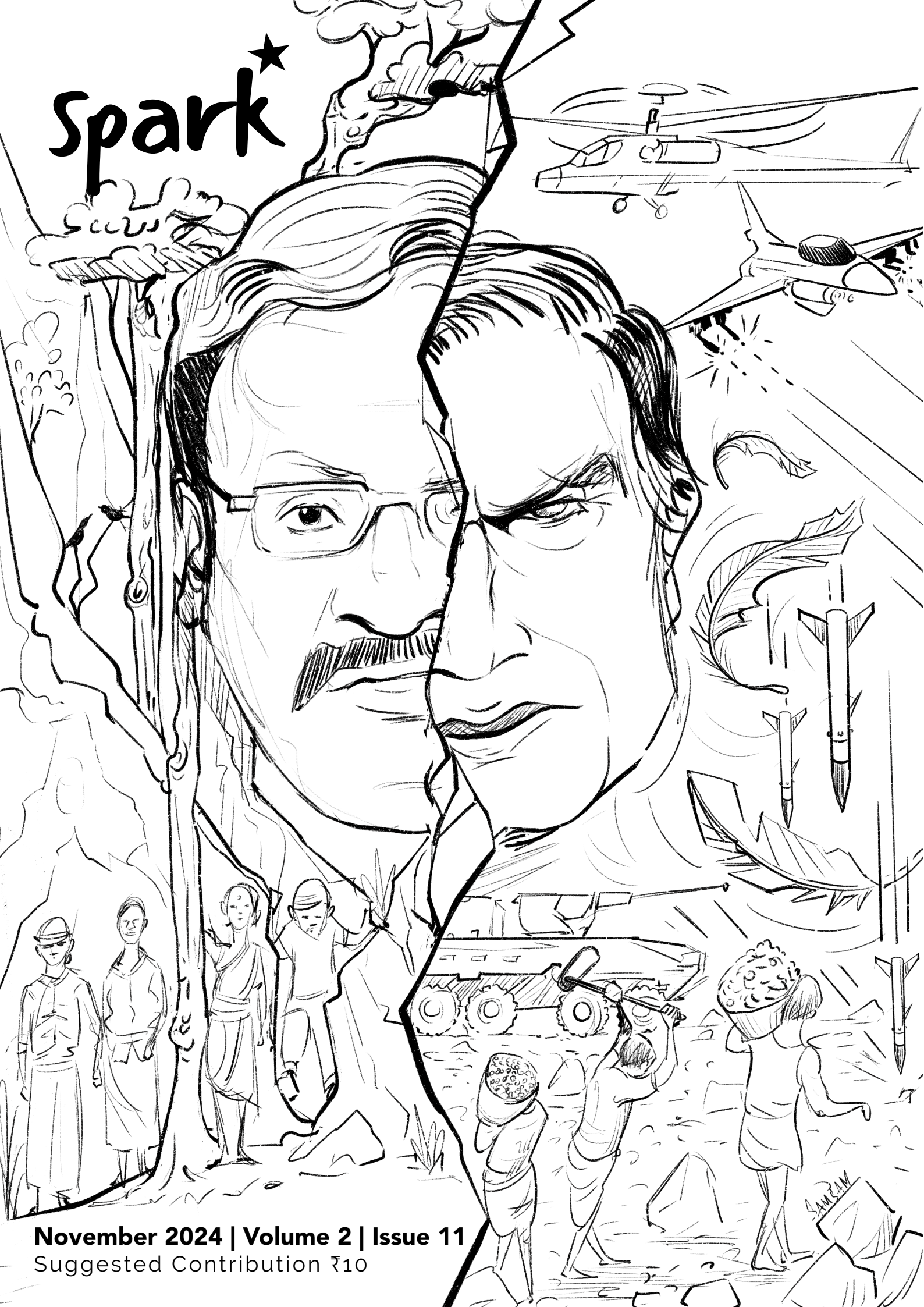


Spark[★]



November 2024 | Volume 2 | Issue 11
Suggested Contribution ₹10

UPDATES ON STUDENT MOVEMENTS

Protest over faculty shortage in government colleges

Hundreds of students from first-grade government colleges in Bengaluru, gathered in Freedom Park to protest against the non-appointment of guest lecturers on October 1st. The classes are not regularised, classes are derailed, many colleges with only up to 8 permanent faculties, thus leaving students in no capacity to face exams, scheduled in December. There are around 10,500 vacancies in these first-grade colleges.



Protest against delay in senate election in Panjab University

Under the banner of 'Panjab University Bachao Morcha' students gathered and protested against the delay in elections to the Senate, the governing body of the University. Students have been carrying out an indefinite protest from the 21st of October, against the refusal to conduct the elections, which is a matter of grave concern for the students.

Protests over the dissolution of student unions in UoH

Students of University of Hyderabad protested against the circular by the administration that notified the immediate dissolution of the Students' Union of 2023-24. The protesting students called this an autocratic move by the administration. They demand that the university conduct elections to the union, and also call for a University General Body Meeting. The administration conceded to the demands, and elections for the Student Union have successfully been conducted.

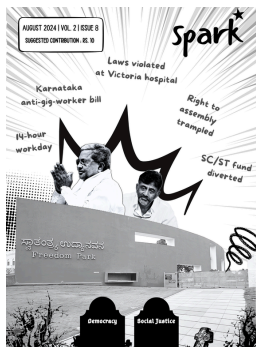
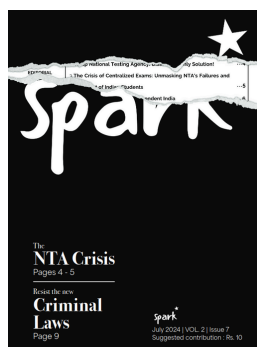
Police detain students protesting in support of Sonam Wangchuk

Delhi Police on 20th October, brutally detained students and activists from different organisations like AISA and Ladakh Students' Union, who were protesting outside Ladakh Bhawan in support of Ladakh-based activist Sonam Wangchuck, who was partaking in an indefinite hunger strike seeking statehood and 6th Schedule for Ladakh, among other demands.



Gatherings in memory of Com. G N Saibaba

Students in Azim Premji University gathered to remember G N Saibaba, after his death on 12th October. Students read out his poems, spoke about his life, his active support of the people's struggles against state exploitation and loot, about the draconian UAPA and state repression against democratic dissent. This was followed by a candlelight vigil.



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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 or call us at **8584056936**

A Life Worth Living and a Life Worth Dying

All men must die, but death can vary in its significance. The ancient Chinese writer Szuma Chien said, "Though death befalls all men alike, it may be weightier than Mount Tai or lighter than a feather." To die for the people is weightier than Mount Tai, but to work for the fascists and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather.

-Mao Tse-tung

Scene 1:

A 57-year old's final journey is accompanied by a sea of comrades as his body is donated to a hospital as per his last wishes to help medical students. The Indian state had incarcerated him for almost a decade in abysmal jail conditions leading to his untimely demise barely 7 months after his acquittal. While his mortal remains were brought to the Martyr's memorial near the Telangana assembly for his family and comrades to pay their last respect, the Telangana police barged in demanding to be shown permission for the gathering. In death too, he remained a thorn in the flesh for the state.

Scene 2:

An octogenarian capitalist dies of natural causes at a private hospital leaving behind billions of blood money worth of assets. His death is mourned by many, from the PM to the CMs but probably not by the underpaid, overworked factory workers employed by his company. Perhaps the Adivasis displaced by his company and its various ventures too have similar feelings. He is given a ceremonial guard of honour by the Mumbai Police before cremation as hundreds of people including a horde of top politicians pay him a last visit exemplifying the high stature he held within the state.

Such has been the contrasting roles and responses of the Indian state with respect to these two lives and recent deaths- that of the revolutionary intellectual Com. GN Saibaba and the industrialist Ratan Tata. One was a life dedicated towards

building a more just society for the vast masses, while the other was spent on crafting more and more devious ways to loot people, labour, and natural resources. The latter did not merely work for the fascists, rather he was an equal party to the state that was turning fascist with the intensifying crisis of moribund capitalism. The wrath of the state came down on the former as he lived a life dedicated to exposing the deeply unequal society capitalist exploitation leaves in its wake.

As comrade Lenin said, the state is a product of the fact that in society classes exist with their conflicting class interests. Its role is to keep these conflicts in check through the use of a hundred arms in the forms of the police, army, judiciary etc. In the present case of a parliamentary democracy, the façade of an institution that upholds people's collective will, disguises the true intents of the state guided by ruling class interests. In a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, democracy too exists only for the bourgeoisie, with the laws framed in a manner to facilitate perpetuation of their class rule.

In this regard it is important to scrutinise the law that was used to wrongfully jail Prof. GN Saibaba and other activists on charges of conspiring to wage war against the state as part of a banned outfit and to also note the hundreds of legal/semi-legal provisions that Ratan Tata himself helped formulate to increase 'ease of business' (read 'ease of exploitation') on the Indian soil.

Unlawful Activities Prevention Act or UAPA is one of the many draconian laws that turns the process into punishment. Prof. Saibaba, Pandu Narote, Fr. Stan Swamy, and many others were and continue to be victims of it. This act is a part of the sinister neoliberal strategy of not just intensifying economic assault, but also 'safeguarding' national economic security by branding individuals as terrorists even if clear connections to

terrorist act(s) are absent. Such were the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a Paris-based international watchdog that functions in tandem with the International Monetary Fund. In the process of becoming a member-nation of the FATF, the existing UAPA was amended to make it mightier by the Congress. No wonder, one of the staunchest critics of Operation Green Hunt, a tool to facilitate corporate plunder, had to fall prey to it. It must be noted that despite the long jail-term, all had to be acquitted by this very structure on grounds of 'vague allegations'. But who could ever have compensated the ten years he and his close ones lost?

On the other hand, the legal manoeuvres facilitating the Tata empire will fill an encyclopaedia. An instance of the Tatas being a huge benefactor of neoliberal reforms may help. In 2005, business houses from USA and India set up the US-India CEO Forum. Co-chaired by Ratan Tata, the Forum made several recommendations to craft new laws, and establish policy to make India more investor-friendly, pushing for weaker labour laws, facilitation of Special Economic Zones (where labour laws go down the drain), increased focus on postgraduate education, relaxing liability laws, and expediting resolution of disputes especially following events such as the Bhopal disaster. Was it any wonder that he got a 'tata' with a 21-gun salute?

As the death heavier than Mount Tai weighs down on the conscience of democratic activists, **it is important to continue the work that GN Saibaba did with his life.** The struggle for a true democracy did not start with him, nor will it end with him. Let this be a moment to strengthen the resolve to fight against this moribund system till its collapse.

Repeal UAPA! Release All Political Prisoners!

Red Salute to G.N. Saibaba

Ganga

On October 12th, G N Saibaba, a revolutionary intellectual, breathed his last. He was a beloved professor, fierce comrade, and a loving partner. Arrested and put in jail under harsh conditions of confinement for almost ten years, Saibaba's death is what amounts to a murder by the Indian state. With a 90% disabled body, his ideas were more than enough to scare the State, who, as always, found ways to silence those who come in the way of their ruthless and reckless "governance".

Comrade Sai was jailed under the vile UAPA (Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act), a law conveniently put in place to silence dissent. The only "crime" he did was that he exposed the close connection between the ruling government and corporations, whose interests lay in the looting of adivasi land and resources. He was arrested in March 2014, for alleged links with Maoist organisations. He was acquitted and released in March 2024, but his health was forced into such a pathetic state that in less than 7 months of his release, he succumbed to his illness. He was confined to a solitary 'anda' cell in Nagpur Central Jail. He said that he came out of jail alive "only by chance".

Comrade Sai was born in 1967 in Amalapuram, Andhra Pradesh, to a struggling family. He contracted polio at the age of five, leaving him over 90% disabled. For more than three decades, he could not access a wheelchair; he could only move by crawling or with others' support. Despite so many hardships, his determination to pursue education was remarkable. He finished his Bachelor's degree in Amalapuram, his Master's in English from University of Hyderabad, where he began spending time on understanding and organising for socio-political issues. Here he realised his dream was to become a teacher and an activist. He completed his PhD in 2013, from Delhi University. He then became a professor of English at

Ram Lal Anand College, Delhi. The college sacked him after he was sentenced with life imprisonment. He was not reinstated even after acquittal.

To further the cause of Adivasi and Dalit resistance, he began taking part in the activities of All India People's Resistance Forum in the early 2000s. Up until 2008, he travelled across India to various villages, with the support of fellow activists and villagers, where he participated in multiple movements of the peasants, adivasis, and workers. He emphasised on how Indian independence meant nothing but a "mere transfer of power". He then joined Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF), now banned, to organise and resist the state-sponsored violence in Chhattisgarh, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh. He was vocal against Chidambaram's Operation Green Hunt, a paramilitary offensive, a precursor to the current Operation Samadhan-Prahar-Kagaar. The Operation gave extensive impunity to the military, at the cost of the lives of thousands of Adivasi people who were resisting the loot of their Jal-Jangal-Jameen. He was very vocal against the corporate interests who, with the state support, repeatedly attempted to take over tribal land for mining. "I gathered enough evidence that suggested that the ruling class wanted access to [Adivasi] resources, no matter what. Operation Green Hunt was launched to kill, maim, and dislodge them," Saibaba told The Hindu in 2012.

In May 2014, he was picked up by Maharashtra police in Delhi, and jailed under UAPA. The electronic documents seized from Saibaba's house, supposed proof of "unlawful" activities, were never produced during the trial. He was given bail in 2015 on medical grounds, only to immediately be jailed again. In 2016, the Supreme Court released him on bail, but in 2017, he was slapped with multiple sections of the UAPA, and sentenced to life imprisonment. While this was challenged by multiple lawyers,



1967-12th October, 2024

activists, and even global organisations, the stringent measures of UAPA ensured that he could not get bail. In 2020, during COVID-19, a plea for a 45-day medical bail was raised, urging the authorities to release Saibaba, given his seriously deteriorating health. The pleas were rejected on the grounds that the charges against him are serious and that the court cannot afford to take risks. His health condition worsened. In August 2022, he was infected by swine flu. His co-accused, Pandu Narote, also lodged in Nagpur, succumbed to swine flu in August, 2022. Earlier that year, Com. Sai had protested for three weeks, including a four day hunger-strike to get a plastic water bottle, and against a wide-angle CCTV camera capturing the toilet area. In 2020, he was denied bail to visit his ailing mother, and again denied bail to attend her funeral! In October 2022, Saibaba and five others, including the martyred Pandu Narote, were acquitted, only for it to be suspended almost immediately. Finally, in March 2024, they were released, citing 'lack of technical regularity during the prosecution'. Of course, Pandu Narote never got to experience freedom!

Saibaba's partner, Vasantha, has spoken at length about the torture he had to go through during incarceration. The crucial medical intervention that he was denied over and over again while he was confined to the anda cell, resulted in his internal organs, and upper body failing. His left arm was severely injured when he was manhandled by the police during his arrest, which affected his nervous

system.

G N Saibaba was not the first person to face such intense suffering under this state. Fr. Stan Swamy, Pandu Narote, and countless others, have been killed wilfully by the state. This has exposed the simple fact that when a person who raises his voice for the oppressed is called a criminal and allowed to die, this 'democracy' is a farce.

Comrade G N Saibaba sought to free India from the clutches of imperialist exploitation and violence. For this he had to die. He wrote and spoke.

For this the state killed him. He stood for the resistance by the Adivasis in their struggle for their jal-jangal-jameen, with the Dalits against Brahminical oppression, with the workers against capitalist exploitation, and with the students who saw through the theatrics of our state. For this he was murdered.

His death is not in vain. He remains a pillar of strength to all those who raise their fists against the murderous state! His words and deeds will always be remembered by those who fight to end all oppression, and by those who fight for a new dawn of freedom and love!

Long Live G N Saibaba!
Red Salute to all the martyrs!
Down with UAPA!
Release all political prisoners!
Down with Operation Samadhan-Prahar-Kagaar!
Down with the fascist state and its machinery!
People's resistance Long Live!

What Warrants Parole in the World's Most Populous Democracy? *Mitra*

Justice delayed is justice denied. -William Gladstone

Umar Khalid, accused of being the main conspirator of the Delhi riots case was arrested on 13th September, 2020. On September 21st, 2020, he was denied permission to see his family while in police custody. Siddique Kappan, Delhi correspondent for the Azhimukham news portal, was accused of being involved with the Popular Front of India. His wife has said that her attempts to speak to him or even ask about his health were thwarted by the UP Police. Sagar Gorkhe and Ramesh Gaichor, activists of the Kabir Kala Manch, have not been able to get a single proper hearing before the Bombay high court.

The recently deceased G.N. Saibaba, was also denied parole, even as his mother was on her deathbed- "I was not allowed to see her before her death. I was denied parole. After her death, I was denied parole to attend her funeral." The Nagpur Central Prison denied his parole on the basis that G.N. Saibaba was in a high-security prison cell and that an emergency parole would "not be safe." Wheelchair-bound since he had contracted polio as a child, G.N Saibaba was also getting progressively more ill with every passing day in the cell. However, India is not rigid about offering an exit from prison. Gauri Lankesh's murderers, for example, were formally bailed out of Bengaluru Central Jail on October 11. The recently released were greeted in their hometown, Vijayapura, not only with open arms, but also with garlands and saffron shawls. Out of the 25 people arrested in the Gauri Lankesh case, 18 have been granted bail.

Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, the Dera Sacha Sauda chief, sentenced to 20 years of prison for the rape of two of his female disciples, and then sentenced to life-long imprisonment for a murder, has been given eight temporary releases in the last four years. While many raised an alarm over the generous amounts of parole Ram Rahim was receiving, the BJP-ruled Haryana government supported his parole, saying that he cannot be characterised as a hardcore criminal.

The rapists of Bilkis Bano were convicted in 2008, sentencing them to jail for rape and murder. They were released on India's Independence Day in 2022. Outside the jail, they were welcomed with pomp and garlanded. This was met with a huge uproar from the people, and the courts were forced to send the convicts back to jail.

The judiciary is now an extended cousin of the fascist forces. The disparity in judicial processes and treatments expose the inherent bias of the system.

Letters to My Ailing Mother

Harish Gopi

The Lady of Justice has shed her blindfold,
I hear.

Could she finally see the sound of our
voices, trapped beneath her feet?

Could she see the foetid stains of innocent
blood on her saree?

The tender skin of lifeless children,
The rhymes of these victims pleading
for sunshine and rainbows?

The smell of gunpowder weighs heavy
on our dignity,

A metaphor for Palestine, Bastar

Are they visible?

Can she not see the stain in her saree?

Will she turn back to witness the hands
of the perpetrator,

Covered in excreta and prejudice,
Emerging from the deepest latrines
of civilization,

Hiding in the shadow of her veil?

Can she witness the piles of dirt on the
graves of Stan Swamy and G.N. Saibaba,
Made in her name?

Does she not see the burns across her body
from the heat of our anger?

Does she not frown at the stench of greed,
Dripping from the saffron hands that shed
her blindfold?

Could she at least comb her hair while
gazing in the mirror,

Or is the poor puppet denied that privilege
too?



Under the Shadows of Tata's Glowing Legacy: A Brief Examination

Milan

The passing away of Ratan Tata on October 9 was followed by a wave of mourning and anguish from mainstream media. He was being referred to as 'India's most humble businessman', 'secular living saint', 'visionary', 'humanitarian' etc., which spared no shortage of words that eulogised his legacy. However, that is hardly enough to cover the trail of blood he left behind.

In the evening of November 4 in 2009, Manmohan Singh put forth a very interesting admission. "The systematic exploitation and social and economic abuse of our tribal communities can no longer be tolerated". There are no short words to describe the tall legacy of Adivasi struggle in Indian political consciousness and history. Perhaps it is unsurprising that Tata's legacy has been knee deep in crimes against Adivasis.

On January 2, 2006, police opened fire on Adivasi villagers that gathered to protest against the construction of the boundary wall of Tata's steel plant in Kalinganagar, Odisha. This killed thirteen villagers, including a 14-year-old boy. Additionally, the bodies of both a woman and child were found to be mutilated. Subsequent years and decades saw massive displacements and loss of livelihood. Today, Kalinganagar hosts a multitude of plants from many companies despite persistent Adivasi pressure.

In Bastar, Salwa Judum, an anti-Naxal terror squad sponsored by the Chhattisgarh government and mining corporations have conducted indiscriminate massacres and exploitation. The infamous militia holds close to 80,000 Adivasi in camps relocated from displaced lands. This is in the background of Tata's aggressive involvement in land acquisition of 2000+ hectares of Adivasi land, enabled by state violence.

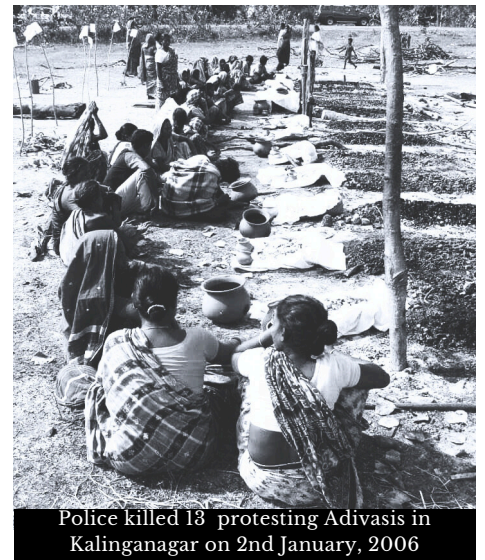
Similarly, Bihar police force massacred 8 unarmed Adivasis inside a hospital in an event called Gua massacre. This was

widely believed to be conducted by the state under the pressure of the Tata group against Adivasi agitation.

In 2006, Ratan Tata announced the construction of a Nano car manufacturing plant in Singur, West Bengal. A forced acquisition of close to 1000 acres of fertile land was conducted, spurring widespread agitation from farmers. The Tata Group withdrew from West Bengal in 2008, ceding defeat. Additionally, similar cases of forcible land acquisition were conducted in Jamshedpur and Munnar.

The secret calls regarding Tata's payment to political parties during the Singur agitation was discovered. The Niira Radia tapes which consisted of leaked telephone calls between politicians, journalists, business tycoons shook the mainstream media in 2009. It also unraveled the 2G spectrum scam. This leak also contained Ratan Tata's calls which turned controversial. He filed a Supreme Court case citing infringement of privacy that he eventually won. Nevertheless, the nexus between the state and corporations was revealed in its bare form. This deep connection was further observed in the electoral bond data which showed that a hefty 75% donation received by the ruling BJP was from Tata group. While, this sort of point may be unsurprising after witnessing the cases of Adivasi violence, where state institutions like the police were wielded as weapons against the people. This nexus is a cause for us to re-contextualize the implicit injustice that violate our fundamental rights. To empower and prioritise corporate entities over women's bodies, children's future and against the simple dignity of existence. To rape, pillage, kill and deny aspirations all in an endless race to secure profit.

Tata group's indifference against violence didn't just flow outside of their factories, but inside too. Increasing cases of safety lapses consequently led to



Police killed 13 protesting Adivasis in Kalinganagar on 2nd January, 2006

multiple fatalities. Falls, equipment failures, chemical leaks etc. have been reported across several plants and across several departments within it. Despite extending condolences, and claiming responsibility, meaningful response can only be seen in outcomes. The rise in cases of safety mishaps speaks otherwise. Tata's passivity regarding safety concerns is in contrast with active actions of union busting. The history of the Tata workers' union in India is claimed to be one of the oldest in India. This surprising longevity can be explained by the lack of a single case of strikes since 1928. Does this mean the worker's views were adequately represented by the management? Starting from 1991, Tata's workforce was cut down from 78000 to 40000 over ten years and yet saw no strikes from the union. Fear may be a factor too. Two of the union's presidents- Abdul Bari in 1947 and VG Gopal in 1993 were gunned down. When the union in Tata's UK plant saw friction with management, disputes over union busting were observed.

The corporation's actions speak closer to being misanthropic than philanthropic. Their involvement in the cover-up of the man-made disaster of Bhopal gas tragedy is a fine example of this phenomenon. In a letter discovered in 2014, evidence had been found that JRD Tata had lobbied on behalf of Union Carbide and infamous warmonger diplomat, Henry Kissinger (whose consultancy represented Union carbide).

This letter was written to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who replied, "The suggestions will be given consideration". Coincidentally, criminal charges and civil proceedings on the company were dropped next year. The Supreme court ordered a settlement which concluded with the compensation of \$470 million which was far below the original fine of \$3.3 billion demanded by the Indian government. The spirit of JRD's legacy was also inherited by his son. Union Carbide which was acquired by Dow Chemical sought re-entry into the Indian market with the backing of Ratan Tata. Tata's intergenerational complicity in a tragedy that claimed 30000 lives is quite sickening.

This doesn't just end here. Tata group's defense products and arms have found its place in Israel during the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Land Rovers turned armoured vehicles, weapon components and electrical equipment sold by Tata enabled brutality against the Palestinian people. The company's war profiteering extended even to the Myanmar military Junta which orchestrated a coup against the democratically elected government. The junta unravelled decades of progress, jailed, tortured and killed thousands of civilians. Tata's defence products also flowed into the hands of the Indian military, specifically in Kashmir.

What more? The Tatas made their early fortune through the trade of opium in the 19th century, contributing to the economic and social devastation of the Chinese people.

Studies have concluded that India's current inequality is worse than colonial times. The genesis of the Tata group was through active support and continual nurturing of British imperialism. Looking into the reflection of Tata is to look at the very face of Indian capitalism. Tata's criminal legacy is only symptomatic of a structural folly that riddles the core of capitalism itself. A folly without which Tata's legacy cannot be illustrated.

ON THIS MONTH

To the Citizens of Russia!

The Provisional Government has been deposed. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies--the Revolutionary Military Committee, which heads the Petrograd proletariat and the garrison.

The cause for which the people have fought, namely, the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship, workers' control over production, and the establishment of Soviet power—this cause has been secured.

Long live the revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants!
Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies

10 a.m., October 25*, 1917.

(this decree was passed after the insurrection in the cities were successful)

**October according to Julian calendar. Russia was yet to shift to Gregorian calendar*

7th November, 1917- The Bolsheviks seized political power overthrowing the bourgeois dictatorship in Russia to form the first socialist state.

11th November, 2004 - Yasser Arafat died at the age of 75 at a military hospital near Paris, France, due to an unknown illness. He was Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from 1969 to 2004 and President of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) from 1994 to 2004. He was a founding member of the Fatah political party, which he led from 1959 until 2004.

15th November, 1875 - Adivasi freedom fighter and religious leader Birsa Munda was born in Ulihatu in district Khunti, Jharkhand. His anti-colonial struggle caused nightmares for the British.

28th November, 1820- Friedrich Engels was born on this day. Engels, as Lenin wrote, was the finest scholar and teacher of the modern proletariat in the whole world, after his friend Marx. He co-authored 'The Communist Manifesto' along with Karl Marx in the year 1848. After Marx's death he published Vols 2 and 3 of Capital. His other published works include The Origin of the Family, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific.

29th November - The International Day of Solidarity traditionally provides an opportunity for the international community to focus its attention to the question of liberation of Palestine. This assumes special significance in the backdrop of the all-out attack on Gaza and Lebanon by the apartheid state of Israel.



Insidious Exclusions- Fate of Science in the Age of Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskars

Sushant

Since coming to power in 2014 the BJP with the ideological backing of RSS has continuously attacked scientific institutions and scientific temperament and is trying to use science and scientists to serve their ideology. After the continuous reduction in research funds, closing the Vigyan Prasar*, promoting Astrology and other pseudosciences, the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP) is their new effort in this direction.

In 2023, the Central government dissolved all existing science awards and integrated them into the RVP framework. The RVP is an award for outstanding contributions to science and technology. The RVP awards generated controversy after the random omission of three scientists from the final list of awardees. The names removed from the final list were Suvrat Raju (International Centre for Theoretical Sciences- Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bengaluru), Prateek Sharma (Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru), and Suman Chakraborty (Indian Institute of Technology, Kharapur).

This exclusion of distinguished scientists from the list of potential awardees in the final stage of selection raised concerns among scientists, even including some from the jury, about the “integrity” of the process. They sought clarity from the government on the considerations that may have influenced the final list of this year’s awardees, and behind the deletion of some names. On August 30, a group of scientists, including former Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) award recipients, wrote to the Prime Minister’s Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) Ajay Sood expressing their concerns about the selection process. In the letter, they asked the PSA if the apex committee’s recommendations were accepted in entirety or revised by further committees or authorities. They asked if the selection was “fully fair”, “transparent”



and “free of extraneous considerations”. The PSA responded to the letter, saying that the names recommended by the awards committee were forwarded to the Minister of Science and Technology. Scientists wrote a second letter to the government, saying, “Shocking, Ministers can’t veto experts’ picks”. They warned that giving the Science and Technology Minister the final say undermines the core principles of scientific practice and could hinder the country’s research development.

Earlier, the RVP website stated that all nominations for the award will be placed before the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar Committee (RVPC). RVPC, headed by the Principal Scientific Advisor, would identify the awardees. After the controversy, a new sentence was added that states: “The RVPC will recommend the names to the Honourable Minister of Science & Technology, Govt. of India.” An interesting point about these exclusions is that two of the three scientists, Suvrat Raju and Prateek Sharma, had signed petitions critical of the BJP Government. They were critical of IISc for its last-minute cancellation of a discussion on UAPA last year. Both physicists had signed open letters on the CAA-NRC and NIA action in the Bhima-Koregaon case. Also, these exclusions become more interesting when we see that the director of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics

Annapurni Subramaniam is awarded just after the involvement of IIA in the Surya-Tilak project of Ayodhya Ram Temple. Despite her achievements in the field of Astrophysics, the award given to her just after this project is too much of a coincidence.

These exclusions and inclusions show that the intolerance of the government to any form of dissent goes to the extent of undermining the contributions of scientists in enriching science and technology who work in Indian institutes.

Since the days of pioneers like Bruno, Galileo, Darwin etc., the ruling classes have punished natural philosophers who went against the norms set by them. Ultimately, scientific truth always won the day. Even today, academics disliked by the government may thus continue to be sidelined from awards, scientific grants, recruitment, and promotions. Such bureaucratic interventions should significantly concern the Indian scientific community. The implications of such manipulations for academic freedom and democratic rights in scientific spaces will be dire.

**An autonomous body under the Department of Science and Technology that was dedicated to promotion of scientific knowledge and fostering a rational outlook.*

On July 8 of this year, nearly 30,000 workers protested against one of the world's biggest electronics manufacturing conglomerates, Samsung, in its hometown of South Korea. The same year saw another massive protest in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, involving 1,350 workers against the same company. Despite having different nationalities, languages, races etc., they were united in the capitalist oppression they faced.

Disruption of Production for Better Working Conditions

Harish Gopi

Foundations of Evil:

Despite Samsung being a leading electronics company, the working conditions for its employees are dehumanising. Investigations by Hankyoreh reporters at Samsung Electronics plants in India, Vietnam, and Indonesia found frequent illegalities. Workers reported violations of minimum wage and probationary worker laws, forced labour, unfair terminations, and verbal abuse, among other issues.

Samsung entered India in 1995. One of its two plants is located near the southern industrial city of Chennai, while the other, dubbed the "world's largest mobile factory," opened in 2018 in Uttar Pradesh. The Sriperumbudur plant, which opened in 2007, manufactures refrigerators, televisions, washing machines, and other appliances. This facility accounts for 20-30% of Samsung's annual revenue in India, which totals \$12 billion, and employs approximately 1,800 people. It plays a key role in Samsung's global supply chain, using India's growing market to boost regional competitiveness.

The plant is located within the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (SIPCOT), established in 1971. The Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Act of 1965 aimed to provide single-window clearances and a range of incentives to facilitate domestic and foreign investment in the state. This laid a basis for the catastrophic liberalization, privatization, and globalization policies that followed. While SIPCOT projects itself as a beacon of economic growth and employment generation, it is a ground for corporate exploitation. There have been numerous cases of poor working conditions, illegal wage theft, lack of job security, union suppression, and non-compliance with labour laws.



The Protest:

The annual increment for Samsung employees in Chennai, announced in May, was set at Rs. 2500. This hike neither reflects market inflation, nor the ugly profits made by the company. In 2023, the increment was of only Rs. 3500*. Only a small percentage of the permanent employees, categorized by factory management as "A," "B," and "C" grade workers, actually received the full increment for 2024. "A" grade employees (approximately five to ten employees) are entitled to the Rs. 2500 annual increase, while B and C grade employees are set to receive just Rs. 1000 and Rs. 900, respectively. The top annual salaries for employees range from Rs. 50,000 to around Rs. 55,000, exclusive of a provident fund of about Rs. 3000. On average, a worker receives only Rs. 31,000 and takes home just Rs. 28,000. The factory officially operates two nine-hour shifts, each with approximately 800 workers. The first shift is from 8 am to 5 pm, and the second shift is from 8 pm to 5 am. However, all workers are required to work a minimum of 11 hours per day, four days a week, as overtime. Some employees spend long hours alone in poorly lit areas, working until they are exhausted, going without breaks for long. Hence, workers formed a union to challenge Samsung's infringement on

their labour rights. The Samsung India Labour Welfare Union (SILWU) was established by Samsung employees in July 2023, with the workers seeking government recognition and aiming to establish affiliation with the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), which represents numerous workers in Sriperumbudur and the industrial belt of which it is part.

The union-busting tendencies of Samsung are well-documented, with its founder, Lee Byung-chul, asserting that the company would not tolerate unions until "dirt covered his eyes". When Samsung management received notice of the formation of the union, they began harassing employees to dismantle it. The workers submitted their application for the registration of the Samsung Independent Workers Union (SIWU) to the Registrar of Trade Unions on June 27. More than 90 days have elapsed since then. According to the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947, a 14-day notice is required for a legal strike. SIWU sent their strike notice on August 19, nearly three weeks before the strike, still, the government declared the strike illegal. Samsung has used this "illegal" designation to withhold wages of the strikers. For the ruling party, maintaining 'ease of business' clearly had primacy to upholding hard-earned labour rights. Hence, all essential legal protections and progressive jurisprudence, including Article 19(1)(c) of the Constitution, which guarantees workers the fundamental right to form unions were disregarded. All these culminated together in the massive 37 day strike by the workers since September 9.

State Repression:

The self-proclaimed harbinger of social

justice, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), sided with Samsung in suppressing workers. The state police safeguarded corporate interests. On October 8, around 250 workers were detained. In a midnight crackdown, ten office-bearers of the union were picked up from their homes. The police went on to take down the tent at the protest site and threatened nearby shops for providing food or water to the protesters. When leftist parties, including CPI, CPI(M), and CPI(ML) Liberation, held a protest in solidarity with the workers, the police detained them, despite them being part of the ruling alliance. TRB Rajaa, the Minister for Industries, Investment Promotions, and Commerce, spread fake news of Samsung management and workers having reached a resolution. The striking workers clarified that management had included some workers in a “workers’ committee” and falsely claimed to have signed an agreement with them, completely bypassing the striking workers. Additionally, many media outlets sided with the corporation, portraying both the workers and the trade unions as anti-development.

The workers ended the strike on 17th October after the Samsung management decided to accept most of the workers' demands. While SIWU had agreed to the proposals, its petition seeking registration of the union was still pending before the Madras High Court. Justice Manjula had sought responses from both the State's Labour Commissioner and the statutory authority the Registrar of Trade Unions on the petition.

MNCs like Samsung exploit the cheap labour and lax labour laws of a developing nation like India where the policies have to strictly conform to neoliberal diktats. Irrespective of the party at the centre or the state, the bias would always be towards the domestic or foreign companies. With the introduction of the new labour codes, unionizing, living wages, job security etc. will become much harder to retain in the coming days.

*<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2024/09/20/ugjq-s20.html>

Stand in Solidarity: Support the Workers of Prism RMC

Sachin

The workers of Prism Johnson Ltd. RMC (India) has been locked in a prolonged struggle after the company abruptly issued an illegal "Notice of Closure" without prior consultation. On July 19th, workers arriving at the Veerasandra and Yelahanka plants found the gates closed, guarded by bouncers hired by the company. Management refused to speak with the workers, who were left stranded, blindsided by the sudden shutdown enacted just after the night shift had ended.

For over two decades, the Karnataka General Labour Union has organised the workforce at Prism Johnson Ltd., helping them secure better working conditions and collective bargaining power. The company, however, has consistently undermined these efforts, relying heavily on contract workers hired through sham contractors to avoid granting them the rights and job security that permanent employees deserve. Many of these contract workers, having served the company for years, have been demanding regular employment, which the company has persistently denied. The closure appears to be a strategy to replace unionised workers with cheaper contract labour while continuing production activities within the plant, blatantly violating labour laws that require proper permissions for closures.

The company's refusal to engage with the union reflects a broader erosion of labour rights in India. The new labour codes, introduced by the BJP-led central government, have given companies unprecedented power to hire and fire workers with little accountability. The dilution of collective bargaining rights and restrictions on strikes have left workers more vulnerable to exploitation. Prism Johnson Ltd.'s actions are part of a disturbing trend where employers, emboldened by these laws, crush unions and curtail workers' rights with impunity.

Despite these challenges, the workers have shown incredible resolve, sitting in protest outside the factory gates for over a hundred days. By blocking the movement of machinery and vehicles in and out of the factory, they have managed to apply significant pressure on the company. However, rather than addressing the workers' concerns, the management sought police intervention through the High Court to remove the protesters. However, in a small but significant victory, the High Court rejected their plea, allowing the workers to continue their peaceful protest.

An additional layer of pressure has come from the landowner, who is reportedly urging the company to vacate the premises, further complicating the company's position. However, the battle is not yet over, and the workers need continued support to sustain their fight.

Public solidarity is crucial at this stage. The workers have fought courageously, but their struggle is part of a larger movement to protect labour rights in the face of increasing corporate impunity. By visiting the protest site and lending support, we urge our readers, be it students, progressive youth, civil society members, etc. to amplify the workers' demands and force the company to negotiate.

This struggle is not just about the 100-plus workers at Prism Johnson Ltd. RMC (India). It is about protecting the right to dignified employment, unionisation, and collective bargaining in an environment increasingly hostile to workers. Now is the time for everyone who believes in justice to stand with these workers and demand the reopening of the factory and accountability for the company's illegal actions.

Solidarity and Resistance Against Global Project of Islamophobia and Dehumanisation of Muslims: From Palestine to India

Adnan Hamid

Indian Muslims' expressions of solidarity towards their counterparts worldwide who face oppression and violence often trigger Hindu nationalists in India. The solidarity exhibited by Muslims across national boundaries today is grounded in shared experiences of discrimination, rather than a rejection of their national affiliations. Their solidarity is crucial for effectively confronting the hate and oppression posed by Islamophobia.

We all are aware about Israel's desperation for a full fledged regional war in the Middle East. For that only purpose Israel increased the scale of attacks from Southern suburbs of Lebanon to the Lebanese capital, Beirut and unleashed the terror. In these attacks Hezbollah's Secretary General Syed Hasan Nasrallah was killed. When Indian Muslims, including J&K's former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and JKNC MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mahdi, condemned the politically-motivated murder of Hezbollah leader, Hindu right wing got triggered.

BJPs leader and Assam Chief Minister Hemanta Biswa Sarma raised the same question. Sarma said, "The president of Hezbollah was killed in Lebanon, and the INDIA alliance in India is mourning. But when Hindu people are killed by terrorists here, do they express the same sadness and remorse?"

The anxiety in Hindu right wing against the solidarity among the Muslims, particularly for Palestinians, is not new. During the month of Muharram, in July three persons were arrested by Bihar police in Nawada district of Bihar for waving Palestinian flag in a Muharram procession. Same thing happened in Jharkhand when a man waved Palestinian flag. BJP chief Babulal Marandi shared his video clip on X (formerly Twitter) calling for strict

action against people with a "Talibani mindset". Later that person was arrested. Triggering of Hindu right wing, from waving Palestinian flag and some words of solidarity for the victims of the most brutal violence in the 21st century, is so dystopian. Their hostility is not a recent phenomenon. It is widely acknowledged that the "War on Terror" following the events of 9/11, contributed to the rise of Islamophobia on a global scale. However, it is important to recognize that the dehumanization of Muslims as well as Islamophobia had existed in Western countries long before this period and was also prevalent within Indian society.

In Britain, during the last month of August, violence against Muslims flared up after three children were murdered linked to Muslim as a suspect, although later investigations revealed the accused was not a Muslim. In India, there is an immediate attempt to link every crime involving Muslims suspects, mostly by Hindu-right. During COVID, the hatred and stereotypes spread against Muslims intensified economic boycotts against them, similar to what is happening in Europe.

In Europe, incidents are frequently blamed on Muslim migrants without any investigation or inquiry. These are the Muslims from the countries in West Asia, which have been devastated by Western imperialism causing migration in the first place. Indian Muslims face very similar treatment in India, where every Muslim vendor, vegetable seller, or worker in Hindu-majority areas are often labelled as a Rohingya or Bangladeshi refugee and portrayed as the source of various problems.

Portrayal of Muslims as savages did not start in 2001. It existed in western societies previously. These people, including Semites (indigenous of West

Asia) were subjected to rule, long before Prophet Muhammad. Indigenous Jewish people were Savages for whites during the Roman empire. During the rise of Muslim rule in West Asia, portrayal of Muslims as savages began. People belonging to the dominant religion in West Asia become savages by default for the West.

This dehumanization of Muslims over the centuries is so ingrained in the collective psyche of Western population that for their rulers it becomes a cake walk to tell their subjects, "Look those are some savages in that region who do not know how to live like us, so we are going to kill them and teach them how to do that". Looting and maintaining control over oil, food supply chains, and other resources gets social sanction in the process of exporting civilization to these savage and backwards countries.

Edward Said (1997) writes: "For most of the Middle Ages and during the early part of the Renaissance in Europe, Islam was believed to be a demonic religion of apostasy, blasphemy, and obscurity. It did not seem to matter that Muslims considered Muhammad a prophet and not a god; what mattered to Christians was that Muhammad was a false prophet, a sower of discord, a sensualist, a hypocrite, an agent of the devil. Nor was this view of Muhammad strictly a doctrinal one."

So the West did not only see Prophet Muhammad from that angle but dehumanised his followers as savages, and 'demonic'. Racialization of followers of 'Islam' continued. Western and American orientalist writers continued to push that propaganda for political purposes to justify the imperialism of west and America. Norman Daniel, in his book, *Islam and the West*, says, "shocked by the wild inaccuracy and

patent hostility of what he found in the mediaeval texts – crude insults to the Prophet, gross caricatures of Muslim ritual, and scurrilous portrayals of Muslims as libidinous, gluttonous, savage, bloodthirsty and semi-human.”

There were many books written about Prophet Muhammad like 'Rangeela Rasool' in India as well. There were so many attempts to demonise Prophet Muhammad from West to India for the purpose of demonising all the Muslims. It was an easy way to portray Muslims as wild savages and paedophiles by portraying and vilifying their Prophet in such a manner. The project of hate against Muslims will thus be furthered.

In post-independence India, the image of a Muslim has been painted as that of a savage alien invader from far away lands. However, the fact remains that most of the Muslims are indigenous to India and those who came and migrated to India did not all come as invaders. Most were merchants and traders and among those who find their ancestry in these groups have been living here for centuries. Yet still, this portrayal as 'others' and 'savages' made its way to the mass psyche in post-independence India owing largely to increasing political and economic inequalities between the majority and minority communities.

A rich savarna man sitting in his luxury car has little reason to question the dehumanized portrayal of a Muslim puncture-wala who does not speak a polished language or eats the same food. So Muslims getting marginalised in all walks of life in India goes hand in hand with their dehumanization and portrayal as a savage alien. Where Indian Muslims are standing today has been a long journey to the extreme of their villainization as a danger to the majority and ultimately reduced to a mere shadow that practically has no equal rights in the society, polity and economy.

Meanwhile, in the post-9/11 scenario, Muslims worldwide started to recognize their dehumanisation and Islamophobia as a tool for their collective oppression and that it was just one more step in the ladder of pre-existing hate against Muslims around the world. Seeing the common roots of dehumanisation and oppression of Muslims in these different places gives a sense of shared pain, and not just a shared religious identity.

In a world where more than 17,000 children are killed and resisting this ethnic cleansing is termed terrorism, the least Muslims around the world can share with each other is solidarity. Humanity would have enabled you to cry at the sight of slaughtered Palestinian children, to ask us to not feel the pain which we know too well and not to express solidarity with their movement is cruel.

When Muslims around the world face the same experiences of Islamophobic violence and dehumanisation then why wouldn't they show solidarity with each other in loss and pain against the imperialist forces of West and Hindutva forces in India or Buddhist militants in Myanmar. There is only one way for Muslims to fight against their collective dehumanisation, that is solidarity without borders among Muslims. This type of solidarity is also a form of psychological and non-violent resistance against the arrogance of Zionist butchering of innocents and tyranny of Hindutva nationalists in India.

I Have Blood on My Hands

Shandhiyaa

These stains run all across my skin
for every single truth I let fall apart
I have blood on my hands I confess
for all the weight of silence I possess

I have blood on my hands
for I see the voices unheard,
for I see the tears unshed,

I have blood on my hands
for I see the justice denied,
for I see the pain dismissed

I have blood on my hands
for I see the wounds unhealed
for I see the screams silenced

I have blood on my hands
for I see the hungry mouths unfed,
for I see the homeless humans sleep with no bed

I have blood on my hands
for I see this system intentionally built with pain,
for I see everyone around me let this cycle remain

I have blood on my hands
not from the fight I didn't choose
not from the battles I've refused to face
but from a world we continue to lose
but from a world that left me in disgrace

Here I'm standing around agonies
and echoes of this street,
having blood on my hands I repeat,
I have blood on my hands I confess
for all the weight of silence I possess.



What is Dialectics?

Sushant

In fact dialectics is nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought.

-Friedrich Engels (Anti-Duhring)

To observe and study the subject matter systematically, there are methods of study and inquiry for any science. For different sciences, there are different methods. Concerning the method of study, research, and inquiry of the fundamental question of philosophy, there are two trends: Metaphysics, and Dialectics.

Metaphysics: Study of nature as a complex of fixed and static things

The metaphysical method does not recognize the unity of the material world. It considers all the objects and phenomena in nature and society as isolated. According to it, nature is static (i.e. changeless and motionless). It also refuses to admit qualitative changes and development. Engels called metaphysics “the old method of investigation and thought...which preferred to investigate things as given, as fixed and stable, a method the relics of which still strongly haunt people’s minds.”

By rejecting the interconnection between apparently separate phenomena, the metaphysical method reduces the issues related to the entire society into individual, separate, sectional, and group problems alone, and obscures the necessity of the unified struggle of masses who exist as different classes and sections. In practice, it prevents the unification and unified struggles of the oppressed masses against exploitation and oppression and against the class system and tries to perpetuate class rule and exploitation. Thus the metaphysical method is the philosophical method that protects the interests of the propertied classes, in particular the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Dialectics : The Science of Interconnections

“Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics

argues like this: Nature is not in a state of rest and immobility, not in stagnation and immutability but a state of continuous movement and change, of renewal and development, where something is always arising and developing and something always disintegrating and dying away.”

- Friedrich Engels (Dialectics of Nature)

Dialectics is the method of reasoning which aims to understand nature in all its movement, change and interconnection, with their opposite and contradictory sides in unity. In its essence, the dialectical method is the exact opposite of the metaphysical method. The dialectical method considers the interconnections between various phenomena in nature. It views the material world as in perpetual motion, mutable and developing. It conceives the development of the world as the result of the struggle of opposites, the process of old being passed away and new coming into being and the progress from one phase to another. A social revolution, the rotation of the planets around the sun, a chemical reaction, and the change of a person's moods and experiences, are all various forms of motion. In everyday life, in production, and in political struggle, we constantly come across changes of the most different kinds. Dialectics is a very simple process which is taking place everywhere and every day. ‘In its proper meaning’, wrote Lenin, ‘dialectics is the study of the contradictions within the very essence of things’.

Dialectics took different forms in its historical development as a scientific method:

- Spontaneous Dialectics of Ancient Materialists (BCE 6th – 4th centuries) (e.g. Dialectics of Heraclitus, Aristotle, etc.);
- Dialectics of German idealists (CE 18th - 19th century) (e.g. Dialectics of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, etc.);

- Materialist dialectics or Marxist dialectics (CE 19th - 20th centuries) (e.g. Dialectics of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, etc.)

Hegel’s Dialectics

“To Hegel, the process of thinking, which, under the nature of ‘the Idea’, he even transforms into an independent subject, is the *demiurgos* (the creator, the maker) of the real world. With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing, else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought...Although in Hegel’s hands dialectics underwent a mystification, this does not obviate the fact that he was the first to expound the general forms of its movement in a comprehensive and fully conscious way. In Hegel’s writings dialectic stands on its head. You must turn it right way up again if you want to discover the rational kernel that is hidden away within the wrappings of mystification.”

- Marx (Capital-Vol. I)

Kant and Hegel studied the laws of thought and reason. They achieved significant results in that field and formulated several important propositions of the dialectical method of cognition. Hegel was able to understand the change that had taken place in the sciences. Reverting to the old idea of Heraclitus, he found, with the help of scientific progress, that everything in the universe is in motion and change, that nothing is isolated, but rather everything is dependent on everything else—and this is how he created dialectics. He understood the complex, inner contradictory character of progressive development, but being an idealist, he only treated the dialectic of thinking and the dialectic of reason and did not recognise that development is also inherent in the objective material world. He thought that it is spiritual changes that provoke changes in matter. He

found that both spirit and the universe are in perpetual change but concluded that changes in spirit determine changes in matter. His dialectical methods therefore remained idealist and could not find application in the society and the natural sciences of the time. The limitedness of idealist dialectics also showed itself in that, in satisfying certain class interests, it crowned the development of society with the development of bourgeois statehood and so deprived mankind of a further prospect.

Marx and Engels developed the materialist dialectics by giving primary importance to matter. Engels said in this regard that Hegel's dialectics was standing on its head and it had to be put back on its feet. They said that Hegel is right to say that thought and the universe are perpetually changing, but it is the change in the universe that leads to change in thought.

Laws of Dialectics:

1. **The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa;**
2. **The law of the interpenetration of opposites;**
3. **The law of the negation of the negation**

The law of the transformation of quantity into quality

The qualitative changes can only occur by the quantitative addition or subtraction of matter or motion. Everything has a definite quality, the change of which is a change in the thing itself. Things can continue to change quantitatively while they are in the same state or stage. But after the quantitative changes reach a certain stage it inevitably leads to a change in the quality and the existence of the thing. This we call the transformation of quantity into quality. The opposite is also true, a change in quality can lead to a change in quantity as well.

Example - If we heat water, the temperature increases continuously, i.e., quantitative change occurs but it remains



water, i.e., there is no qualitative change. But, after reaching 100 degrees Celsius, it begins to vapourise, a qualitative change.

The law of the interpenetration of opposites

The contradiction internal to all things and processes is the reason for all motion and development of all things and processes in the world. Lenin said that the law of contradiction is the essence of dialectics. Everything which appears as one, in fact, is the combination of opposites. Protons and electrons of atoms, cell division and destruction in the metabolic process, motion and rest in the movement; the classes in societies - landlords - peasants; workers and capitalists: imperialism and colonies; war and peace, etc. The two opposites are contradictory to each other. One opposes the other, struggling to interpenetrate. At the same time, these two opposites co-exist in a thing or process. The existence of one depends upon the existence of the other, these opposites do not exist separately. The unity and at the same time opposition between the opposites is called contradiction. The primary reason for all motion and development in things and processes is the struggle and unity between the contradictory forces.

The law of the negation of the negation

The new emerges out of old and old

gets negated in that process of the emergence of the new. The process of development, whether it is of nature, society, or thought process, always takes place in the course of negation of negation.

Example - the germination of a seed implies the disappearance of the seed which is the negation of seed. The plant grows. Then the plant dies, i.e., it is negated. These two negations are two stages of the development of seed. Negation does not mean simply dying away. It means reaching a new stage, while reaching it, leaving the old form and taking a new form.

Marxist philosophy develops and applies the dialectical method of cognition and answers the basic question of philosophy in a materialist way. It extends materialism to society, considers that material social being determines social consciousness, and treats history as a developing, dialectical process. The philosophy of Marxism-Leninism thus studies man's most general relations with the world and discloses the universal laws and connections in the development of nature, society, and thinking. Materialism and Dialectics are the theoretical basis of Marxism-Leninism, the most advanced, revolutionary ideology and scientific world outlook of modern times.

UPDATES ON PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS



West Bengal Junior Doctors' Front Call Off Hunger Strike

Junior doctors protesting the RG Kar Medical College rape and murder case in Kolkata ended their 17-day hunger strike following a two-hour meeting with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the state secretariat, Nabanna on 21st October. They also decided to cancel the all-doctor strike, which was set for 28th October. However, the doctors stated after their general body meeting that they will continue their movement regarding the issue, betterment of the public healthcare system, and will strive for safety in medical colleges and hospitals.



Activist Sonam Wangchuk ends indefinite fast

Sonam Wangchuk and other activists began marching from Ladakh to Delhi in September to discuss demands for greater autonomy in Ladakh's administration with the Central government. Specifically, they wanted Schedule 6 of the Indian Constitution to be made applicable to Ladakh. They ended their 16 day hunger strike on 21st October, after receiving a letter from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs assuring future talks about the Union Territory's administration.



Bangalore for Justice and Peace Meets Police Officials

In response to increased harassment by the Bangalore City Police towards organizers of events supporting Palestine, members of Bengaluru for Justice and Peace met the Commissioner of Police on 24th October. They presented a letter addressed to both the Commissioner and the Karnataka Home Minister, containing 194 signatures from individuals, primarily from Bangalore and other districts in Karnataka. The letter details 12 incidents over the past year where police officials have reportedly harassed and intimidated activists, students, artists, and concerned citizens. This was followed by a meeting with the Assistant Commissioner of Police who said there will be a press release directing police force to not hamper indoor activities on Palestine.



Citizens Protest the Facilitation of Murderers of Gauri Lankesh

Social activists and citizens staged protests in Shivamogga, Vijayapura, and Bengaluru to condemn the recent honour given to individuals accused of murdering journalist and activist Gauri Lankesh. Demonstrators pointed out that although the accused have been granted bail, they still face serious charges. The Sangh Parivar's act of honouring the accused amounts to an indirect admission of guilt in Gauri's murder and demanded a swift trial. The protests highlighted that Hindutva activists, including a member of the Sri Ram Sene (SRS), celebrated the accused after their bail release at the Kalika temple in Vijayapura.



Remembering the legacy of Comrade G.N. Saibaba

Following the martyrdom of revolutionary Intellectual Comrade G.N. Saibaba, several events were organized to honour his commitment to the welfare of tribal communities, his opposition to the militarization and corporatization of tribal lands, and to shed light on his tragic institutional murder at the hands of the state. Notable events include an online meeting conducted in solidarity with Comrade G.N. Saibaba by the All India Forum for Right to Education, featuring speakers such as Anand Teltumbde. Additionally, a solidarity event was organized by the All India Students Association, held in Bengaluru. Another solidarity gathering was organized by AILAJ, APCR Karnataka, Bahutva Karnataka, and PUCL, which invited Mihir Desai, Senior advocate as the speaker.