbole and Sambhaji Bhide had instigated a mob against the Dalit procession, who attacked the Dalits at the procession near the Vijay Stambh after which an ugly violence broke out. FIRs were registered on the Hindutva leaders who instigated this violence, however, no action was taken against them.

Following this, sixteen people, including progressive lawyers, academics, intellectuals, activists and trade unionists popularly known as the Bhima Koregaon 16 (BK-16) were



MAHESH RAUT



JYOTI JAGTAP



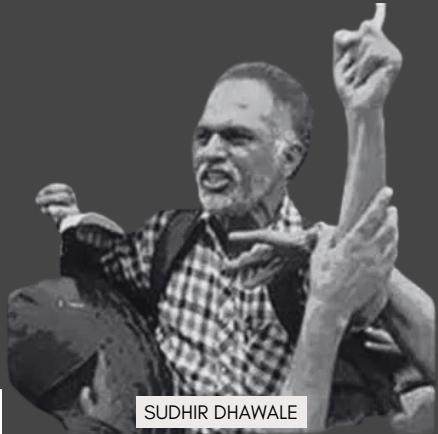
RAMESH GAICHOR



SURENDRA GADLING



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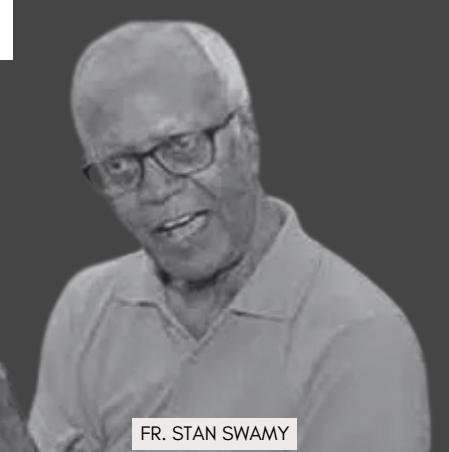
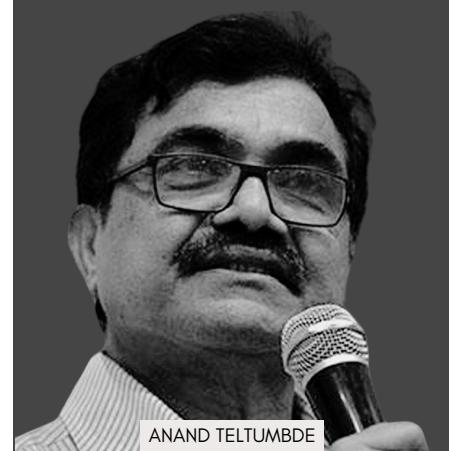


REPEAL UAPA!

booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), a draconian anti-terrorism law used to suppress dissent, for allegedly conspiring to overthrow the government and helping to strengthen the CPI(Maoist). Most of the activists are being detained without a trial, a common trend in UAPA cases where the process itself becomes the punishment. The case was taken over by the National Investigation Agency(NIA) in 2020. The evidence that they relied upon, which were files in activists' computers, including a letter mentioning a plot to assassinate Prime Minister Modi, was found to have been planted by hacking their devices

by planting of malwares remotely as per the report of Arsenal Consulting, a digital forensic firm.

Fr. Stan Swamy, a Jesuit priest and an Adivasi rights activist who is part of the BK16 was denied timely medical treatment in detention, which led to his death in July 2021. We must not forget that the activists continue to languish without trial for being vocally critical of the fascist BJP government. Some are out on bail, some under house arrest, and some are still behind bars. We must actively demand the release of the activists and the repeal of such undemocratic laws that are used to quash dissent.



The Hon'ble Supreme Court Blesses the Abrogation of Article 370

Sushant

"Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter."

~Chinua Achebe

On Dec 11, 2023, the five-judge constitutional bench of the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud, ruled that the region's special status had been a "temporary provision" and upheld the BJP government's 2019 move, and declared its removal was constitutionally valid. The Supreme Court said the government's move was "a culmination of the process of integration and as such is a valid exercise of power", and Jammu and Kashmir should be restored to the same statehood as any other Indian state – with no separate autonomy rights – "at the earliest and as soon as possible". Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said, "Article 370 was an interim arrangement due to war conditions in the state". On August 5th, 2019, the Modi Government, abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 and the subsidiary provision Article 35 A. Through a Presidential order, Jammu and Kashmir has been robbed of its right to Statehood and has been divided into two Union Territories, Jammu and Kashmir with a legislative assembly, and Ladakh as a separate Union Territory without any legislative assembly. This attack on democracy and federalism is now supported by the order of the Supreme Court.

When the Muslim-majority Kashmir's Hindu ruler Maharaja Hari Singh signed an agreement to join India, as part of the Instrument of Accession, India allowed Kashmir to retain its own constitution, flag, and criminal code. In 1947 India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru announced on All India Radio that "Kashmir's future will be decided by the means of plebiscite". However, the promise of the plebiscite is still pending.

India claims that people's participation in elections shows that people are happy and there is no demand for any plebiscite. Article 370, which came into effect in October 1949, granted Kashmir autonomy of internal administration, allowing it to make its own laws in all matters except finance, defense, foreign affairs, and communications. Article 35A, a further provision added to Article 370 in 1954, empowered state lawmakers to ensure special rights and privileges for permanent residents of the state. Kashmir had its own prime minister and president until 1953 when the Nehru Government jailed its prime minister, Sheikh Abdullah, and abolished the post as their so-called efforts to integrate the Muslim-majority region with the rest of India. Article 370 was a condition for accession, the marginal note to Article 370 describes it as a "temporary Provisions with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir" according to the special circumstances but as those circumstances are still present it cannot be abrogated without consulting the parliament of Jammu and Kashmir. Paragraph 7 of the Instrument of Accession, clearly shows that one of the terms of joining India was that the ruler of J&K wasn't going to just accept the eventual Constitution in full, that he would have the discretion to decide which parts of such a Constitution would apply in the state. There are cases when the Supreme Court itself said that Article 370 is not a temporary provision, e.g., 'Sampat Prakash vs State Of Jammu & Kashmir' and 'SBI vs Santosh Gupta'.

Ahead of the Supreme Court's verdict, security agencies in Kashmir took extensive measures to avoid mass protests. The police asked people to desist from sharing "provocative content" on social media. Several pro-India politicians in the region were put under house arrest. Kashmiris have lost faith in India's democracy since long.

Article 370 protected the privileges of permanent residents of Kashmir related to jobs, land, and business investments. Young people now fear that jobs and higher education seats will be shared with people from outside and they will be unable to compete. People from outside Kashmir are already investing in businesses in the region. There is fear that India is trying to engineer a "demographic shift" in the Muslim-majority region because the BJP, which is in power, has for years talked about changing the demography of Kashmir as a way to resolve the dispute. As recently as February, 2023, huge reserves of Lithium have been discovered in Reasi of Kashmir. The GoI brought about the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2023 to facilitate the mining of atomic minerals like Lithium, Zirconium etc. close to the heels of this discovery, a point to note as the assent of the Supreme Court is discussed.

Kashmiris have been forcibly silenced for long. Using the military and repressive laws like AFSPA, their sovereignty has been denied. Lakhs of people have lost their lives and thousands have disappeared during the military rule in Kashmir. According to a report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, published in July 2019, gross human rights violations by state security forces and armed groups have occurred, including sexual violence, and enforced disappearances. The report emphasises the torture on civilians—for example, the use of pellet-firing shotguns has led to 1253 people being blinded in 2016-18. Last month, disturbing videos of Army personnel battering Kashmiri civilians leading to their death went viral forcing an inquiry. India has been the prison of nationalities from the colonial period and continued to be after the so-called independence of 1947. This decision of the Supreme Court is another example of India's treatment of Kashmir as a colony.

Election Commission Appointments Hijacked

Danny

The destruction of our democracy has been a quiet affair. While everyone is distracted with a commotion elsewhere, the ruling government sneaks in anti-democratic laws through the back door. The mass suspension of 146 opposition MPs in our so-called largest democracy is one such commotion that has allowed the passage of several bills with absent resistance. One of the most insidious of these was an expansion of the government's power over elections through the passage of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023.

Earlier in the year in Anoop Baranwal vs the Union of India (2023) the Supreme Court had ordered that creation of a selection committee to regulate appointments to the Election Commission of India. This would deal primarily with the appointment of the Chief Election

Commissioner and the state wise Election Commissioners. In the ruling the Supreme Court ruled that this committee should be made up of the Chief Justice of India, the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, who would present a list of candidates to the President who would make the final decision. This process was formulated because of a lack of clarity in the previous bill regarding appointments. The process laid out by the supreme court ensured that every branch of government had a say, aligning to the principle of separation of powers.

The suspension of opposition MPs provided the perfect opportunity for the BJP to pass their replacement for the SC's ruling which conveniently removed the Chief justice from the selection committee, replacing them with a Union Minister selected by the Prime Minister effectively handing control over ECI appointments to the ruling party. This blatant power grab is

a worrying sign as we enter a heated election year. How can any election held from this point onwards be "democratic" if the selection of those who conduct it is disproportionately in the hands of the Legislative? How are our institutions democratic if such power grabbing can be allowed at all?

A democratic society has separation of powers for a reason. To not allow any one arm of government to get too powerful. Sadly, the passing of such bills is simply a symptom of a chronic disease that is slowly killing our democracy. Slowly weakening institutions and stripping power from the people. Now is not the time to be indifferent and faint hearted. If we are to save what little power the people have in our "great democracy" we must not be afraid to fight. With our vote, with our voices and with the strength of the toiling masses. Or one day we'll wake up and it will be too late.

The Temple Run: 2024 Edition

Sachin

The most awaited event of the century is happening on the 22nd of this month. The inauguration of the Ram Mandir. A mandir which everyone has been dearly waiting for. The unemployed youth, mob-lynched Muslims, manual scavengers, undernourished children, migrant workers, indebted peasants, subjugated women, etc. all have been waiting for this Mandir their entire lifetime. This is all they want in their lives. This is all that we need in our lives.

After the First War of Independence of 1857, the British scared by the unity of communities started a rumour. A rumour about a Ram temple being demolished by the Mughal ruler Babur to make the Babri Masjid. There's no evidence anywhere about the existence of a Ram temple underneath the Masjid. Then in 1858, they allowed for the construction of a "Ram Chabutra" in the premises of the Masjid. The Muslim worshipers and visitors filed several petitions against it which were of course ignored, fueling

the increasing tension between the communities.

The next major boost to this tension occurred during the late 80's and early 90's during the Ramjanmabhoomi movement. A movement with a belief that the site of the mosque was the birthplace of the Hindu deity Lord Ram and called for the construction of a temple at that location. This was happening in the leadership of the BJP-RSS leaders Murli Manohar Joshi and Lal Krishna Advani.

In 1992, under the same leadership, with some very popular slogans such as "Tel laga lo Dabur ka, naam mita do Babur ka"(apply oil of Dabur, destroy name of Babur), "Ram Lalla aayenge, mandir wahin banayenge"(temple for baby Ram will be built there itself), etc., a mob of almost 1.5 lakh people tore down Babri. The demolition resulted in several months of rioting between the communities which resulted in deaths of 2000 people (officially). None of the leaders who made this happen were

arrested. Not so surprisingly, it helped them gain more seats in next election.

But it's not only BJP who has benefited from the RSS. Be it Nehru or Rajiv Gandhi, they both supported or took support from RSS some or other time. Nehru praised RSS for its 'patriotic' work during the Indo- Pak and Indo-China war. While Rajiv Gandhi asked for their support during the 1984 elections to gain the Hindu's support which they lost after the Shah Bano's case.

The next milestone was the Gujarat riots. Where the sangh parivar fought a 'heroic' fight against unarmed Muslim men, women and children, raping and murdering them. This riot will soon lead to the rise of its mastermind to the prime ministership of India in 2014 elections. That is the natural step forward in our 'democracy'. The higher the pile of innocent dead bodies, the higher in hierarchy you reach. The "Gujarat model" was the call for this election. India which is like Gujarat. India which is like 2002 Gujarat. And we see that

model working in whole of India now. Be it the issue of Kashmir, aerial bombing of villages in Chhattisgarh, increasing mob lynching, the Manipur issue, etc.

From "Achhe din aane wale hain" in 2014 to 2019's Babri verdict of the "most important" pillar of the "largest democracy", i.e the Supreme Court of India bent its backbone in front of the Hindutva goons. Now before the 2024 elections its time to show the citizens of our country the biggest achievement of its 10 years tenure. The Ram Mandir. But will it be a happy ending of centuries old debate and conflict? Sadly, no. The Sangh Parivar has another slogan and another dream to show to its disciples, i.e. "Yeh to bas ek jhaanki hai, Mathura-Kaashi baaki hai ("this is just a jolt, now its turn for Mathura and Kaashi").

They will keep adding multiple mandirs to their list. They will keep raising and adding new slogans like this. But what is the use of these slogans? Is it to distract the people from the actual problems they face? Is it to create more problems for them? Is it to stop people from asking genuine and difficult questions? Is it to hide the genuine and difficult questions that are already being asked?

But why is dissent still alive? Still, how four youths managed to ask questions about employment and women's safety with a loud noise in Parliament? Still, how are they not able to completely suppress the movements going on against the corporate loot in villages? Still, how are they not able to stop the voice of resistance coming from Kashmir and North-Eastern states even after so many hours of internet shutdown and brute force?

The future of our country lies in the answers to these questions. No matter how much the current regime tries to portray Mandirs and Hindutva as the driving goal of the country, the people cannot be blinded for long. They will demand what is rightfully theirs. Be it jobs, be it dignity, or be it political power. And if needed they will snatch it from them.

UPDATES ON PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS



Solidarity with Palestine at Freedom Park

On December 2nd a protest in solidarity with Palestine was held at freedom Park in Bangalore. Organisations from across Bangalore's civil society were involved alongside a strong showing from the city's student movement. This came after multiple FIRs were lodged against people staging protests in solidarity with the Palestinian cause in Bangalore for the past few months.

Guest Lecturers Strike across Karnataka

Guest lecturers in government first-grade colleges in Karnataka have been on a 20-day strike, demanding the regularisation of their services. Over 12,000 lecturers are on strike. The lecturers seek absorption into permanent positions, citing promises made in the Congress's election manifesto. Despite the strength and pressing nature of the protest, the teachers have so far been ignored by those holding office both in government and opposition.

Parents Protest Against their Kids Being Forced to Clean the Toilets in Government Primary School in Bangalore

Students of the Government Model Higher Primary School at Andrahalli in Yeshwantpur were made to clean toilets daily by their headmistress, prompting major protests from Parents. The headmistress has been suspended but questions have been raised about the inhumane state of government schools in the state. Similar instances have been reported elsewhere. Students of a government school in Srigandhada Kaval were shown to be carrying mid day meal food carriers in a viral video. A number of people's organisations are investigating this issue which has been ignored by a lackadaisical state and central government.

Hundreds Take to the Streets in Kochi in Solidarity with Palestine

On December 10th, hundreds of people gathered in Kochi to march in solidarity with the Palestinian resistance and to condemn the genocide currently being perpetrated by the Israeli state. This march is one of just many similar events held in Kochi and the rest of Kerala over the last few months.

Andhra Anganwadi Workers Strike for Pay Hikes, Pension and Gratuity

Anganwadi workers in Andhra Pradesh have been on strike since early December, protesting long standing issues with the government regarding pay hikes, pension and the release of gratuity. The indifferent attitude of governing officials to the protestors has only further emboldened them as the movement grows more every day. The government's official response has been a cowardly attempt to try to leverage the education of children into forcing the strike to end.

Ennore Residents Protest Against CIL after the Leakage of Ammonia Gas; Demand Permanent Cease of Operations

Residents of Ennore protested outside the Southern and Northern gates of the Coromandel International Limited (CIL), a fertiliser manufacturing company owned by the Murugappa group, from where Ammonia gas leaked on Tuesday. The protestors want the company to cease operations permanently and are demanding the Coromandel International Limited, to take responsibility for not ringing the emergency alarm, for not helping them evacuate their homes, and for not creating situational awareness for emergencies like these.

Faculty and Students Protest the Unjust Removal of Eight Ad-hoc Teachers at Ramjas college

Protests erupted among faculty and the student body at Ramjas college when eight Ad-hoc teachers were removed from the English department, in what has been described as an ideological purge. Teachers without PhD and lower API scores were given preference over the removed teachers. This incident has become part of a worrying pattern at DU. Students and faculty have united in protest against these appointments.

Velu Nachiyar: A True Saga of Courage

Shandhiyaa

"I am not here to be a puppet, I am here to make a difference"

~Velu Nachiyar

Velu Nachi, known as "Veeramangai" (brave woman) was a great revolutionary, a determined freedom fighter, a radical warrior and most importantly, a powerful voice of resistance. Velu was born on 3rd of January, 1730. She was the princess of Ramanathapuram and the only child of King Chellamuthu Vijayaragunatha Sethupathy and Queen Sakandhimuthathal of the Ramnad Kingdom. She was trained in many methods of combat, including war match weapons usage, martial arts like Valari, Silambam, horse riding, and archery. In addition, She was a trained scholar in many languages and was proficient in languages like French, English and Urdu. Her early life was shaped by the socio-political landscape of 18th century India. Nachiyar at a very young age of 16 was married to "King Muthu Vaduga Naadhar of Sivagangai" who was later killed in a battle in 1780 by the East India Company forces of Nawab of Arcot. Undeterred by grief, she rose from the ashes of despair to become a symbol of resistance. With an indomitable spirit, Velu Nachiyar sought refuge in the court of Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore. She formed an alliance with him to oppose the British East India Company. Nachiyar's military prowess became evident as she led her own army, comprising both Tamils and Marathas, in several successful campaigns against the British. One of her most notable achievements was the recapture of Sivagangai from the British in 1780. With the help of Marathas and Marudhu brothers, Velu after 8 years of training went on to attack the British forces. Velu Nachiyar ingeniously used her deep knowledge of the local terrain to execute a surprise attack, catching the British off guard. This victory marked a significant

setback for the British forces in the region.

Velu Nachiyar's commitment to the cause of independence extended beyond military strategy. She implemented progressive policies in the territories under her control, advocating for social justice and equality. "A true leader is not measured by gender, but by their actions", said Velu Nachi during her 8 years of training which definitely had a profound impact on all her warriors. For instance, Velu is also credited with being one of the earliest rulers to train one of her valiant warriors 'Kuyili' as a human bomb. In a daring act of sacrifice, she volunteered to set herself ablaze and walked into the British ammunition depot during the siege of Sivagangai in 1780. This courageous act resulted in a massive explosion, causing significant damage to the British forces and contributing to the victory of Velu Nachiyar in that battle. Kuyili's selfless bravery and the resulting explosion was a decisive blow to the British, showcasing the lengths to which these women warriors were willing to go in their pursuit of freedom. She acquired her territory back with India's first all-women army built by her. Velu was succeeded by Vellachi, her daughter, to the throne in 1790 as the second queen of Sivagangai estate and ruled till 1793. Velu Nachiyar's commitment to the cause of independence was characterised by a rare blend of military prowess and visionary leadership. Her ability to inspire loyalty and rally diverse forces under a common banner made her a formidable force against the British colonial powers. The story of Kuyili's sacrifice became emblematic of the selfless courage displayed by those who fought alongside Velu Nachiyar. The legacy of Velu Nachiyar endures not only in the history of India's struggle for independence but also in the hearts of the people of Tamil Nadu. In recognition of her contributions, the Tamil Nadu



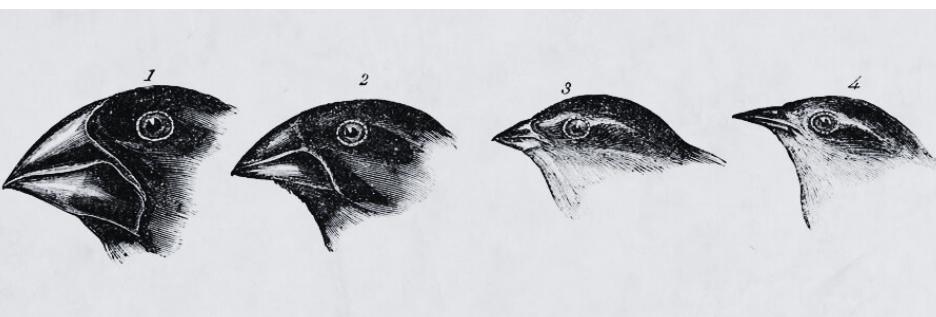
government has honoured Velu Nachiyar by naming a district after her. This gesture ensures that history remains an integral part of the region's cultural heritage, a source of inspiration for generations to come. Her story transcends the boundaries of time, serving as a testament to the power of determination and sacrifice in the face of oppression. Velu Nachiyar's legacy continues to inspire individuals to strive for justice, freedom, and the betterment of society. Her indomitable spirit remains a guiding light, reminding us of the transformative impact that a single individual can have in the pursuit of a noble cause. On December 25, 1796, at the age of 66 in Sivagangai, Velu Nachiyar the valiant queen, took her last breath.

Once Velu had said, "I won't let anyone suppress my voice". Today as I write this after 128 years of her death, I firmly believe that the unsuppressed voice of power, courage, and leadership resides in all of us. Everytime we go against injustice, everytime we stand united against oppression, we take up the courage to put up a selfless fight for ourselves and our people. In conclusion, Velu Nachiyar's life is a true saga of courage, leadership, and independence.

Why is Darwin's Theory of Evolution an Anathema to the Religionists?- Part IV

Ashoke Mukhopadhyay

[In part 3, the author spoke about Darwin's discovery of random variations as a cornerstone in organic evolution. He found that animals and plants would be born with random variations, only the ones that were best suited to the surroundings would survive. This meant that God made more failed designs than correct ones, making him presence redundant.]



Four of the species of finch observed by Darwin on the Galápagos Islands, showing variation of beak

We are using in this essay the terms "random variation" time and again. What is it? How did Charles Darwin turn his attention to the phenomenon described by this phraseology? What does it signify in science? If it is random, how does a law appear through this? Is there any causal relation in the random phenomena? Or, does randomness imply lawlessness?

Let us delve into these problems.

To get at the idea of randomness we have to handle some mathematics. Students of mathematics know there is a concept of variable in it. A quantity which assumes different values at different times or in different conditions is called a variable (the adjective is turned into a noun). For example, a man's age, the time shown in the clock, weights of potatoes in a sac, the size of the fishes, the meter reading in a taxi, the temperature of a place, marks obtained by students in (say) history in a school examination, and so on. It is hardly difficult to guess that these quantities vary from case to case and from time to time.

But note that here there are two kinds of variable quantities. The variables like the age of a man, the time shown by a clock, or the taxi meter reading, etc. change with a pattern. They do not rise (or fall, as is relevant) haphazardly but conform to some other kind of order. The person who was aged 53 in 2019 will be 57 this year (2023) without a doubt. The meter reading of a taxi,

unless the machine is defective, shows a steady increment at regular intervals.

But the potatoes in a sac, although different in size and weight, do not show any identifiable correlation. That means, looking at the size you may not be able to tell the weight. Neither the seller even. When you purchase prawn or tomato in the market, you will face and/or see the same problem.

Quantities like these are called random variables in mathematics.

Although the implicit values of the variables differ from case to case, there are no simple mathematical relations or laws visible among them. At least immediately, on the face value.

Then what is the meaning of randomness? Everything whatsoever? Absolute wilderness? Total disorder? Thorough lawlessness? Simply unpredictable?

No, none of these. At least in the mathematical sense.

It implies unplanned, undetermined, without premeditation, so on and so forth. There is determination, but no predetermination.

Consider the case of the dice in Ludo. If it turns out 'two' now, there is no certainty that in the next turn you will get 'three' or 'four'. On the other hand, whatever comes, it will show surfaces with markings from one to six. You shall never get a 'fifteen' or a 'twenty seven'. Similarly, take the case of the potatoes in the sac. The weight of a potato may be 37 grams or 54 gram. However it is

hardly likely to weigh two kilograms. This type of quantities is called a random variable.

However randomness is not synonymous with lawlessness. Random variables also follow certain laws. They are called the law of large numbers, subject to the law of probability. Both of these are under some solid mathematical formulations. These are expressed in the forms of equations with their well defined right hand side equal to the left hand side. Equations entail an order. And hence causality. Some definite causes ensure what is more probable; without a sound cause something is unlikely to occur.

For example, if a person has slightly more than 110 microgram/ml of sugar in his/her bloodstream, it signals the possibility of trouble. Possibility does not imply the immediate occurrence of the danger. The more the proportional quantity of sugar, the greater the likelihood of the danger. If the person is interested to know why, a physician may explain the situation. But he will explain the ensuing troubles in terms of causality, with reference to the salient biochemical and physiological facts, the so called aetiology of diseases.

Again for instance, what will turn out in the next move in a game of Ludo? You can't say for certain. It may come as any from one to six. What cards will one in a Bridge game obtain at a particular shuffle? It is also similarly

uncertain. Or, having his/her own cards in hand, a player may not be able to guess the cards in the hands of his/her partner.

With so much ignorance how does the game then proceed? With the help of the law of probability. In a multiple of moves, a six is sure to come up in the Ludo. Just so, in the periodic shuffling of the cards one may expect some cards more often than not. This knowledge propels the game forward. The more does one understand the role of probability the better may one play.

This phenomenon where a variable assumes different undetermined values is known as random variation. This concept had crept into mathematics in Europe ever since the seventeenth century to tackle the problem of gambling. Many theorems, functions and equations were gradually born out of that practice in the last four hundred years. But it did not find use beyond pure mathematics till the middle of the nineteenth century; or to put it more succinctly, till Charles Darwin. With the introduction of the concept of random variation, Darwin showed two things:

1) Variations on which natural selection works are random and reject teleology;

2) in the long run, some varieties being successful in adaptation and later in selection is almost certain, which ensures evolution proceeds.

It is thus that on the one hand the species are stable and do not change on and often; on the other, evolution is also possible in and as a long term process. Both these processes brook no interference of Providence; on the contrary, bringing in the almighty there jeopardizes explanations of both phenomena.

In other words, the design argument went against the very purpose of the men who had proposed it. If you conceive of God as the grand designer of the successful candidates, you have no way

but to attribute to Him the designs of the unsuccessful species too, the number of which overwhelm the number of the former by a multiple factor. That grossly undermines the power and knowledge of a superbeing. But the ideas of random variation and of selection working upon it explicate both without the least anomaly.

Consider the case of the recent earthquake in Syria (February 2023), in which about fifteen thousands of people died under the heaps of the crumbled buildings. One cannot obviously elicit this as a sample of mercifulness of God. And even if one tries, the surviving relations of the killed will scarcely

exception is also a random eventuality, similar to what happens in natural phenomena like storm, thunder bolt, cyclone, tsunami, flood, landslide, and so on. We may attach anthropomorphic terms like catastrophe, calamity, disaster, etc. to any of them from our survival point of view, but they still are merely some natural phenomena.

Thus the credit of introducing the idea of random variation into the fields of science goes to Darwin. He for the first time showed that natural phenomena occur out of nature's intrinsic processes, and not by any human or superhuman dicta, neither by virtue of any pre-plan or pre-designed order. He could not

express the matter in its mathematical form, in terms of probability, for he had no grounding for that. Once the idea got entry in the court of scientific knowledge, it was extended further by Gregor Mendel in his theory of heredity, and that with a statistical formulation. Soon it found application in the field of physics through the works of James Clerk Maxwell and Ludwig Boltzmann. Five decades later when quantum mechanics appeared on the scene, probability became its fundamental spoken language.

“...the credit of introducing the idea of random variation into the fields of science goes to Darwin. He for the first time showed that natural phenomena occur out of nature's intrinsic processes, and not by any human or superhuman dicta, neither by virtue of any pre-plan or pre-designed order.”

accept the thesis. Now suppose, someone goes to cite the two kids strangely surviving the grave of debris as an example of God's magnanimity. Directly someone else, in line with the son in Ingersoll's story, may ask: Did Herr God think of the two kids only and forgot about the others? IT WOULD LOOK VERY BAD. One had better keep silent in such cases. Or a devotee may argue like the simple minded Ramakrishna: How can we fathom the will of God? It's OK then.

The truth is that large scale destruction of life and properties in the event of an earthquake is a natural occurrence, although some may escape death on certain rare concatenation of things. This

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Origins of Caste- Part I

Anupam

Caste has been noted as one of the most important problems in the specific context of Indian democratic revolution. In fact caste is directly related to the particular nature of the evolution of Indian society as a unique system of social stratification with a unique feature of self-organisation and self-regulation. With the development of class society and emergence of state, the caste ideology served as a compact ideological package of the reactionary ruling classes and till now acts as a barrier in the development of class consciousness. The fundamental logic of the caste system lies in the division of society into mutually exclusive groups where the social status of an individual is defined through his or her attachment to the group. The extreme division is ensured through conventions, laws, and rituals well supported in the Hindu religious framework. The uniqueness of caste has been a matter of debate within scholars. In fact it is tough to find a system in this world that reflects the dynamic nature of caste which enhances its power of exploitation.

Many scholars try to compare slavery with the Indian caste system. Sources depict that slavery existed in India during the 6th century BCE and reappeared in the Islamic period in the form of bonded labour system which is still prevalent in the country. Similarly, with the expansion of the caste system, it can be seen that most of the bonded labourers belong to the Dalit communities. In this context, the Anti-Slavery International report (2008) can be referred to that clearly states the condition of Dalit bonded labourers who are associated with the most physically straining works in industries and farming. Broadly, a similarity can be drawn between the two systems as both of them offer all privileges to the uppermost and none to the lowest one. But the worst part lies in the two opposite consciousnesses that they

produce. The consciousness of a slave encourages him to revolt against his master while the caste consciousness strengthens the caste structure. In the hierarchical caste structure, the contradiction is allowed to penetrate to every local level to further widen the caste division rather than abolition of the caste-based oppression. Even Dr. Ambedkar tried to draw a comparison between the untouchables in India and slavery in European and American civilization. He remarked "It is enslavement without making the Untouchables conscious of their enslavement...It is enduring because it is

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The Manusmriti acted as a precious weapon to the feudal system, supporting it with ideological justification for the superiority of exploiting classes. It explains "Since the Brahman sprang out from the (virat purusha's i.e. god's) mouth, he was the first-born, possessed the Veda and hence became by right 'the lord of this whole creation'... To the Shudra, the god prescribed 'one occupation', i.e. to serve meekly the other three Varnas."

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Approaches have been made to measure caste in a racist approach and compare it with racism of the West. The race relation has got a physical orientation while caste is culturally oriented. People like James Silverberg have spoken of the flexibility of the caste system that is absent in case of racial discrimination. Groups of backward caste try to imitate the practice of higher caste in order to get elevated in caste hierarchy. Race sentiment and interest has got a universal nature while the caste sentiment and interest tend to be localized. The antagonism produced by a racial system divides the society vertically while the caste antagonism

produces a stratification of hierarchical manner. Dr. Ambedkar denies to see caste as race and argues that "The Brahman of Punjab is racially of the same stock as Chamar of Punjab...The caste system is a social division of people of the same race". Dr. Teltumbde explains that this formidable system (caste) of stratification "represents a continuum of infinite castes stung within a fluid hierarchy." The innumerable castes maintaining the macrostructure obeys the Varna hierarchy through their attachment to one of the Varnas. Simultaneously, each of them contends for a higher status with respect to the

one in its proximity. These contentions among castes not only strengthens the macrostructure but also internalises its hierarchy.

The origin of the caste system can be traced 3000 years back. Its development has been related to the development of class society, emergence of state, development of feudal production, and forcible inclusion of various tribal groups into the exploitative agrarian economy. The Vedic period (from 1500 BCE) witnessed the emergence of agriculture as a dominant production system to the rise of the state around 500 BCE. Till the 4th century CE, the expansion of agriculture based on Shudra

labourers, the growth of trade and its decline continued, followed by the emergence of feudalism. With the development of feudalism, the Brahminical Hinduism and Varna system acquired the complex and rigid form. The source of the caste code is embedded in the reactionary ideology of Brahminism and is traced to the Purusha Sukta of the Tenth Mandala of Rig Veda that is regarded as the earliest Hindu text. Phule and Ambedkar denied Purusha Sukta and considered it to be a new addition to Rig Veda since Rig Veda did not mention the fourth Varna-Shudra.

The Atharva Veda also referred to only three Varnas. The concept of Shudra was originated in the later part of the Vedic period and the four Varnas were the form class society took in the later Vedic and Upanishad period. In this period, agriculture flourished at the cost of non-agricultural tribes who were either evicted from the forests or livelihood. The conquest strengthened the position of the chieftain clans who relied on ritualism and yajnas to enhance their prestige and appropriate the surplus. These were performed in alliance with the priestly clans. Thus, as the pastoral tribes adopted agriculture, the chieftain and priestly clans were consolidated as the Kshatriya and Brahmin Varnas. The ordinary clansmen constituted the Vaishya Varna and the subjugated tribals came to form the ShudraVarna. The last two Varnas engaged themselves in rearing cattle and tilling the soil. The Varna ideology nurtured the growing power of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas and ensured the absorption of the subjugated tribals into the lower Varnas.

Caste developed itself as the ideological expression of the classes that evolved from the womb of various tribes. It can be seen that with the development of the caste system, all castes connected with physical labour (peasants, artisans etc.) or those who challenged Brahminical hierarchy (kayasthas or court writers, vaids or doctors) were clubbed as Shudras.

At the nascent stage of the Varna system, there had been no mention of existence of the fifth category-the Avarna or Panchamas, people outside the four-fold Varnas, the Untouchables. Arthashastra by Kautilya has got mention of outcastes (chandala, antavyasains) beyond the four Varnas and declared punishments according to the caste of a person. The Manusmriti (Laws of Manu) which was composed between 200 BCE and 300 CE rigidified the caste code and justified the Purusha Sukta theory of origin of the four Varnas to be necessary “for the sake of prosperity of the world.”

The Manusmriti acted as a precious weapon to the feudal system, supporting it with ideological justification for the superiority of exploiting classes. It explains “Since the Brahman sprang out from the (virat purusha’s i.e. god’s) mouth, he was the first-born, possessed the Veda and hence became by right ‘the lord of this whole creation’...To the Shudra, the god prescribed ‘one occupation’, i.e. to serve meekly the other three Varnas.” Manusmriti tried to compel the Shudra to do servile work as “he was created by god to be the slave of Brahmins”. The Manusmriti also referred to the existence of people beyond four Varnas as dasyus, the tribes which were not included in the Varna system, irrespective of whether they spoke the language of the mlechchhas (Barbarians) or that of Aryans. These ‘impure’ groups were forced to live in

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Eleanor Zelliot remarked that by 300 CE, specific caste groups of Untouchables had emerged in Indian society. From that period of history, this concept of untouchability in practice continued to exist in the country, where in parts of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra, Untouchables still exist who are considered to be unapproachable and even ‘unseeable’. Specific purification strategies exist in case of such ‘impure’ contact. The Untouchables are assigned with works like removal of waste, butchery, making of footwear etc.- everything that has to do with decay and death. This ideology of ritual pollution opened the tool of creating a class of semi-slave for the rural and urban economy. Brahmins as the closest friends of the exploiting class (who possess land and labour) developed these theories of pollution. As the Varna

ideology dominated the entire society, it emphasised the importance of the caste system in the feudal mode of production.

Classically, the caste system stands on the balance strongly supported by Hindu religious and philosophical notions of two doctrines of Karma

Dharma. Karma justifies the assigned caste by their previous deed not only in this life, but also in previous one (doctrine of reincarnation) and Dharma provides the doctrines of systematic practice of religious duties in order to be born in a higher caste in their next birth.

Another strong pillar of the structure was its internal elasticity. It had the power to absorb a new group within a caste, create a new caste and collapse or reorder the old ones. This flexibility allowed many merging and splitting of existing castes as per local economic and political demands. This elastic nature made it possible for the caste society to survive and witness various changes in Indian civilization facing serious challenges in different stages of history.

remote, wild areas or near burial grounds, wear garments of the dead, use broken utensils and would only have internal social interactions and endogamy. They remained Avarna, outside the formalised society and were forced to physical segregation in villages. The Pantanjali refers to two types of Shudras-the Nirashrit (excluded) and the Ashrit in around 4th century BCE. They were few in numbers. But with the growth of feudalism, as new tribal groups were included in the varna system, the number increased. As a result, the Chamars and Rajaks were reduced to Untouchables. The tribal groups displaced from their forests/land and means of sustenance were also gifted the status of Untouchables. Some artisan groups and bonded agricultural labourers were even degraded from Shudra to ati-Shudra. Their existence was meant to work for the landowning classes of the village, living far from the village with even their shadows deemed as ‘polluting’.

ON THIS MONTH



January 5, 1919- German communists led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht attempted to take over the government by seizing a number of buildings.

January 2, 1989- Communist playwright and director Safdar Hashmi was brutally attacked on 1st January, 1989 by Indian National Congress party goons during his play called "Halla Bol" in Ghaziabad. He succumbed to his injuries the next day.



January 15, 1919- German revolutionaries Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were cruelly imprisoned and shot by Freikorps (a right-wing Paramilitary group) officers. Their bodies were dumped in Berlin's Landwehr Canal and Berlin zoo respectively.



January 30, 1968- Beginning of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam as North Vietnamese troops attacked 36 provincial capitals and 5 major cities in South Vietnam, including an attack on the US Embassy in Saigon and the presidential palace.

January 21, 1924- Vladimir Lenin, the architect of the Bolshevik Revolution and the first leader of the Soviet Union, dies of a brain haemorrhage at the age of 54. He led the Bolsheviks to victory over the Czar in the October Revolution of 1917 establishing the world's first socialist government.

January 31, 1943- German troops surrendered at Stalingrad, marking the first defeat of Hitler's armies in World War II.