

PROUT

A Journal of Proutistic Views and Neo-Humanistic Analysis

amazon IN INDIA

WORKERS CAUGHT IN E-COMMERCE JUNGLE

Up to now the state in India has limited foreign-direct investment in the retail sector to 49 per cent, meaning that big corporations like Walmart, Amazon or Carrefour have not been able to act as 'independent' retailers.



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PROUT

Progressive Utilization Theory

Cry of the Suffering Humanity

A Vibrant Magazine which Informs & Inspires

What is PROUT :

PROUT is an acronym for the Progressive Utilization Theory. Conceptualized in 1959 by Indian Philosopher Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, PROUT is a viable alternative to the outmoded capitalist and communist socio-economic paradigms. Neither of these approaches has adequately met the physical, mental and spiritual needs of humanity. PROUT seeks a harmonious balance between economic growth, social development and cultural expression.

Combining the wisdom of spirituality, the struggle for self-reliance, and the spirit of economic democracy, Proutist intellectuals and activists are attempting to create a new civilizational discourse. PROUT news-magazine aims at conveying comprehensive and visionary goals of PROUT Philosophy.

PROUT magazine invites scientists, economists, politicians, artists, intellectuals and others to join us in the creation of a new, spiritually bonded society by propagating and popularising unambiguous elevating thoughts. Through Proutistic views and Neo Humanistic analysis, it strives to serve as beacon for the benighted civilization of our times.

Main principles of PROUT and Neo-Humanism :

Neo-humanism expands the humanistic love for all human beings to include love and respect for all creation - plants, animals and even inanimate objects. Neo-humanism provides a philosophical basis for creating a new era of ecological balance, planetary citizenship and cosmic kinship.

Basic necessities guaranteed to all : People can not strive toward their highest human aspirations if they are lacking the basic requirements of life. PROUT believes that access to food, shelter, clothing, education and medical care are fundamental human rights which must be guaranteed to all.

Balanced economy : Prout advocates regional self-reliance, cooperatively owned and managed businesses, local control of large scale key industries, and limits on the individual accumulation of excessive wealth.

Women's Right : PROUT encourages the struggle against all forms of violence and exploitation used to suppress women. PROUT's goal is coordinated cooperation, with equal rights between men and women.

Cultural Diversity : In the spirit of universal fellowship PROUT encourages the protection and cultivation of local culture, language, history and tradition.

World Government : PROUT supports the creation of world government with a global constitution and a common penal code.

For both civilization and science, intellectual knowledge is indispensable. Spiritual or intuitional development is possible through the happy blending between civilization and science. - Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

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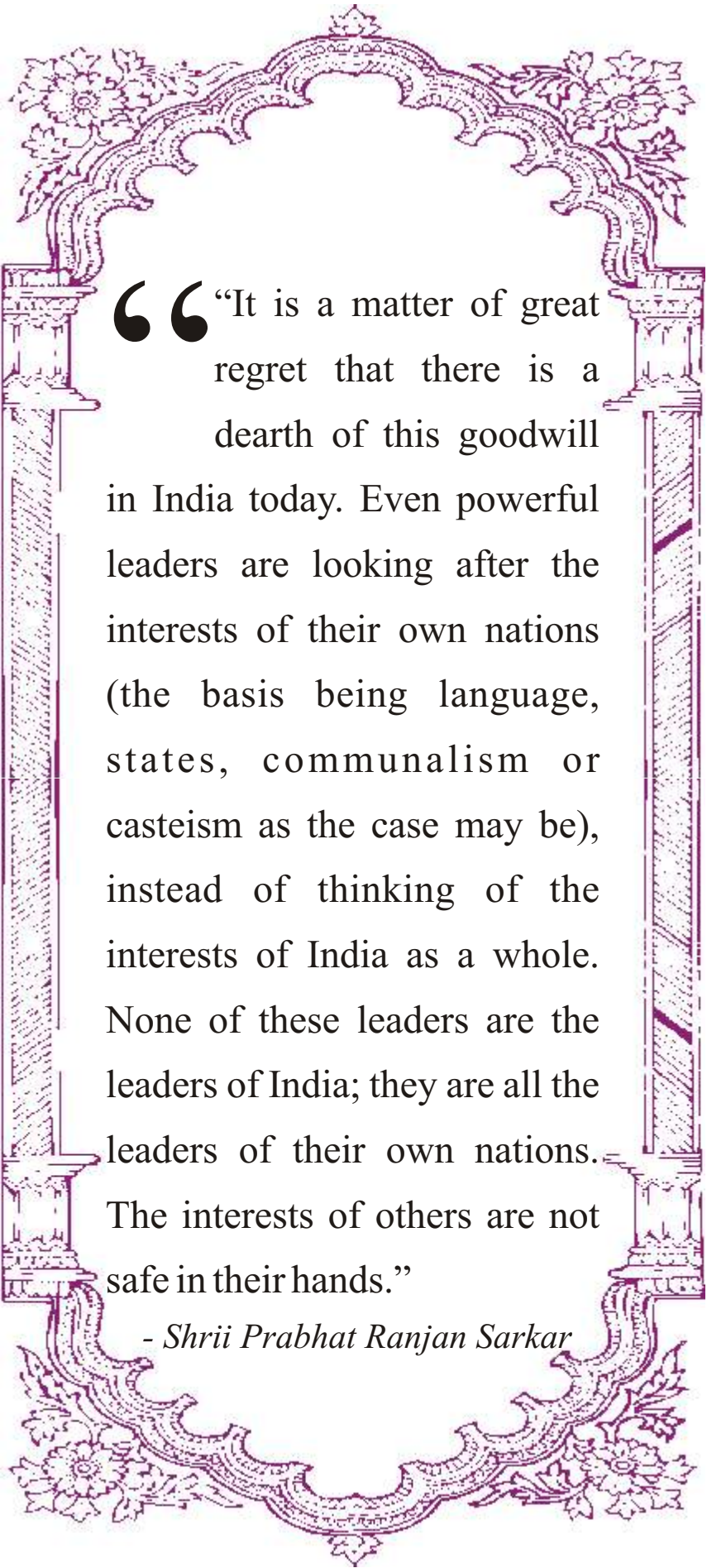
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Fundamental Principles :

1. No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body.
2. There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supra mundane and spiritual potentialities of the universe.
3. There should be maximum utilization of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of unit and collective body of the human society.
4. There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supra mundane and spiritual utilizations.
5. The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, space and person and the utilization should be of progressive nature.



“It is a matter of great regret that there is a dearth of this goodwill in India today. Even powerful leaders are looking after the interests of their own nations (the basis being language, states, communalism or casteism as the case may be), instead of thinking of the interests of India as a whole. None of these leaders are the leaders of India; they are all the leaders of their own nations. The interests of others are not safe in their hands.”

- Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Swaraj Surrendered

On September 28, 2001 after the 9-11 Terror attacks, UN Security Council Resolution 1373 was passed unanimously. For the first time, this law was imposed upon all members of the UN without waiting for them to sign a treaty. More unusual was the fact that the meeting to discuss this bill began at 10:50 PM and adjourned at 10:53 PM and even more strange is that there is no official record of this meeting. This law calls upon all nations to change their laws so as to create anti-terrorism legislation. What has happened since then has been the creation of laws which violated democratic civil liberties and often persecuted minorities in many nations. This has been termed by Law Professor Kim Lane Scheppele as the “International State of Emergency.” The result has been a movement towards what has been termed “The Global Police State”.

Around the world, various forms of surveillance have been imposed in various nations. On May 11th 2005 the Real ID Act for a national ID card for all US citizens was rushed through the US legislature. Popular resistance forced Obama to strike down this law. In the UK, National Identity cards based on biometric details of citizens was created and once again protest compelled Cameron to strike down this law. This law as many commentators have said marks the end of any form of political freedom which is the sole redeeming quality of capitalist democracy. This is because soon, one will have to show one's AADHAR card wherever one goes and one's every movement will be monitored by the government. Even China and the Philippines have abandoned this idea. Such information can also be used to organise mass violence such as when census figures were used to target Gujarati, Muslims in 2002.

In the beginning, without consulting Parliament, the AADHAR card using biometric identification like fingerprints or eye photographs was created. Due to pressure a bill was introduced but the Standing Committee of Parliament rejected it. Ironically those who were loudest in denouncing this bill are supporting it today. Then the Supreme Court struck down the practice of compelling citizens to have an AADHAR card. A further case is still in the Supreme Court. Without waiting for the Court to consider the case the former opposition party has forcibly passed new legislation for the surveillance of the Indian people. Displaying the same contempt for Parliament as the Congress, the BJP has fraudulently passed this bill as a “money bill” because it does not have the majority to force it through the Rajya Sabha.

As Wikileaks has shown, both the US National Security Agency (NSA) and the British Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ) have been spying upon the whole world through the Internet and they easily have the expertise to monitor any Indian citizen they want. Furthermore several of the companies working with the Indian government to set up this database, such as MongoDB, have direct links with the CIA and the NSA. And it is not just foreign governments who will be watching us. Clause 57 of the current bill allows any corporation access to this database. Already Microsoft is working on the use of AADHAR in Skype and What's App. Another company TrustID will give any rich person the chance to use AADHAR data to spy upon any Indian citizen. The sky is the limit when it comes to spying upon the Indian people.

When we realise how first the Congress and then the BJP blatantly violated the rights of foreign corporate controlled Parliament of today and have surrendered the dearly won freedom of the Indian people, we are reminded of Bhagat Singh's comment on the British controlled Parliament of India's past,

“We have been convinced that it exists only to demonstrate to the world India's humiliation and helplessness, and it symbolizes the overriding domination of an irresponsible and autocratic rule.”

**Birth of a New Bihar**

Bihar has been a state in crisis for nearly a century. After Bihar's glorious role in the 1857 freedom war, the British created the policy of keeping this region (along with Avadh) backward and mired in poverty. Today the descendants of those who fought against the British live in poverty and the descendants of those who fought for the British now rule India. Now as the 160th anniversary of this freedom war approaches once again Bihar is called to greatness. What is so special about this article is that for the first time we find the correct pathway to freedom in the form of the revival of the ancient cultural kingdoms of Bihar – Mithila, Bhojpur, Angadesh and Magadha – based upon economic democracy.

Nrisingh Aktar, Siwan

Tagore's Critique of Nationalism

Today we cannot breathe because nationalism is suffocating us. Right now this is happening in the media and opposition is being brutally crushed. Just see what is going on right now at the University of Hyderabad – in the name of loving India, students are being beaten and tortured because they have dared to protest the persecution of Dalit student activists across the country. The rest of the country is not really disturbed but how long will it be before we are all forced into witchhunts against so-called 'anti-nationals'. Tagore truly was the prophet of the tragedy of India today.

Abhishek Sen, Kolkata

Farming Budget

This really shows how farming as a way of life is being attacked. The aim of all parties is to bring in factory farms as seen in the West. To do this, farming is deliberately underfunded and kept without any safeguards. All the while the government indulges in phony pracar about their concern for

farmers when actually they are part of a corporate war on farming as a way of life in India. What makes this really dangerous is that for two years we have seen serious drought in many parts of the country and no one seems to be planning for this growing crisis.

Sudeep Das, Bilaspur

American Politics

It is real interesting how hate is in the air. By hating minorities one can become so popular. What does this say about our society today? There has been so much knowledge gained since the rise of fascism in the 1930s and it seems it all has been of no use. We have gained no wisdom. The more know, the more cruelty we show. We all know how in the last Economic Depression, the humiliation and rage of the lower middle class led to fascism but still we see the same thing happening in every country. The ultimate truth of global politics is that we are facing a crisis of hatred due to our cowardice in fighting the corporates who have created and are profiting from this Global Economic Depression.

Jay Murphy, Newark

Dalits Robbed in Budget

The Budget is basically a financial photo of a crime – the crime of how the poorest and most persecuted Indian are robbed – year in and year out – no matter which party comes to power. We need to stop pretending that we have a democracy when in reality what we have is a corporatocracy. What was most interesting is how in the newspapers we saw various corporate leaders talking about how this was a people's budget. That tells us all we need to know. If it is a budget that pleases the upper caste corporates, then we can count on the lowest castes being robbed.

Mukund Deb, Silli

Unmaking Boko Haram

Boko Haram is one of the most violent, powerful and brutal jihadi groups in the world. What this

article shows us is that their fighters are not demons from hell. They are poor, disrespected people from an exploited region trying to assert their dignity by murdering other people in the name of Islam. This after is quite modern and "progressive", is it not? The modern western nations are also becoming increasingly controlled by fanatic Christians and are preaching about human rights while robbing and bombing the planet. This article gives hope because it shows how by giving people basic respect, by ending their humiliation we can solve so many problems. But as the article says the key fact is that these people come from exploited regions of Nigeria and other countries. Thus the ultimate solution lies in regional economic freedom in every country.

Mrityunjay, Chennai

Bastar Tragedy

This was truly a terrifying article. More and more journalists and service workers are being arrested. The article seems to be correct in pointing towards government plans for another mass assault to drive the people out of their homes. Already 1 lakh people have been made refugees, now more people will be raped and killed so as to drive the people of Bastar off their mineral rich lands. The government seems to be partnering with the Maoists in this agenda. Interestingly since the current state government has come to power almost no BJP activists have been killed by the Maoists. Faced with another round of murder from the Chattisgarhi people, the only hope for the people of Bastar lies in becoming independent from Chattisgarh in the form of an independent state. Bastar has had close ties with the famed Kakatia Dynasty of Telangana. Perhaps it would be best for Bastar to become part of Telangana.

Saora Linga, Jagdalpur

THE FINAL INSPECTION

The soldier stood and faced God,
Which must always come to pass
He hoped his shoes were shining,
Just as brightly as his brass.

"Step forward now, you soldier ,
How shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned the other cheek?
To My Church have you been true?"

The soldier squared his shoulders and said,
"No, Lord, I guess it isn't.
Because those of us who carry guns,
Can't always be a saint.

I've had to work most Sundays,
And at times my talk was tough,
And sometimes I've been violent,
Because the world is awfully rough.

But, I never took a penny,
That wasn't mine to keep...
Though I worked a lot of overtime,
When the bills got just too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help,
Though at times I shook with fear
And sometimes, God, forgive me,
I've wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place,
Among the people here
They never wanted me around,
Except to calm their fears.

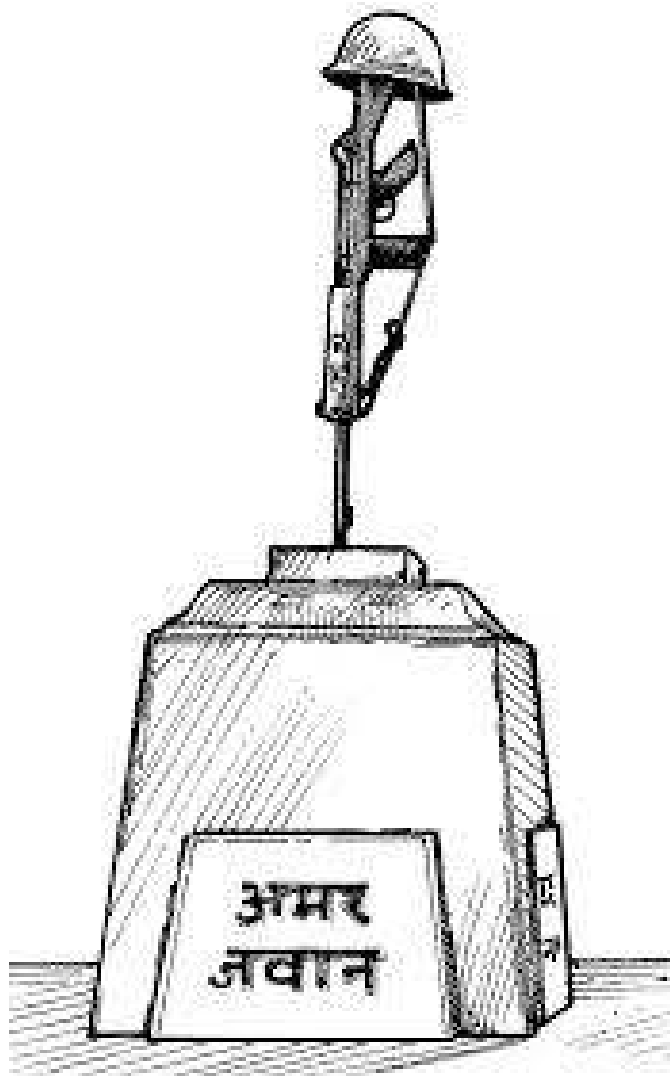
If you've a place for me here, Lord,
It needn't be so grand,
I never expected or had too much,
But if you don't, I'll understand.

There was a silence all round the throne,
Where the saints had often trod,
As the soldier wanted quietly,
For the judgment of his God.

'Step forward now, you soldier,
You've borne your burdens well,
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,
You've done your time in Hell.'

It's the Military not the Reporter who has given us the freedom of the press. It's the Military, not the Poet, who has given us the freedom of speech. It's the Military, not the politician that ensures our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It's the Military who salutes the Flag, who serves beneath the Flag, and whose coffin is draped by the Flag.

It is unfortunate that OROP agitation has had to be continued in the absence of any mutually convincing direct discussion between the Government and the Reps of the "Ex-servicemen" TO RESOLVE THE ISSUES INVOLVED.



Rear Admiral Harish Malhotra (Retd)



The Fundamentals of Language

SHRII PRABHAT RANJAN SARKAR

Each and every language has five fundamental characteristics: The first is that it must have its own verbal forms. For instance, we say in English, “Ram is going”; in Hindi, *Ram ja raha hay*, and in Saṁskṛta, *Ramah gacchati*. English has its own verb forms, “is going,” Saṁskṛta also has its own verb forms “*gacchati*”. Paharii Punjabi [spoken in Himachal Pradesh] is also a language because it too has its own verbs for example, *akśa basha* or *akśara dasha*. This is the first characteristic of a language: it has its **own verbs**.

In Saṁskṛta, there are some verb endings such as *-ti* (gacchati), *-tah* (gacchatah), *-anti* (gacchanti), *-si* (gacchasi), *-thas* (gacchathah), and *-tha* (gacchathā), etc.

The second characteristic of a language is **case endings** for nouns, for example, “Ram’s sister is eating bread”; in Saṁskṛta we say, *Ramasya bhaginiṁ rotikāṁ khādati*. In Hindi we say *Ram rii bhaen rotii khārahii hay*. And in Paharii language, *Ram ki bhaen rotii khandii*. In Punjabi language there is a tendency to pronounce in the *tirjak* style (the “a” sound tends towards the “o” sound). In English “Ram’s” means “of Ram”; in Saṁskṛta *Ramasya* (we add *-sya*); in Hindi, *Ramki*; In Paharii, *Ram rii* (the suffix *-rii* is added). These are called case endings; they vary from

One important characteristic of a language is that it must have its own literature, classical or folk.

language to language, and from the linguistic point of view, every language which has its own case endings deserves to be recognized as a language. In this respect Paharii Punjabi is also a language different from Hindi, since both have their different case endings.

The third characteristic of a language is its **own pronouns**. For example, we say, “He is going to Calcutta.” In Saṁskṛta, *Sah kalikāṭam gacchati*. In Hindi, “*Vah kalikāṭa ja raha hay*.” In Pahari, *Naesae kalkāṭa calao jāsao*. Thus each language has its own pronouns: “he” in English, *vah* in Hindi, *sah* in Saṁskṛta and *sao* in Paharii. (There is some similarity between Paharii and Saṁskṛta). In this respect Paharii is a separate language, not merely a dialect; and Dogrii, too, is also a separate language, as I have told you previously.

The fourth characteristic of a language is that it must have its **own vocabulary**. Even if a learned person contradicts you in this regard, you should give a firm reply. It is my conviction that all will accept your logical opinion regarding the science of linguistics. Any language which has its own vocabulary has to be recognized as a separate language. Some reputed scholars in Hindi may argue against this; thus you should know the correct reply in

advance. Some orthodox supporters of the Hindi language may argue in Hindi, and you will have to give the reply in Hindi. If you speak in English, they may not like to speak with you, because in their opinion English is a foreign language. There are some people who do this to hide their weakness in English. But the strange thing is this that they send their own children to study in English-medium schools.

The word “wheat” in English is *gehun* in Hindi and *kanaka* in Paharii, *kanakha* in Punjabi, and *kanaka* in Dogrii. In Paeshācīi Prakṛta the original word was *kanaka*, from which the other derivatives *kanakha*, *kanakan*, etc. have come. From the mother language of Paeshācīi Prakṛta have emerged the three languages of Dogrii, Paharii and Punjabi. For instance, when we say in English, “What is the staple food of the Punjab?” (Usually the article “the” is not used before the name of any particular province; but it is used before Punjab. This is a peculiarity of the English language). The Saṁskṛta translation of this sentence will be *saptanadasya mukhyānnah godhūmo'sti*. In Saṁskṛta *godhūma* means “wheat”, and

asti means “is”. (*Asti* in Sanskrit, *ast* in Persian. So you see what a great similarity there is between these two languages).

Again, in the Persian language it is said, *Hanoj Dehlii dur ast* (“Delhi is still far from here”). *Yā dost nist dushman ast* (“He is not my friend, he is the enemy of my enemy”). In Sanskrit *nāsti*, in Persian *nist*-what a close similarity! In the same way, there is another word *nest nabud* (“no solid ground under one's feet”). The Hindi rendering of the Sanskrit sentence *Saptanadasya mukhyānnah godhūmo'sti* will be *Gehun Punjab kā mukhya khadya*, and in Pāhārii it will be *Kanaki Punjab naedii pradhāna*, or *Kanaka Punjab nadii khās*. “Wheat” in English is *godhuma* in Sanskrit, *gehu* in Hindi, and *kanaka* in Pāhārii. Thus these four languages each have their separate vocabularies. And as Pāhārii has its own vocabulary, it should be recognized as a separate language.

The fifth characteristic of a language is that it must have its **own literature, classical or folk**. Now, when the Pāhārii farmers sing songs at the time of harvesting, are these songs composed in pure Urdu of Lucknow city? Certainly not. They are composed in the farmers' own Pāhārii language. The songs are their folk literature.

These five above-mentioned characteristics are the essential conditions of a separate language.(1) Thus I say that Pāhārii is a full-fledged language. It is not Hindi, it is altogether different. Those who cry out “Hindi, Hindi!” in fact want to forcibly impose the Hindi language on the Pāhārii people so that they will become the slaves of the Hindi-speaking

people, just as English was imposed on the Indian people to enslave them. This is a type of psycho-economic exploitation. Try to understand well the implication of this.

Let me make the matter of psycho-economic exploitation even more clear. Suppose a certain Hindi chauvinist has come to see you. When you speak to him, you will certainly speak in Hindi, and so will he. But he is speaking his mother tongue, whereas you are not. Perhaps ungrammatical Hindi words will come out of your mouth. But it is obvious that in your expression there may be some fundamental errors, and the use of words will not be precise and to-the-point. This will create a diffidence in your mind, a kind of inferiority complex, whereas the Hindi-knowing people may suffer from superiority complex. They may think of you, “What a fool he is! He cannot speak with grammatical precision!” But instead if you speak in your own mother tongue, your expression will be grammatically correct.

So when you speak Hindi you become somewhat inferior to those Hindi-speaking persons and, taking advantage of your inferior position, they may exploit you economically. They should not be given this opportunity of psycho-economic exploitation. If this sort of psycho-economic exploitation is tolerated, if they are given the opportunity to exploit for long, they will become rulers and you will become their subjects. This is how psycho-economic exploitation is perpetrated; in the first stage the exploiters impose inferiority complex in your mind by creating psychic pressure. When your



language is suppressed, you will feel mentally inferior and develop some psychic weakness. Taking advantage of this psychic weakness, the exploiters will continue their psycho-economic exploitation. So those who advocate the cause of Hindi thus pave the way for psycho-economic exploitation. Actually they are not your friends.

It is also true that the Hindi language has many dialects; the spoken language varies from district to district. But Pāhārii is not a dialect of Hindi, Pāhārii itself is a language altogether different from Hindi. I hope you have well understood these five characteristics of a language.

So if the Pāhārii-speaking people demand that the Pāhārii language should be used in all spheres of their social life, that will not at all be irrational; in fact, Pāhārii should be used in courts, schools and colleges, in official correspondence, in airports, and in radio stations.

Three scripts can be used for writing Pāhārii: the Tāmrii [i.e. Takri or Tankri] script which is the popular script of this

region, Dogrii script which is used in the Dogrii-speaking areas, and Sirmaorii script which is used in the Nahan areas. Devanāgrii script is not popular here; it is the script of Gujarat. Hindi is also the script of Gujarat; it has no relation to the script used in this area. The inscriptions on the rocks and stones that can be excavated from this area are not carved in Nāgrii script because Nāgrii script was never popular in this area. The Tāmrii script is popular in Kinnore area also. This script has some similarity to the Tibetan script. In a mountain cave in Tibet, it is written in Tānrii script, *Om̐ mane padme hum, om̐ mane padme hum*. Thus Tāmrii script should be used in writing the Pāhārii language. As I

already told you, when the Dogrii language will be used for local purposes, the Dogrii-speaking people will also feel proud. They will think that they, too, have something of their own, that they are not anyone's slave. If someone contradicts you in this regard, you should give them a fitting reply. Although no written book is available now, yet three or four-hundred-year old books in Dogrii script will certainly be found right in this area. If there are any Samskr̥tā knowing scholars here, they will tell you all about this. There should be many Samskr̥tā-knowing scholars, because wherever there were kings, there were Samskr̥tā schools and Samskr̥tā scholars.

You should search for old manuscripts written on bark or palm leaves. Many manuscripts were

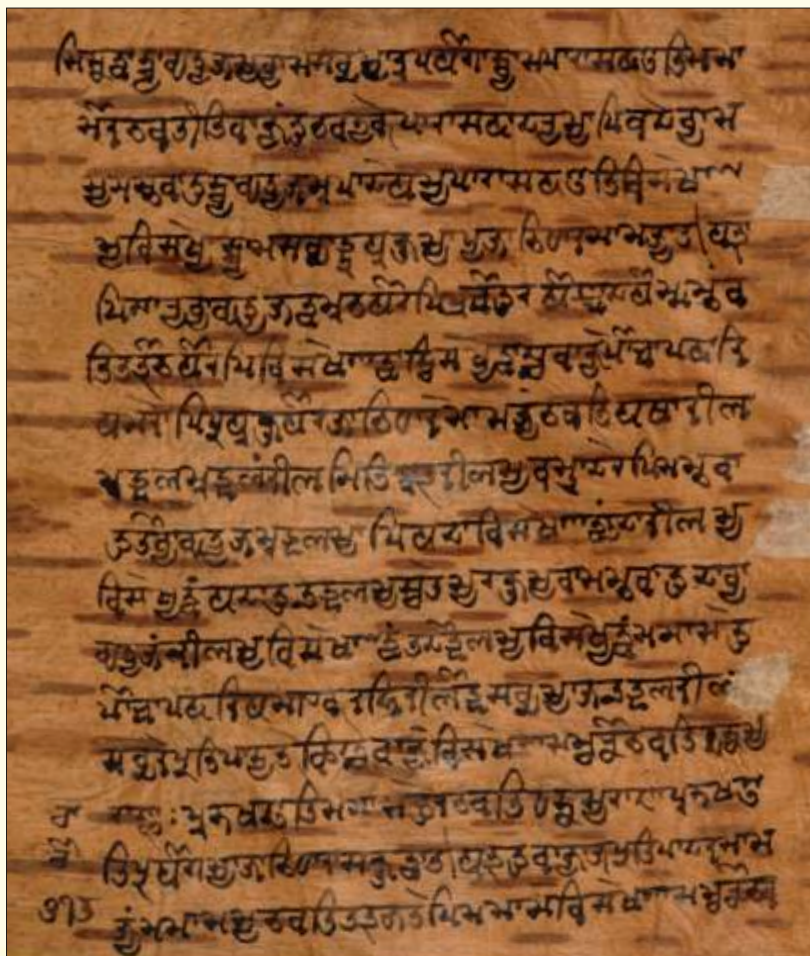
written on bark or leaves (*bhurjapatra*), and I find many *bhurja* trees all around this area.

As I told you earlier, the old books were not written in Devanāgrii script, for this script was imposed from outside. In fact, the Devanāgrii script is a script of the Gujarat scholars. As many people are not aware of the exact history, they wrongly think that Devanāgrii is the original script for writing Samskr̥tā, but this is not at all the case. Actually Samskr̥tā has no script of its own; so there was a rule that when Samskr̥tā was written, it could be written in any script. Thus Samskr̥tā is always written in the script of the concerning area. It is written in Bengali script in Bengal, and in Tamil script in Madras. It is not written in Devanāgrii script in Madras. When the British established universities for higher education, they decided that when Samskr̥tā would be taught in each university, Devanāgrii script should be used to write it.

The language of Himachal Pradesh, the local language here, is born out of Paeshacii Prakṛta, and Hindi is born of Shoraseni Prakṛta. Many people are not aware of this fact. Had they been aware of it, there would not be so much conflict regarding languages and scripts. Even those who are educated and respectable people are also not aware of this fact. Had they known this, they would have certainly conveyed these facts of history to others.

Footnote

(1) Four years after this discourse, Shrii Sarkar began the first of many treatises on Neohumanistic Philology named *Varna Vijnana*. In the chapter "Language and Dialect 1", it is said, "Now the question arises - what is the fundamental difference between a language and a dialect? Roughly speaking there are



Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2

Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly access, when possible to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

eight conditions that must be fulfilled in order to be considered a language, much like an eight-legged cot. These eight are: 1) own vocabulary, 2) pronouns, 3) verb-endings, 4) case-endings, 5) oral or written literature, 6) style of intonation, 7) psycho-acoustic and inferential acoustic notes, and 8) syntax.” In the succeeding chapter Shrii Sarkar explains the sixth criteria as follows: “Every language has its own intonation or style of pronunciation, just as every dialect has more or less its own intonation. This changes from village to village, mile to mile.”

The seventh criteria is summarized saying, “Just as psycho-acoustic notes differ from person to person, a similar difference can be observed from collective to collective... Inclination depends on two factors: nervous structure and the influence of personal and collective environment. Here the meaning of collective may refer to ten people as well as to one race or another... There were originally four races on earth: Caucasian,

Mongolian, Austric and Negroid... The analysis I have given of these races and their branches and sub-branches is based on their individual and collective characteristics which also includes psycho-acoustic notes. The same Indo-Aryan script is pronounced differently in the throats of different races. The same alphabet is of one type in northern India, another in western India and yet another in southern India, and its pronunciation in Bengal, Tibet, Burma and Thailand reflects the local differences. This is due to racial influence. Of course, climate can also exert a certain influence. The same Semitic alphabet is pronounced differently in Arabia, Persia, Pakistan and Israel I am saying this from personal experience. The same Roman script is pronounced differently in Britain and in France... Now, the mental feeling, neither crude nor subtle, which arises in the mind upon seeing some object is a particular type of mental vibration. For example, if one sees the colour white or red then the vibration created by that mental impression creates a sound in the nervous system in accordance with the wavelength of that vibration. In the case of red it is *taklak* and in the case of white it is *dhapdhap*.

Thereafter we create a word according to that sound vibration. The words *khankhan*, *thanthan*, *jhanjhan*, and so on, were made in this way. First a vibration arises in the nerves when an object is seen, then a mental sound is created and finally a word is made based on that sound. In this way the original verbal roots of language are created based on psychic sounds, and different words have been created, and are being created, from these verbal roots...”

The eighth criteria is explained in the tenth chapter as follows: “Syntax refers to a language's grammatical and structural style. How a word, that is, noun, adjective, pronoun, indeclinable, is placed in the sentence in accordance with the rules of grammar is syntax... Now the starting-point of syntax is the division into parts of speech (*vibhakti*). Within a sentence we get inflections, non-verb forms, word agreement, verb conjugations and so on. In all languages the sentence is divided into two parts, the subject and the predicate.”



Private Sector to Manage 40% of Forests

For over a century, these forests have been under government control and the latest move for privatization comes after decades of lobbying by forest-based industries.

★ **Kumar Sambhav Shrivastava**

The government is set to throw open the management of up to 40% of Indian forests to the private sector to revive degraded forests but experts warn it may destroy complex ecosystems and deprive local communities of a livelihood.

The environment ministry issued guidelines to the states last month, where it argued it didn't have the resources to manage forests well

and laid down the procedure to lease out degraded forests to private companies, who would "carry out afforestation and extract timber".

For over a century, these forests have been under government control and the latest move comes after decades of lobbying by forest-based industries, sources said. "It has been felt that ongoing national aforestry programmes have not been able to make the desired impact in

improving productivity and quality of forest cover due to a lack of sufficient investment, capacity, technological upgradation and adequate skilled manpower," said the guidelines.

"Thus there is need to look at options including how private sector can contribute in improving and restoring forest landscapes apart from meeting the vital requirement of various forest products," the

guidelines said.

The rules showed the ministry intended to introduce new rules to allow private participation in forest management because forest land was allowed to be diverted only for developmental projects and not plantation under the forest conservation act. The country has around 69 million hectares forest cover, out of which about 40% is categorised as open forests or scrubs -- together called "degraded forests" -- which have less than 40% canopy cover.

But experts cautioned the scheme was likely to convert chunks of natural forests into monoculture industrial plantations and devastate local ecosystems because the guidelines prohibited firms from planting the same species of trees in only 10-15% of the area, meant to be developed for local communities. "Even the most degraded natural forests have 50-100 species of trees per hectare. For their end products, industries would hardly plant one or two species," said a former director of Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal.

"The natural eco-systems are

complex and sensitive, where each species has a role and is symbiotically dependent on other species. Removing 95-98% of species for growing 1-2 species may result in the fast degradation of the site.

"The guidelines also said tribal communities could access non-timber forest produce in only 10-15% of the leased-out area -- a violation to the Forest Rights Act that recognized forest dwellers' traditional rights to forest land and its resources", experts argued.

When contacted, director general of forests SS Negi refused to comment. "I don't remember if we have sent the guidelines to the states. I don't remember its details," he said.

The documents show the guidelines were sent to the Madhya Pradesh forest department on August 11. The scheme will first be implemented on forests with less than 10% canopy cover and "based on the experience gained", could be extended to forests with up to 40% cover.

"Interested states forest departments may identify such forest areas not exceeding

5000/10,000 hectares to be initiated as pilots for private participation," the guidelines said.

The identified parcels would be open for competitive bidding by public listed companies, co-operatives, public sector undertakings, charitable public trusts and foundations. The guidelines go against the National Forest Policy 1988, which says the primary use of forests should be for environmental benefits and the needs of local communities while industries should extract raw material from captive plantations.

States will approach the Centre for approval to lease out forests to private companies, similar to the process of diversion of forest land for industrial projects. "We refused such demands a couple of years ago, saying the national forest policy did not permit it. But there has been constant pressure for more than a year from within the government. The ministry is now even planning to amend the national forest policy," said an environment ministry official.



Dynamics of the Statecraft of Greed

★ Fred Harrison

Nations of the world are governed by a culture that was incubated in Europe in the 16th century. England played the leading role in enabling that culture of greed to mutate into a statecraft that propagated chaos through its laws of the land. The statecraft manages the anarchy that was embedded in traditional communities as a result of the violent transformation of people's rights of access to the commons. Understanding that history is the pre-condition for addressing what the CIA calls the mega-trends that threaten all our futures.

The doctrine that rationalised the statecraft of greed was called the social contract. This philosophical device was constructed to argue that when people came out of the "state of nature" they consented to a particular kind of authority. The arch

The erosion of liberties was directly related to the erasure of people's rights of access to land. This rationalised statecraft of greed under 'the rule of law' was called the social contract.

exponents of this myth were the philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Their discourses justified the violent re-distribution of land by monarchs and their courtiers. In Britain, the aristocracy used Parliament to justify the enclosure of the commons. Comparable trends occurred in most parts of Europe. People's authentic cultures were ruptured as an alien order was imposed on them. The social creation myth legitimised and sanctified the power of the aristocracy.

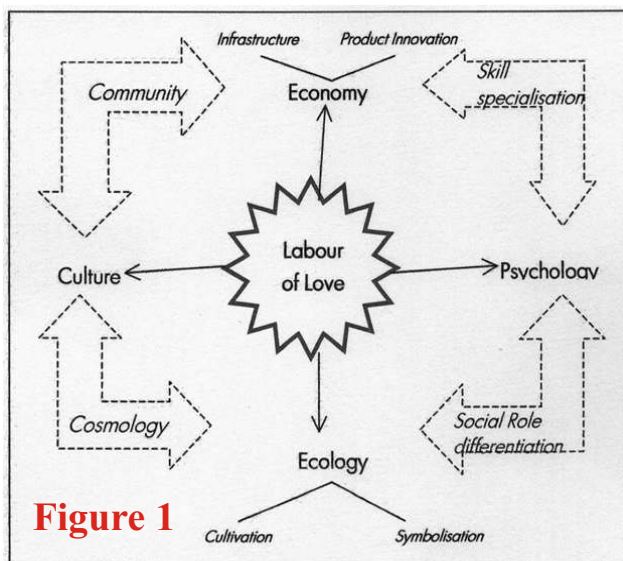
The erosion of liberties was directly related to the erasure of people's rights of access to land. The monarchs silenced opposition by claiming that they ruled by divine right. Their courtiers then employed devices like "the rule of law" to secure their monopolisation of land. They executed coups

against kings in a struggle over the power to tax. It was imperative for the barons and knights to control taxation, so that the Land Tax could be reduced and the fiscal burden shifted onto peasants. They succeeded. The outcome was the statecraft of greed.

Now, politicians exercise sovereign power through "democracy". That power is conditional: we know from the cut and thrust of 20th century history that they are not free to transgress the material interests of those who appropriate the rents which were traditionally reserved to fund the services shared in common.

Today, governments are not free to institute the one reform – to the financial system – that would enable people to resolve the crises of the 21st century. Global under-employment of labour and capital, debilitating mass poverty, suicide on an epidemic scale in southern Europe, planetary degradation of natural habitats, all are symptoms of a pathological social structure. The guardian of that structure is the culture whose agents are embedded in the seats of power.

If people are to successfully



challenge the statecraft of greed, they first need to understand the terms on which healthy societies evolved over the past 100,000 years. For what is today regarded as “normal” is pathological. And without the restoration of the ancient rights and the code of natural justice, there is no prospect of remedial action capable of undoing the damage wrought over the past five centuries.

The Evolutionary Template

Early humans had to pay a price to escape the iron laws of Nature. To release themselves from dependence on the instincts inscribed in their DNA, they had to formulate and enforce a code of conduct. Morality guided behaviour, principally by reminding individuals of what was not allowed. The moral code had to be synchronised with the laws of Nature on which people continued to depend for their material subsistence. Nature remained the wisest teacher for early humans who sought to evolve into a culture-bearing species.

Evolution of The Social Galaxy

Populations that transgressed their moral codes fell into a twilight zone, marooned between nature and civil society. There, they were in a state of anarchy (*not* a state of Nature) and easy meat for predators. There was no going back to Nature. So, sooner or later, they would have to re-tread the route back to morality.

Social evolution was contingent on (1) the capacity to produce a material surplus that exceeded biological needs; and (2) the willingness to share that surplus product. Those two elements were inextricably linked, and were expressed as *co-operation*. Mutual help was a foundation principle of the community.

Initially, the surplus took the form of labour *time* and *power*. People gave their labour out of love within kinship-based communities, to construct increasingly complex relationships, habitations and knowledge. They gave of themselves to create the culture that

differentiated them from other species.

Then, with the onset of agriculture and commercial contact with other groups, that labour surplus was transformed into symbolic forms. The Labour of Love had to be de-personalised to facilitate the up-scaling of communities into the towns that became urban civilisations. The de-personalisation of labour power was made possible by (i) creating a market economy and (ii) inventing money as tokens of the value of labour power. Converting labour power into abstract forms made it possible to accelerate innovation and co-operation.

Money made it possible for people to identify and allocate that portion of resources which represented their shared values in increasingly sophisticated ways. Originally, those resources were called by words such as “tribute”. Today, economists call it “economic rent”.

Figure 1 illustrates the primary impacts on the formation of culture and the collective consciousness. As people enriched their lives by co-operating with others, they

- **Deepened** their perception of themselves: the psychology of self-identity
- **Expanded** economic skills that favoured value-adding activity: shifting away from dependence on hunting/gathering
- **Enriched** culture: elaborating social systems and relationships with the natural universe
- **Heightened** conscious awareness of habitats: assigning symbolic value to cosmic forces represented by the landscape's endowments.

The creative power of people fructified as the emerging social universe grew ever more complex.

Within the economy: differentiation of households as value-adding units within extended territorial networks engaged in the exchange of products and services

Within the natural environment: expanding the

material opportunities by discovering and nurturing nature's endowments

Within people's minds: deepening self-awareness concurrent with articulation of respect for neighbours

Within culture: enriching lifestyles as a result of migration to new habitats, and new knowledge about homeland resources and personal abilities. The transformations ensured continuity within a people-centred culture and community that harmonised with nature's *homeostasis* (long-run stability).

The risk of conflict over the possession of territory was constrained, and social stability secured, through the evolution of

- The language of respect (ethics of equality)
- Complex customs (marriage rituals, relationship taboos)
- Institutionalised practices (such as leadership based on acquired wisdom); and
- Articulation of a cosmology which visualised a divine, cosmic realm.

What happens when the Labour of Love (or its monetary form) is usurped? Culture begins to wither. The boundaries between good and evil, between mine and yours, between the individual and society, are blurred. Social and natural reference points are dislocated, confusion prevails and corruption on a socially significant scale materialises. When rent is privatised, *corrosive cynicism, loss of trust and rule-bending assume pandemic proportions*. None of the current indices of social and individual behaviour tracks such behaviour to their source(s): for which, a Cheating Index is needed.

The Collateral Damage

The traumas that afflicted most civilisations of the past were the result of the conversion of rent into income appropriated by a privileged few, whether priests, princes or patricians.

Corruption of The Social Galaxy

Figure 2 illustrates some of the *primary impacts* of rent privatisation. These include

- **Distortions** to people's perception of themselves (psychological trauma)
- **Constraints** on the value-adding economy (artificial ceilings on productivity)
- **Perversion** of culture (dysfunctional communities and of ways of perceiving the world); and
- **Abuse** of natural habitats (loss of reverence resulting in assaults on other life-forms).

Symptoms stemming from primary distortions are registered through the interaction of two or more of the disturbed pillars that support the social universe.

Within the economy: enforced idleness, loss of affordable shelter, misallocation of capital

Within Nature: deforestation and topsoil erosion; pollution of skies; acidification of oceans

Within people's minds: irrational attitudes, such as racism (through competition for artificially-constrained space), and class and gender prejudices (scramble for status within the hierarchy of Insiders [rent-appropriators] *versus* Outsiders [the excluded]).

Within culture: adjustments of world-views to cope with the loss of authentic people-centred norms. Resort to dependency-type coping ideologies and organisations such as socialism, fascism and the welfare state; and, most recently, "capitalism with Chinese characteristics". These are responses to the primary shocks:

- **Disengagement** of people from their natural habitats through land enclosure and privatisation; and
- **Denial** of access to the rents that populations need to sustain their cultures, the effect of which is the evisceration of society in favour of a naked individualism.

Privileges of the rent-seekers who take control of the social space

are consolidated through manipulation of minds and emotions, as with

- **The language of humiliation**, with corresponding statistical profiles: e.g. numerical differentiation into Upper and Lower Classes
- **Institutions**, such as the subordination of women: India's caste system, Europe's primogeniture.

Privatisation of the resources that communities formerly shared between their members was consolidated in property rights which undermined the vitality of humanity. When rents are not pooled for the common good, all spheres of existence are automatically ruptured and degraded. Slavery was the crudest expression of the denial of freedom. The outcome is the crime of *humanicide*.

History is replete with examples of the way that cultures were debilitated when populations were deprived of their common rights to land. Examples from the colonial impact on indigenous peoples in South America are analysed in *The Traumatized Society*. An example from within Europe is provided by Ireland. Its population's behaviour over the past 300 years cannot be understood without reference to the way the English grabbed the land, to extract the rent; thereby reconfiguring personalities and culture. "The peasant's character, no less than his material condition bore witness to the landlord's exactions". The lessons were not learnt. The legacy of decolonisation was land legislation that consolidated the privatisation of rents: "[T]his was the giddy draught that made the impoverished tenant fancy himself head of a landowning family". The *mores* of Ireland were adjusted as people aped their former masters, the cultural shifts traced through marriage customs, morality, religion, the arts and politics. The culmination was the maniacal property boom/bust of the early 21st century as sponsored by the

statecraft of greed.

Japan: A Study in Mutual Help

The intimate relationship between mutual help and the social status of land emerges clearly from a study of the people who occupied Japan. Professor of sociology Morio Onda has captured the grand sweep of that anthropological history in his account of reciprocity:

- *Yui*: reciprocity through exchanging labour
- *Moyai*: redistribution based on a common store of goods and resources; and
- *Tetsudai*: support in social rites of passage that was non-reciprocal.

Onda stresses the association with the natural environment: "The commons played important roles as economic production, social integration, and spiritual symbol in regional society". He stresses that the commons supported expenditures for public services. "Money from selling trees and food from the commons was used to maintain it and the rest was distributed among local people. Fish caught in the sea as part of the commons were equally distributed among not only the fishermen, but also people who did not work directly in the fishery; namely, children, the elderly, and housewives, because they supported the work of the fishermen as village members.... We also can see the same mutual help network in a hunting environment".

The customs were designed to prevent an unbridled exploitation of Nature's resources. Access rights to the commons varied, but the central issue was that "The commons was never supported by individuals but always by communal ownership," securing the power of people to protect "the core site in communal life and the core of the network of mutual help".

Japan: The Transformation of Mutuality

Onda summarises the trends in Figure 3. Through time, the communal interest was crowded out

as communities were differentiated by interests defined as public and private. Traces of the mutual help may still be discerned in Japan. But, as we know from the grotesque level of land speculation, by the 1980s people had succumbed to the Western disease (from which Japan has yet to recover). We can date the erosion of the spirit of mutuality to the late 19th century. That was when the Land Tax, which had been deployed during the early decades of industrialisation, was degraded in favour of the culture of rent privatization.

Estrangement From Society

In Europe, when the kings of old started to grab the commons, they did not just deprive people of their land. They also began to erase people's authentic cultures. Over time, to secure the quiescence of the dispossessed, the statecraft that represented the interests of the rent-seekers substituted "patriotic" practises of the kind that served the purposes of the new culture of greed.

The degraded state to which society has now been reduced may be inferred from the unrelenting attacks on institutions that are supposed to serve the common good. The animosity is most explicitly articulated in terms of the resentment of taxation. The gulf between citizens and the institutions of state continues to widen as value-adding activities are subordinated in favour of schemes to avoid taxes.

The complaints against taxes on wages and profits from value-adding enterprises are legitimate. Public services are funded by arbitrary exactions on earned incomes; creating the discontent that corrodes a population's collective consciousness. We need a debate that enables people to interrogate issues that are excluded from the public discourse by politicians who are locked into the modern statecraft. The awkward questions include:

- Does society generate a distinct and quantifiable value which, therefore, it can rightfully claim as its own?

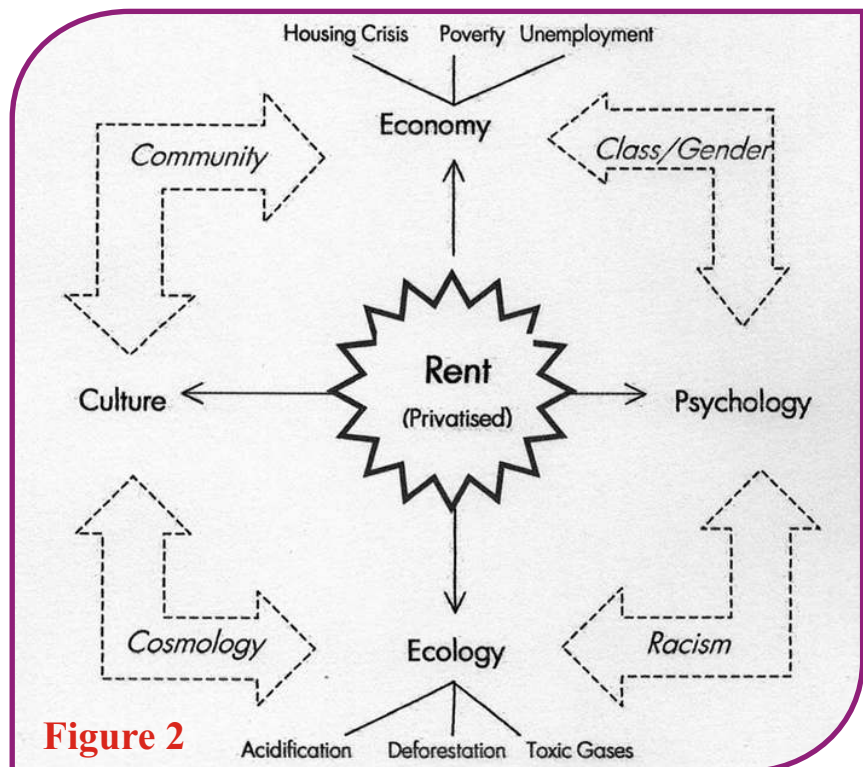


Figure 2

- How can a community of people be held to account as a moral entity if it is separated from the material resources *which it creates*, and which it needs to fulfil its social obligations?
- How did the rent-grabbers of old wipe out memories of the moral status of the community, and its distinctive flow of rental income?
- Does each of us have a responsibility to restore that moral status to our communities?

As we now know, the advent of democracy was not going to be capable of restoring justice in a form consistent with natural law. One consequence is the routinisation of criminal behaviour as a social phenomenon in which the political system does more than merely acquiesce: it sponsors such behaviour by the fiscal incentives that it provides.

Champions of the liberal democratic model seek to explain pathologies like organised criminal behaviour in terms of idiosyncratic behaviour of individuals. This enables them to deny that the culture of the modern socio-economic system is responsible for deeds of individuals such as the oligarchs in

post-Soviet Russia. Really? In the 1990s the West sponsored the campaign to privatise Russia's natural resources. In 2012, \$49 billion was estimated to have been illegally withdrawn from that country by criminals. Most of the money derived from resource rents. Such activity would not be possible without the application of what Paul Farmer, in *Pathologies of Power*, calls "structural violence". Officials who dared to investigate tax evasion were assassinated.

The corruption of the spirit of democracy may be traced in the history of the first democracy based on *We, the People*: the United States. In the 19th century, the Robber Barons bribed elected representatives with cash. The process is now more sophisticated, and it has been legalised in the form of the hugely profitable lobby industry based in Washington DC. Citizens collude by donating funds to achieve privileged access to lawmakers on Capitol Hill. The corrosive effect is reflected in the enormous subsidies to some corporations and land-intensive sectors like agriculture. Tax breaks also result in discrimination that

disadvantages those who rely on their votes rather than their wallets. In the Old World, the process of corruption is painfully exposed to public gaze in Italy, which was most embarrassingly displayed during the election of 2013 where people realised that High Finance Incubates Mobsterism.

Learn, or Lament

The cult of the individual was developed to camouflage the activities of those who erased the authentic culture of people in their traditional communities. With the agricultural and industrial revolutions, the rise in productivity would have allowed those communities to develop their traditions of mutual respect in ways that cannot, now, be conceived. The legacy inscribed in the historical record is one of systematic perversion of people's right to

evolve their customs and communities in directions that suited the needs of everyone, not just the rent-grabbing minority.

To retain control over the social rents, the elites were obliged to mess with people's minds. Two examples:

- The concept of *progress*, developed in England in the 18th century, was deployed as an ideological tool. The dispossessed had to be persuaded that, no matter how dire their condition, patience would be rewarded sometime in the future.
- The concept of *happiness* was employed to render palatable the written constitution of the US, and the unwritten constitution of the UK. Jeremy Bentham's felicific calculus married science with sophistry in a formula that was supposed to calculate ways of achieving happiness for the greatest number of people.

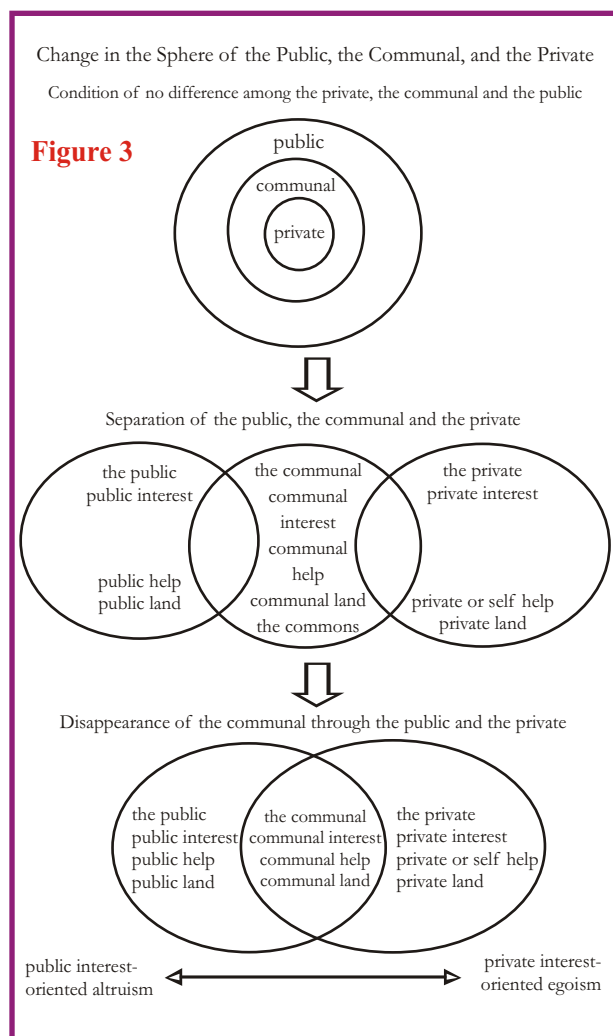
But happiness is contingent on prior access to the resources that render a decent lifestyle possible. And Bentham remained silent on the need to redistribute the resources of the commons so that every person may work to achieve his or her happiness. It was left to an American journalist to resuscitate the notion of community with its distinctive source of revenue. Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* (1879) animated a popular debate that enabled people to recover their knowledge about the unique role played by rent in the lives of their forefathers. But

despite the democratic mandate that was extended to the rent-as-public-revenue policy (in Britain, in the form of the People's Budget [1909]) the will of the people was killed off by the rear-guard action of landowners.

The Welfare State in the 20th century sought to compensate for the deprivation that blighted people's lives in the rich industrial nations. People's rights as individuals were listed in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But those rights were not consolidated by also enforcing the complementary rights of society. **The declarations were conspicuously silent on everyone's equal right of access to the benefits flowing from Nature and society.**

By accepting as normal the privatisation of the flows of rent the value generated by the distinctive services of both nature and society we conspire in the appropriation of people's Labour of Love. We abuse the social side of life in an act of sacrilege that dehumanises, separating people from their essence as social beings. We degrade our material selves into metaphysical ciphers. This is the basis of the corruption of morality, the deadweight losses imposed on economic enterprise, and the perversion of culture, as the goodness in each of us is channelled into a barbaric process that inflicts humiliation on others. Everyone loses.

Our collective trauma can be overcome. By working to understand the pathologies of modern society, we engage with others in the quest for change. This can turn into another Great Awakening when we collectively renounce greed in our own minds and hence the collective mind by spiritual struggle to attain higher states of Consciousness. This Great Awakening is above all will be an awakening of the heart of humanity transcending selfish greed unto selfless love.



Health Budget Figures Tell a Sick Story

★ Pavitra Mohan

The millennium has seen some remarkable achievements in public health in India: significant declines in infant and maternal deaths, halting of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, eradication of poliomyelitis and near elimination of neonatal tetanus. What explains some of these achievements? Clearly, these were linked to increased investments in public health. Based on recommendations of the National Health Policy (2002), budget allocations to the health sector progressively increased every year from 2005: between 2005 and 2010, budgetary allocations increased by 300%, from Rs 10,000 crores to Rs 30,000 crores. From 0.9% of total GDP, public health expenditures increased to about 1.3%. Most of these increased allocations went to the National Rural Health Mission that sought architectural corrections in India's public health systems, and to especially support the lesser developed states. Not surprisingly, it is these states which made the most significant advances.

However, the health status of India's citizens continues to be bad. If you require any proof, here it is: the country continues to have the distinction of having the largest number of infant deaths, maternal deaths and tuberculosis cases in the world. Its public health systems are in disarray: about 15,000 doctor positions at primary health centres are lying vacant, and 4,000 out of 5,000 community health centres do not have even a single obstetrician. At 1.3% of GDP, India's health sector also continues to be among the

Why government plans do not address our medicare crisis.

countries with the lowest relative public expenditure on healthcare; even Nepal spends a higher proportion. On the other hand, private sector facilities, largely in the specialist and super specialist segment, continue to grow and are recognised as one of the best in the world.

Losing Sight of The Real Target

The Twelfth Five Year Plan and draft health policy 2015 committed the country to increase public expenditure on health to 2.5% of GDP. This would have required an increase of 30-40% in the Union health budget every year, matched with increased allocations in the state budgets. Knowing that the fiscal space in some of the states with the poorest health status is likely to be the smallest, Union budgets would need to provide a large share. With an allocation of about Rs 33,000 crores reflecting a token increase in health allocation of 13% over past year's allocation (which was itself lower than the previous year) the finance ministry neither allocates the required funds nor provides an indication of the government's commitment. The only consolation one can draw from Arun Jaitley's latest budget is that the allocations could have been even lower.

So how do we ever reach the elusive, but very conservative health

policy target of 2.5% of GDP as the quantum of public expenditure on health to ensure that India's public health systems are accessible, effective, equitable and responsive? I say conservative because most countries with whom India aspires to stand, such as BRICS, spend a much higher proportion of their GDP on health; ranging from 3.5% to 8.5%. Public health expenditure keeps their people healthy: healthy people in turn fuel their economy. If we are not able to have a quantum increase in health allocations, India's health systems will remain ailing, and large numbers of its citizens, who cannot afford expensive private healthcare, will remain diseased and undernourished.

Another announcement in the budget is that of opening 3,000 government-run pharmacies aimed at increasing people's access to cheaper drugs, and thus reducing out of pocket expenditure on healthcare. While the intention is laudable, the problem is that India has about 850,000 pharmacies which sell branded drugs, at a high rate, making it difficult for poor families to access cheaper drugs. The proposed 3,000 generic drug stores will constitute less than 1% of the total pharmacies, and will have a negligible impact on the public's access to cheap drugs. The alternative solution of ensuring availability of generic drugs in all government-run primary health centres, as in Tamil Nadu and



Rajasthan, would have led to significantly increased access of free generic drugs to the poorest populations. We know from these two states that when governments procure and supply generic drugs, they make huge savings, require very little additional funds, and significantly increase the utilisation of public health facilities in the poorest areas.

Misplaced Logic on Dialysis Centres

One specific but surprising announcement in the budget was on the opening up of dialysis centres in district hospitals across the country. Neither the 2002 National Health Policy nor the 2015 identify end stage renal disease as a priority, nor does the illness feature in the top ten causes of adult deaths; hence the surprise. In a country with limited resources like India, any new health intervention funded by the state needs to be backed by evidence on the high prevalence of the disease being addressed, its impact on reduction of mortality and a justification of cost of the intervention to address the disease against its effectiveness; and all of these need to be measured against other competing options.

Another significant criterion that the state must apply is the externality its intervention generates i.e. the impact of the intervention on others besides the patient herself.

For example, when you treat a tuberculosis patient, there is a benefit external to the person being treated: you also prevent many others from getting infected by this patient. In view of the many competing priorities for limited health care resources, end stage kidney disease does not fit the criteria of high contribution to mortality and high externality, and there is no evidence on the effectiveness of adding dialysis centres in district hospitals to address the condition.

On the other hand, competing options for investments would be diseases with much higher prevalence and mortality such as TB, which remains one of the major causes of adult mortality, and, with emergence of multi drug resistance in India, becoming increasingly difficult to control. Even if one considers end stage renal disease as a significant problem, prevention and management of hypertension and diabetes, which are major causes of this condition, would appear a much more sensible and cost effective option than setting up dialysis centres. In such a scenario, the specific announcement in the budget comes as a surprise, and makes one suspect the intention behind such a move.

The Insurance Trap

Finally, the finance minister announced a health insurance

scheme that would cover poor and economically weak families for catastrophic health expenditures. Though more details are not available, the insurance scheme (the Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Yojana) is a modification of the existing Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), with the annual limit increased from Rs 30,000 per family to Rs 100,000, and an additional top up of Rs 30,000 for senior citizens. Even with the lower reimbursements as in RSBY, David Dror and colleagues estimate that to enrol all the BPL families in the country would cost anywhere from Rs 2,460-3,350 crore. With the reimbursement limit now hiked to Rs 100,000, the budgetary allocations required would be substantially higher. What we have in the budget is Rs 1,500 crore, which is not sufficient to enrol or continue enrolment of half of the BPL households even under the current scheme. Hence the entire exercise shows not just lack of any genuine caring and planning to serve the Indian people but outright fraud or just another *jumla*.

Our health systems are suffering from a deep wound. The wound requires urgent surgery, not the placing of another Band-Aid.

*The writer is co-founder,
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Journalism as Genocide

Journalism demands detachment and objectivity that allows for dissent, disagreement and freedom of expression. In the absence of such ethics, it clears the ground for violence and does great disservice to the democratic way of life.

✱ Suchitra Vijayan

In its 2003 verdict, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) found Rwandan journalists Ferdinand Nahimana and Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza guilty of genocide, incitement to genocide, conspiracy and crimes against humanity. The case against Nahimana and Barayagwiza raised important questions regarding the role of the media and their social accountability. For the first time since Nuremberg trials, hate speech was prosecuted as a war crime. The judgment declared that the way the journalists had acted constituted “journalism as genocide”.

Words Can Kill

Rwandan cultural anthropologist Charles Mironko analysed confessions of a hundred genocide perpetrators. His work confirms the thesis that hate messages in the media had a direct effect on the dehumanisation of the population that was subject to persistent slander. Several months of this behaviour, in the absence of credible reporting, conditioned the population to hate, and kill.

Similarly the tribunal held that the media both newspaper and radio “relentlessly, targeted the Tutsi



population for destruction” and portrayed them as a “political threat”. The hate media essentially became the background score to the state's dispensation of arbitrary authority, and the journalist became both the petty sovereign of the state and useful idiots. In this, it used a line of reasoning similar to the Streicher case at Nuremberg, where *Der Stürmer*, a weekly tabloid-format Nazi newspaper, was found to have “injected into the minds of

thousands of Germans a poison that caused them to support the National Socialist policy of Jewish persecution and extermination”.

Der Stürmer, like *Kangura*, its Rwandan equivalent, was filled with stories of slander, libel, smear campaigns, and fabricated stories. By journalistic standards, both publications were nothing more than substandard tabloids. Yet, they enjoyed enormous influence and support from leading public figures

Turning the Page of Hate: A New Campaign to Promote Tolerance in Journalism

**Launched April 18th 2014 in Rwanda to
mark 20 anniversary of Genocide**

**Aims to mobilise journalism at all
levels against manipulation of media
and journalism as weapons of hatred
and incitement to violence**

in various fields, political elites and other popular journalists. Both cultivated powerful patrons and moulded their audience into a controllable, incitable mob of puppets.

The behaviour of sections of the Indian media over the past few decades has an eerie similarity to the behaviour of *Der Stürmer* and *Kangura* in the run up to violence, ethnic killings and genocide.

The sinister parallels were evident in the 2002 Gujarat. A study by PUCL in 2002 found that two vernacular newspapers in particular *Gujarat Samachar* and *Sandesh* ran false stories, fabricated sensational headlines with the intention to “provoke, communalise and terrorise people”, which incited and encouraged Hindus to kill Muslims. Rather than perform the ethical duties that journalism demands, these papers published doctored material without evidence, and furthered arguments that incited violence. *Sandesh* featured a front-page headline on February 28, 2002, the day after the burning of a train in Godhra, “70 Hindus burnt alive in Godhra”, followed by another headline that proclaimed “Khoon Ka Badla Khoon” (Avenge Blood with Blood). Eyewitness accounts from Naroda Patiya, scene of one of the

worst massacres, describe mobs carrying weapons and copies of the *Sandesh* with the headline, “Khoon Ka Badla Khoon.” PUCL's report on the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi following the death of Indira Gandhi also reports the same slogan being shouted by the mob leading up to the killings.

Sandesh published fabricated reports that the breasts of two Hindu women had been sliced off by Muslim mobs. This new report led to sexual violence against Muslim women. The editor of the paper stated that “the information had been provided by the police” and refused to apologise, or print a retraction on the ground that “it was against the policy of the newspaper to carry out corrections and clarifications for previously published articles.” While the Press Council of India later reprimanded the newspapers, nothing was done to hold them accountable. Instead the then Gujarat chief minister, Narendra Modi openly praised *Sandesh* for its work. During the course of events leading up to the Gujarat carnage and in its aftermath, the circulation of *Sandesh* rose considerably due to its pro-Hindutva stand.

The Gujarat riots are not an exception; it simply follows the trajectory of hate entrepreneurship

practiced by some journalists and a section of the media. It has a genealogy starting from the Jabalpur riots in 1961, to the riots that consumed Aligarh; Ayodhya to the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots.

Democratic Alibi

French historian Jean-Pierre Chrétien describes the behaviour by journalists in inciting hatred and violence as ‘the democratic alibi’. A democratic alibi divorces the question of ethics from the political, and employs the mechanisms of mass conditioning and mobilisation required to create group hatred. A democratic alibi is the precondition to riots, lynching, political trials, extrajudicial killings, military occupation and genocidal violence. Its legitimacy lies in the justification of collective violence either by the state or the mob, and begins by creating a dispensable enemy of the state the “anti national”, “the secular”, “the minority”.

An established pattern of presenting and commenting on the news transforms political debate into righteous passion against individuals and groups that disagree with the status quo. The targets of violence are marked with precision, taken as public hostages and accused of being enemies of the state. Later they explain what has to be done to this enemy. Through constant repetition, they construct a political, moral and historical alibi that eventually becomes the accepted truth. In this steady journey into the abyss of intolerance, journalists and news anchors become agents of the state and even annihilators of society. All the ingredients for conditioning a democratic alibi that existed in Nazi Germany and Rwanda exist in India today.

In the case of Gujarat and other instances, sections of the media were not only complicit in conditioning, inciting and producing the riot; they were also responsible for explaining, and interpreting the violence. They repeatedly justified the carnage as spontaneous mob violence, used

language that neutralised “the horror and injustice of the subsequent violence”. Similarly in the case of the recent lynching in Nagaland of a Muslim man, Sayed Sarif Uddin Khan, on allegations of rape, there was a clear instance of misinformation and fabrication that amounted to incitement in the local media.

Road Map to Annihilation

Upon analysing witness testimonies from the Nuremberg, Yugoslavia and Rwanda trials, two things become increasingly clear. First, truthful reporting of facts, analytical investigation of issues, and a stand against violence by journalists in all these instances could have both changed the behaviour of the perpetrators, and in some instance even prevented the slaughter. Second, when airwaves become a platform for ideological, socio-religious-nationalist populism, there are clear roadmaps with milestones

and perfected patterns of hate that lead to eventual violence and destruction of a society. Some of these milestones include:

1. The justification of massacres, violence and even mob justice against people and social groups because they are seen as “anti-national”, “cockroaches” and “pests”.
2. Defining what constitutes majority opinion, abandoning pluralism of opinion, and legitimising the views of the 'majority people' in whose name the journalist claims to speak.
3. The rules of criminal procedure are abandoned in favour of a trial by intentions and public opinion in which evidence is falsified, doctored and manipulated.
4. Public shaming, humiliation, administering public mob justice, painful corporal punishment in public, and forcing a group of people to wear identifiable markers.

5. Democratic culture (rule of law, due process, protection of minorities, and social justice) is considered as being ancillary to state power and its interest.

6. Journalistic propaganda constantly retreats to revisionist historical references, often edited to fit the narrative of victimisation suffered by the 'majority', that demands historical justice for the crimes of the past.

While the list enumerated above is a repetitive pattern of behaviour gathered from over hundred witness testimonies from Nuremberg to Rwanda, their relevance resonates for India today, as we are birthing a new dystopia of hate and bigotry. This list holds up a haunting mirror to the ugliness on display and the vileness employed by some Indian news channels, anchors and journalists. It is as much a war over the minds of the people, as it is a war to enact extra judicial

Ashoka Rock Edict XII

The ‘beloved of the gods’, king Priyadasi, honors all forms of religious faith, whether professed by ascetics or householders; he honors them with gifts and with manifold kinds of reverence: but the beloved of the gods considers no gifts or honour so much as the increase of the substance (of religion):--his encouragement of the increase of the substance of all religious belief is manifold. But the root of his (encouragement) is this: - reverence for one's own faith, and no reviling nor injury of that of others. Let the reverence be shown in such and such a manner as is suited to the difference of belief; as when it is done in that manner, it augments our own faith, and benefits that of others. Whoever acts otherwise injures his own religion, and wrongs that of others; for he who in some way honors his own religion, and reviles that of others, saying, having extended to all our own belief, let us make it famous; - he who does this throws difficulties in the way of his own religion: this, his conduct, cannot be right. The duty of a person consists in respect and service of others. Such is the wish of the beloved of the gods; for in all forms of religion there may be many scriptures (Sutras), and many holy texts, which are to be thereafter followed through my protection. The ‘beloved of the gods’ considers no gift or reverence to be equal to the increase of the essence of the religion: and as this is the object of all religions, - with a view to its dissemination, superintendents of moral duty, as well as over women, and officers of compassion, as well as other officers (are appointed); and the fruit of this (regulation) will be the augmentation of our own faith, and the lustre of moral duty.



and unconstitutional laws that encroach into and legislate the private lives of citizens. The absolute essence of this priming is the stamping out of pluralism in all its forms - pluralism of ideas, opinions, faiths, beliefs, memories, myths and even gods.

The reporting and editorialising of communal violence in cases like Gujarat are not isolated. It has to be seen through the editorial narratives broadcast in other incidents like the censorship and silencing of author Perumal Murgan, the arrest and custodial treatment of G.N. Saibaba, the notorious and dubious reporting on “love jihad”, the beef politics that led to the lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq and others, the reporting of the death of Rohith Vemula and the

JNU crackdown. In all these instances, some media commentary chose to perform the function of legitimising the ideology of the ruling government, its political projects and equated it to nationalism.

Recently, Sudhir Chaudhary, editor, Zee News, in an interview to Outlook magazine stated that: “It has become necessary for media houses to take a stand on certain issues. It has to be a nationalistic approach. That benefits the people of India. What do you call neutral and secular? No one is neutral anymore. I will pitch for a nationalistic reporting, ...” He further states, “If you want to live in India and want the breakup of India, then why do you want to live here? Leave the country and go.”

What happens to journalism when it willingly wraps itself in a flag? To borrow from Adorno it facilitates a politics of murder and destruction.

While nationalism will continue to mediate many facets of our life, it cannot become the prism through which we understand the complexities of the world. Chaudhary, and many like him, hold immense power of persuasion, and present a position of unthinking hawkish nationalism that uncritically propagates a retreat to banal patriotism. This excludes the possibility of criticising the state and its political projects. Journalism is not the witch's brew from Macbeth, and journalists cannot become the agents of chaos and conflict. Journalism demands detachment and objectivity that allows for dissent, disagreement and freedom of expression. In the absence of such ethics, it clears the ground for violence and does great disservice to the democratic way of life.

While handing down its judgment in the media trial, the ICTR rightly criminalised the hate speech of a powerful media against a vulnerable minority. The great fight for individual humanity against crimes by the state and the journalists who defend it has to begin with accountability. To rephrase what Rwandan journalist Thomas Kamilindi testified at the war crimes' tribunal, how should we hold journalists accountable for their actions, and if need be prosecute them, if they knowingly caused harm, and incited violence. We must find a way to articulate and respond to such abuses of power without violating the principles of freedom, which are an indispensable cornerstone of democracy.

The writer is a New York based Barrister, political analyst and a writer. She previously worked for both the War Crimes Tribunal for Yugoslavia and Rwanda. She is currently working on her first book on the making of India's political borders.

The US Must Relinquish Puerto Rico

The problem in Puerto Rico is not its debt, the vulture funds or even the Financial Control Authority. The problem is that Puerto Rico, a tiny island in the Caribbean, is staring into the rifle barrel of the entire US capitalist system.

★ Nelson A. Denis

This year, 2016, marks a new era in Caribbean colonialism. The US Congress is preparing a "Financial Control Authority," which will supervise the finances of the entire government of Puerto Rico -- its legislature and courts, public authorities, pension system and all leases, union contracts and collective bargaining agreements. The authority will also restructure the entire public workforce (including teachers and police), freeze public pensions and ensure "the payment of debt obligations." Then it will issue its *own* debt, spend the funds as it sees fit and leave Puerto Rico to pay the bill.

Congress Can Veto Any Law Passed in Puerto Rico

The authority will also have prosecutorial powers. It will be empowered to "conduct necessary investigations" into the government of Puerto Rico, or in other words, be empowered to hold hearings, secure government records, demand evidence, take testimony, subpoena witnesses and administer oaths -- under penalty of perjury -- to all witnesses.

Any witness who fails to

appear or to supply information will be subject to criminal prosecution and removal from office. This includes any elected official on the island: even the governor and attorney general.

All of these powers are enumerated in the 157-page Senate Bill 2381, also known as the "Puerto Rico Assistance Act of 2015," which is currently under review in the US Senate.

The bill is supported by banking lobbyists in Washington, DC, since it will ensure the repayment of \$72 billion in public debt and exclude any bankruptcy protections.

It is opposed by many of the island's journalists, union leaders and independence advocates, who view the looming "authority" as nothing more than a hedge fund collection agency. They also fear the imposition of a *de facto* dictatorship in the Caribbean: created in Washington, operated from Wall Street, all disguised as a "management assistance authority."

But the problem in Puerto Rico is not its debt, the vulture funds or even the Financial Control Authority. The problem is that

Puerto Rico, a tiny island in the Caribbean, is staring into the rifle barrel of the entire US capitalist system.

Sooner or later, there will be an explosion.

A History of Colonialism

The abuse of the island started early. In 1493, Columbus made his second voyage to the New World with seventeen ships, 1,200 men, horses, cattle, guns, and smallpox. When he finally reached a major island, it happened to be Puerto Rico. The Taíno Indians welcomed Columbus, but they made a big mistake: they showed him some gold nuggets in a river and told him to take all he wanted. Naturally, this started a gold rush.

Spain named the island Puerto Rico (meaning "rich port") and invaded with embroidered bibles and African slaves. They enslaved the Taínos as well: every Taíno over the age of fourteen had to produce a hawk's bell of gold every three months or have their hands cut off. Since they'd never seen a hawk, a horse, an armored man, or fire-breathing muskets, the Taínos did as they were told. To make matters worse, a strange plague (smallpox)

was killing all the Tainos but sparing the Spaniards, which meant they must be gods or at least immortal.

Columbus eventually started up a global child-sex-slave trade, shipping off Indians to all corners of the globe. He even bragged about it to a friend in a letter written in 1500, saying that, "A hundred castellanoes (a Spanish coin) are as easily obtained for a woman as for a farm, and it is very general and there are plenty of dealers who go about looking for girls; those from nine to ten (years old) are now in demand."

Under Columbus' rule, life for the Taino people became so bad that they resorted to mass suicide.

Twenty-five years after Columbus had arrived in Hispaniola, the Spanish missionary Pedro Cordoba wrote that,

"As a result of the suffering and hard labor they endured, the Indians choose and have chosen suicide. Occasionally a hundred have committed mass suicide. The women, exhausted by labor, have shunned conception and childbirth. Many, when pregnant, have taken something to abort and have aborted. Others after delivery have killed their children with their own hands, so as not to leave them in such oppressive slavery."

Eventually, Columbus resorted to wiping out the Taino altogether.

For 118 years, Puerto Rico has provided a textbook illustration of Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. The United States "liberated" Puerto Rico from Spain in 1898. The very next year, in 1899, Hurricane San Ciriaco destroyed thousands of the island's farms and nearly the entire year's coffee crop. Of 50 million pounds, only 5 million were saved.

US hurricane relief was bizarre. The US government sent no money. **Because their island is a captive economy, Puerto Ricans are the largest per capita importers of US goods in the world.**

Instead, the following year, it outlawed all Puerto Rican currency and declared the island's peso, whose international value was equal to the US dollar, to be worth only 60 cents. Every Puerto Rican lost 40 percent of his or her money overnight.

In 1901, the United States passed the Hollander Act, which raised the taxes of every farmer in Puerto Rico. With higher taxes, devastated farms and 40 percent less cash, farmers had to borrow money from US banks. But with no usury law restrictions, interest rates were so high that within a decade, the farmers defaulted on their loans and the banks foreclosed on their land.

The United States, which was undergoing its industrial revolution, then turned a diversified island harvest (coffee, tobacco, sugar and fruit) into a one-crop, cash-cow economy.

The very first US-appointed governor of Puerto Rico, Charles Herbert Allen, leveraged his tenure on the island into the presidency of the American Sugar Refining Company -- which today is known as Domino Sugar.

By 1930, all of Puerto Rico's sugar farms belonged to 41 syndicates. Eighty percent of these were US-owned, and the largest four syndicates -- Central Guanica, South Puerto Rico, Fajardo Sugar and East Puerto Rico Sugar -- were entirely US-owned and covered more than half of the island's arable land. With no money, crops or land, Puerto Ricans sought work in the cities. When the Puerto Rican Legislature enacted a minimum wage law like the one in the mainland United States, the US Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional. After a visit to the island, AFL-CIO President Samuel Gompers held a press conference to declare: "In all my life I have never witnessed such misery, sickness and suffering."

To make matters worse, US finished products -- from rubber bands to radios -- were priced 15 to 20 percent higher on the island than on the mainland. Again, Puerto Rico was powerless to enact any price-fixing legislation.

The United States did give Puerto Ricans one "gift." Over the objection of the Puerto Rican Legislature, Puerto Ricans were declared US citizens in 1917, just in time for military conscription into World War I.

A Classic Colony

After a fraudulent plebiscite in 1952, in which voting for independence could get you 10 years in jail (see Public Law 53 -- the Gag Law), the United States filed papers with the United Nations Decolonization Committee, declaring that Puerto Rico had



Inauguration of Charles Herbert Allen, the first US governor of Puerto Rico. (Credit: US Gov)

chosen to become a "free associated state" with the US, and was no longer a colony. **Every man, woman and child in Puerto Rico will be paying \$2,000 per year just to cover the interest on Puerto Rico's public debt.**

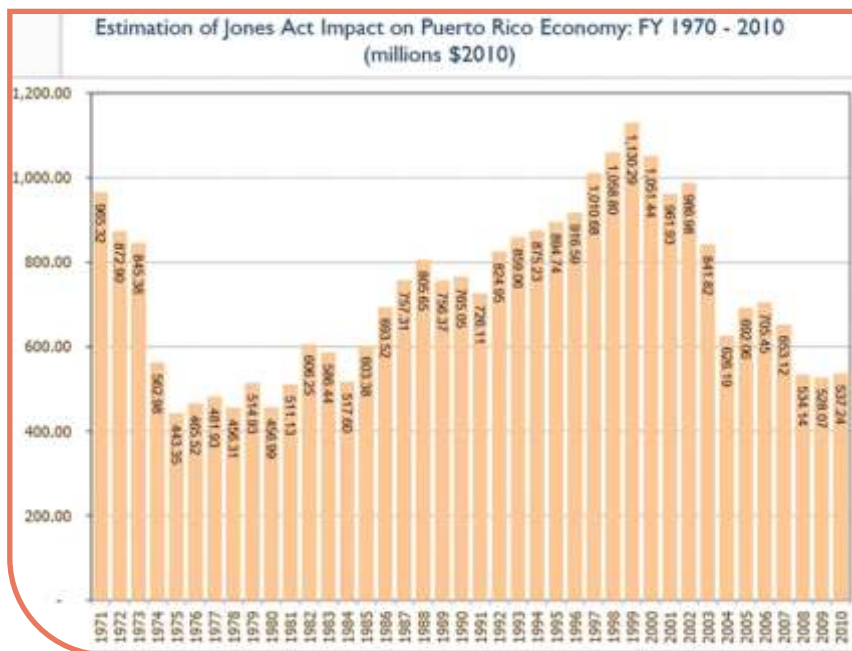
However, to this day, US federal agencies control the island's international trade, foreign relations, banking system, currency, shipping and maritime laws, customs, import-export regulations, immigration, postal system, radio, TV, transportation, Social Security, military, environmental controls, coastal operations, judicial code, civil and criminal appeals, and cabotage rights (i.e. the Jones Act). In addition, the US Congress has plenary jurisdiction over any law or regulation promulgated by the Puerto Rican Legislature. Congress can veto any law passed in Puerto Rico.

The US military presence is overwhelming. At its peak, no one could drive five miles in any direction without running into an Army base, nuclear site or tracking station. The Pentagon controlled 13 percent of Puerto Rico's land and operated five atomic missile bases. The island of Vieques was bombed mercilessly for 62 years. From 1984 through 1998 alone, more than 1,300 warships and 4,200 aircraft used the island for target practice, and pounded it with 80 million pounds of ordnance.

The colonial veneer is so ludicrously transparent that José Trias Monge, the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico who crafted the "free associated state" and drafted the Puerto Rican "Constitution," finally threw up his hands and wrote a book titled *Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World*.

Operation Booby Trap

From the mid-1950s until 2006, the United States laid a red carpet from Wall Street to San Juan. US corporations were given 10- and 20-year tax exemptions on all gross revenues, dividends, interest and capital gains income. Instead of



growing fruit, coffee and sugar cane, Puerto Ricans now manufactured bras and razors behind concrete walls.

Unfortunately, once Playtex and Schick found cheaper labor in Asia, the factories all disappeared. Once the IRS 936 tax exemption expired, the pharmaceutical companies vanished. All of them had repatriated their profits back to the US mainland. None of them had invested in Puerto Rico. In the end, rather than providing a true economic base and self-sustaining growth, these corporations only produced more dependency on the United States, and more long-term unemployment.

The program was originally called Operation Bootstrap. With typical wit and accuracy, Rep. Vito Marcantonio named it Operation Booby Trap.

The Jones Act

The greatest booby trap of all is the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, also known as the Jones Act. Under section 27 of this act, *all* goods carried by water between US ports must be shipped on US flag ships that are constructed in the United States, owned by US citizens and operated by US citizens. That means that *every* product that enters or leaves Puerto Rico must be carried

on a US ship. **The Puerto Rico debt crisis is a national financial crisis, with no clear resolution in sight.**

This includes cars from Japan, engines from Germany, food from South America, medicine from Canada -- any product from *anywhere*. In order to comply with the Jones Act, all this merchandise must be off-loaded from the original carrier, reloaded onto a US ship and *then* be delivered to Puerto Rico. It all makes as much sense as digging a hole and filling it up again.

There is One Major Exception

A foreign-flagged vessel may enter directly into Puerto Rico -- after paying an extreme levy of taxes, customs and import fees, which often *double* the price of the goods they carry.

This is not a business model. It is a shakedown. It's the maritime version of the "protection" racket. This maritime mafia is so entrenched that several Jones Act carrier company executives were indicted and jailed for price rigging in Puerto Rico.

A 40-year study of this "cabotage cost" to Puerto Rico shows the following results: From 1970 through 2010, the Jones Act cost Puerto Rico \$29 billion. Projected from 1920 till the present, this cost becomes \$75.8 billion.

Ironically, this \$75.8 billion cost is *higher* than the amount of Puerto Rico's current public debt. In other words, if the Jones Act did not exist, then neither would the public debt of Puerto Rico.

In addition, if the Jones Act did not exist, 10,000 maritime jobs would immediately shift to the island from Jacksonville, Florida.

Fourth-Largest Market for US Corporations

The tiny island of Puerto Rico -- with only 3.5 million residents -- is the fourth-largest market in the world for US products. Because their island is a captive economy, Puerto Ricans are the largest per capita importers of US goods in the world. Eighty-five percent of all fruits and vegetables consumed in Puerto Rico are sold by US corporations.

Puerto Rico has more Walgreens stores per square mile, than anywhere in the United States -- and more Walmart stores per square mile than anywhere on the planet.

Thanks to the Jones Act, all these US products have been "price-protected" for the past 96 years. Automobile prices are 30 to 40 percent higher in Puerto Rico than the United States. Some products -- particularly unprocessed food items -- cost twice as much in Puerto Rico.

The tragedy of all this is that Puerto Ricans cannot afford to *pay* these inflated prices. The per capita income of Puerto Rico is \$16,400 -- roughly half that of Mississippi, the poorest US state. But the cost of living is 12 percent higher in Puerto Rico than in the United States thanks to the Jones Act.

Shrinking Tax Base

When the IRS tax exemptions expired in 2006, dozens of pharmaceutical companies abandoned the island and unemployment became rampant. With no economy of its own and no real private sector, the government of Puerto Rico became the island's largest employer.

Over the past 12 years, 1 million Puerto Ricans have moved

to the United States, largely in search of employment. The island's tax revenue has eroded and public debt is skyrocketing due to a population loss of 22 percent. This unhealthy equation -- shrinking tax base plus large payroll equals mounting public debt -- has exposed the government of Puerto Rico to the ways and whims of Wall Street.

Lies From Wall Street

Puerto Rico's bonds are highly attractive because they are triple-tax-exempt: All capital gains are exempt from federal, state and local taxes. But with a 22 percent population loss, Wall Street demanded a higher level of taxation from the remaining 78 percent of island residents. The Wall Street credit ratings services -- Standard & Poor's, Fitch, Moody's and Dun & Bradstreet -- insisted on "fiscal austerities" in order to avoid the downgrading of Puerto Rico's debt.

The Puerto Rican government complied. They laid off 30,000 workers, charged 67 percent more for water, raised electricity rates, raised property and small business taxes, hiked the gasoline tax *twice* in one year, cut public pensions and health benefits, raised the retirement age, closed 200 schools and hiked the sales tax to 11.5 percent.

After all this austerity, three rating services still downgraded the island's debt to "junk bond" status. In other words, Wall Street *lied* to Puerto Rico, and then hiked the premium payments. And now they want to collect.

The debt service on \$73 billion will be roughly \$7 billion annually: \$4 billion on its GO (general obligation) bonds, and \$3 billion for PREPA (the Electric Power Authority) and PRASA (the Aqueduct and Sewer Authority).

With a population of 3.5 million, this means that every man, woman and child in Puerto Rico will be paying \$2,000 per year just to cover the *interest* on Puerto Rico's public debt. Since per capita income is only \$16,400, this \$2,000 represents 12 percent of everyone's personal income.

With a shrinking tax base, Puerto Ricans are unable to meet this crushing debt burden. Any further "austerities" will force more people to abandon the island -- and the tax base will shrink even further. As Puerto Rico's Gov. Alejandro García Padilla stated in a nationally televised speech, "Puerto Rico is in a death spiral."

The death spiral is so pronounced that García Padilla was recently seen begging for a Financial Control Board, as a shield against impending bondholder lawsuits. This is neoliberalism on steroids, a Caribbean Hobson's choice: to be eaten by a jackal or a wolf.

A Banquet Table for John Paulson

While Puerto Ricans are forced to flee their own island under a pogrom of taxes and "austerity measures," a banquet table of "business incentives" has been laid out for US billionaires and hedge fund operators. Two tax laws enacted in 2012 -- Act 20 and Act 22 -- provide 20-year tax exemptions to high net-worth individuals on all their dividend, interest and capital gains income. The primary beneficiary of this has been John Paulson.

Paulson deals in human misery and "distressed assets." He made his greatest fortune -- billions of dollars -- by profiting on home foreclosures during the 2007 US mortgage crisis. In 2007 alone, Paulson made more than \$15 billion by "short-selling" the US housing market, effectively betting on its collapse, even perpetuating the magnitude of the collapse."

Using Acts 20 and 22, Paulson has imported this business model into Puerto Rico. He currently owns the Condado Vanderbilt and La Concha Renaissance, the San Juan Beach Hotel, the St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort and the 326,000-square-foot AIG building in the Hato Rey financial district. He also owns 8.6 percent of Banco Popular, the island's largest bank.

Paulson also owns a large share of Puerto Rico's "public debt." If

Puerto Rico cannot pay, and if the US Congress extends no Chapter 9 bankruptcy relief to the island, then Paulson will soon own a portion of Puerto Rico's physical infrastructure (water, electricity, schools, roads, bridges) as the underlying collateral for this debt.

Thanks to Act 20 and Act 22, Paulson will own major pieces of Puerto Rico without paying one cent of interest, dividend or capital gains taxes on any of his hotel, office, banking or infrastructure income for 20 years.

The banquet table is enormous. While enjoying their 20-year tax breaks, neither Paulson nor dozens of hedge funds want Puerto Rico to receive access to any Chapter 9 bankruptcy protections. They want Puerto Rico to *default* on its debt so that the creditors can convert this debt into P3s -- public-private partnerships -- and turn the physical infrastructure of Puerto Rico (the PREPA electrical grid, the PRASA water supply, highways, bridges, schools, prisons and airports) into ATMs for the hedge fund creditors.

Puerto Rico VS the US Capitalist System

In this game of fiscal brinkmanship, the stakes are very high. If Puerto Rico defaults, it would be the largest in the history of the \$3.7 trillion market for debt sold by US state and local governments. All over the country, pension funds will be unable to meet their payment

obligations.

On the other hand, if Puerto Rico is allowed to file for Chapter 9 bankruptcy protection, then every state in the United States will demand a similar privilege. The US financial system cannot withstand 50 states, all potentially filing for bankruptcy at the same time.

In addition, the \$3.7 trillion municipal bond industry is more than 20 percent of US GDP, which was \$18 trillion in fiscal year 2015.

With more than 20 percent of the entire US economy filtered through these municipal bonds every year, the industry is too big to fail -- a fundamental component of Wall Street revenue and financing, which no one wants destabilized.

For these reasons, the Puerto Rico debt crisis is a *national* financial crisis, with no clear resolution in sight. President Obama is trying to ignore it -- hiding behind Congress, the courts and the bankruptcy laws -- but sooner or later, he will have to address it.

The entire system of municipal bond financing, pension funds nationwide and the fiscal integrity of all 50 states are threatened by the crisis in Puerto Rico. Even a simple debt restructuring will not resolve this mess. So long as Puerto Rico has no real industry, economy or entrepreneurial class, the systemic problems will deepen.

Solutions

The Gordian knot of predatory

capitalism must be cut in Puerto Rico.

- The Jones Act must be repealed as soon as possible. This will establish a shipping industry throughout the island and end the price inflation of US products.
- The Jones Act carrier companies -- Crowley, Sea Star, Horizon and Trailway -- should all be replaced by Puerto Rican shipping companies.
- All import fees levied on foreign-flagged vessels should be paid into the Puerto Rican Treasury, not the US Merchant Marine.
- Puerto Rico must be permitted to negotiate its own international trade agreements. This will enable it to develop capital resources, an entrepreneurial class and a diverse economy.
- A large number of maritime jobs in Jacksonville, Florida, must be rightfully relocated to Puerto Rico.
- Any 10- and 20-year tax abatement deals with US corporations should require the reinvestment of a stipulated percentage of profits into Puerto Rican infrastructure and industrial development.

Fairness and Common Sense

After 118 years, it is time for the United States to relinquish the oldest colony in the world. The present arrangement -- the so-called "free associated state" -- benefits only a few bankers, bond traders, hedge funds, corporate executives, real estate hustlers and John Paulson. Morally and economically, it is time to move on.

It is nakedly self-serving to inflict a Jones Act on Puerto Rico, deny it any bankruptcy relief and then impose a hedge fund collection agency known as "the Financial Control Authority."

It is an international scandal for the United States to turn Puerto Rico into a land of beggars and billionaires -- bossed by absentee landlords, fought over by lawyers and clerked by politicians. It is an even bigger scandal that the UN does not even ask for justice for the people of Puerto Rico.



PROUT's Stand on "Anti-Nationals"

◆

Who are the Anti-Nationals? Those who are involved in the starving, malnutrition of the Indian people directly or indirectly by robbing the resources of the country and leaving the people to live in abject misery are Anti-Nationals first and foremost.

◆

★ **Taraka**

Shrii Sarkar, the propounder of PROUT, was very forthright in condemning all forms of nationalist extremism, including religious nationalism. As He said, "India is a multi-lingual and multi-religious country...Similarly, if a particular religion is proclaimed the state religion, those who follow other religions will not identify with the country. Consequently, the unity of the country will be undermined. If people go against this basic principle, they may be politically successful for a short time, but eventually they will inflict great harm on the country and prove to be a failure.

"There are occasions when majority decisions do not create unity in society because people are more or less divided on an issue. In such circumstances, the leaders should be very cautious when making their decisions, and take special care to safeguard the interests of everybody. In particular, they should select a course of action which does not harm the sentiments of any group. For example, suppose there are seven brothers in a joint family, and these brothers are divided on an issue. Four brothers may be on one side and three brothers on another. If the head of the family takes a decision based on

the wishes of the majority, the family will be divided into two groups. Therefore, a decision should be taken which safeguards the interests of all the brothers." (Three Cardinal Socio-Political Principles)

There has been a trend around the world to create Theodemocracies and religious fascist regimes. This started with Iran and has become popular in other countries. The ideal of Theodemocracy is that only "good" Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists should be allowed to run for office. This system has been established in Iran where all candidates are vetted by a council of priests. On the other hand we have seen religious fascism where there is outright dominance and brutality by religious nationalists.

Shrii Sarkar rejected this saying, "Many people today advocate the formation of theocratic states (*dharmarashtra*). But when they use the term theocratic states, they mean religious states, not states which uphold the cause of righteousness. We should strive to establish states which uphold righteousness (Dharma), and for this the physical sentiments that are the basis of religion should be ignored. People must remain aloof from dogmatic religious ideas." (How to

Unite Human Society)

Who is the Real Indian, Where is the Real India?

Some people think that the Marwaris, Bengalis, or Biharis or upper castes are the real Indians. But being an Indian does not simply mean one who was born in India or who is of Indian origin, because plenty of cockroaches and malarial mosquitoes are being born in India. So who are the Satya Bharatiyas (real Indians)? Shrii Sarkar states: "Addressing Arjuna, He says "Bharata. "Bharata" here means Arjuna. The word *bharata* comes from two Sanskrit root verbs: *bhr* and *ta*. *Bhr* means "to feed", *bharana*. *Ta* means "to expand", "to develop". *Bhr* + *al* = *bhara*, which means "feeding entity". And *tan* + *da* = *ta*. *Ta* means "expanding entity" that helps you in your all-round expansion. So *bharata* means "the entity that feeds you and helps you in your all-round [physical, psychic and spiritual] development". *Bha*, *ra*, *ta*. And *bharata* plus *sna*, *bharata*, means "pertaining to *bharata*".

"This land of ours [India] is known as Bharatavarsha. In Sanskrit, the word *varsha* has three imports: One meaning of *varsha* is rainy season; another meaning of *varsha* is "year". 1979 is a *varsha*. And the third

meaning of *varsā* is a *desha* [country] that can be identified, that can be properly demonstrated or pointed out. That one is signified in “Bhāratavarśa”. “Bhāratavarśa” means “the country that feeds you as well as as helping you in your all-around development”.

"Here “Bhārata” means a king. Arjuna was a king. So he is “Bhārata”, because it was his duty to feed his people and to help his people in their all-round development.” (The Advent of Mahāsambhūti). He further explains that to be called a Bharatīya means one has accepted the service mission of being Bharata, “Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna as “Bhārata”. Kṛṣṇa wanted people to take the responsibility for the physico-psycho-spiritual development [of the people]. Therefore He addresses him as “Bhārata”.” (The Advent of the Lord)

So someone (1) who has taken responsibility to feed the people of India and in future the world (2) who has taken physical responsibility to give medicine, shelter, clothing, economic prosperity, social equality and justice and freedom from exploitation to all Indians and in future the world (3) who has take the responsibility to educate people in

a) The mother tongue, in their state languages and in Sanskrit

b) Practical skills such as basic farming, carpentry, electrical work, house construction, etc.

c) Their local culture (art, music, dance, handicrafts, etc.) and inspired them to create a renaissance in that culture

d) Feeling a great thirst for knowledge so as to be able to serve more and more people.

e) Learning more and more intellectual, artistic and musical fields based on mystical love (4) One who has taken the responsibility to educate people in yoga, mystical love (bhakti) and countless aspects of spiritual life freed from any form of superstition or religion - ONLY such a person is a GENUINE INDIAN.

To take responsibility does not

mean one has attained success. A small girl decides to be a doctor and is not yet a doctor but she has accepted the mission of being a doctor and the hard work involved. This is precisely what PROUT wants the Indian people to do. Only those who do so have the right to call themselves as Bharatīyas.

Those who live in other countries and never step foot in India but who dedicate themselves to this type of service - they are better Indians than those people in India who do not dedicate themselves to this type of service.

But then who are the Anti-Nationals? We can then clearly say that those who are involved in the starving, malnutrition of the Indian people directly or indirectly by robbing the resources of the country and leaving the people to live in abject misery are Anti-Nationals first and foremost. Those who are involved in looting of the Budget giving tax breaks to the corporates while cutting money on medical care and public schools can also be called anti-Nationals. Those who drive Dalits, Adivasis and Muslims out of schools and those who drive them in universities to commit suicide are also anti-Nationals. Above all, Anti-Nationals are those who inject hate and teach the Indian people to hate each other and play Holi with the blood of other Indians just to win votes. And what should be our response to the Anti-Nationals - should we hate them, threaten them, kill them?

Never, ever. We should simply stop their himsa by any means

necessary. This is the crucial task. We must stop the killing, starving, raping and exploiting of everyone. We must propagate universal love based on social equality in every village and town and unite the exploited people of all communities based on the mission for local economic democracy and regional economic swaraj (sovereignty). If we do this we will become true Bharatīyas and this long-suffering land will genuinely become Bharata Varsha.

For we are bound to admit, that those countries where there is an attempt to serve the people in this way they are the real land of Bharata Varsha. As everyone knows, India today is a land that does not nourish its people physically (economically, socially, politically) psychically (education) and in fact starves, exploits and kills its own people in so many ways. Only spiritually are the people nourished by the spiritual vibrations of the past that are the basis of India's sublime righteousness or Dharma. However, there are many who ignore this Dharma and instead escape from it by claiming that by killing Pakistani brothers or Indian brothers that India will become great. However, the fact is that it is only by becoming a place that feeds, and nourishes all people in all ways that India can become great. It is only by pursuing this mission of selfless service to all beings on this small planet and beyond, that the Indian subcontinent can become the genuine moral, economic and spiritual superpower of the 21st Century.





Pushing Ahead With Privatisation of Indian Railways

The Railway Minister in a meeting in Singapore assured “Private players can participate in upgradation and horizontal expansion of stations including construction of malls, laying new tracks, creating separate freight and passenger corridors to reduce decongestion etc. by adopting equity route and work with Indian companies on zero risk basis with assured financial returns”, thereby guaranteeing Indian and foreign capitalists of assured profits with zero risk, for investment in the Indian Railways - music to the ears of every capitalist.

* Gadhar

In the last Railway Budget presented by the Railway Minister, Mr. Suresh Prabhu on February 2015, he had announced that Rs 8.5 lakh crores would be raised to augment the capacity of the Indian Railways and modernize its infrastructure. It was announced that this would be raised through private sector participation as well as direct foreign investment (FDI). This plan was in line with the policy of the previous UPA government as well as the present Narendra Modi government, of increasing reliance on private capital to fund infrastructure in roads, power, telecom and now in railways. In fact, it was widely understood that Mr. Prabhu was made Railway Minister by Narendra Modi in November 2014, replacing his predecessor, Mr. Gowda, who was perceived as not moving fast enough with the plan of privatization of the railways!

Privatisation, Piece By Piece in the Name of “Improving” the Functioning of the Railways

It may be recalled that in September 2014, the Indian Railways had appointed the Bibek Debroy

Committee to give recommendations on improving the finances of the Indian Railways. In its report submitted in June 2015, the Bibek Debroy committee recommended corporatization of the railways and that the Railway Ministry of the government should be involved only in policy making, while private players should be allowed to run passenger and freight operations. When the railway workers led by their trade unions unanimously rejected these recommendations and

threatened to go on strike to show their opposition, the government was forced to back track. The Railway Minister then said that “Railways will continue to be owned by the Government of India, managed by the Government of India. We want change not for the change in ownership... We want to bring in private capital or technology to improve the functioning of railways.” However, behind all the talk of “improving” the functioning of the Railways,

POLICY OF PRIVATIZATION IN RAILWAYS

Ministry of Commerce has framed policy of privatization in Indian Railways vide Notification dated 22.08.2014

Railway sectors to be privatized:-

- Reservation Centers
- Manufacturing of Rolling Stocks
- Electrification & Signalling
- Maintenance of Rolling Stock
- Passenger Terminals
- High Speed Trains
- Dedicated Freight Lines
- And Many Other Departments

Details are available on www.afrinindia.com & www.nrmn.net

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SAVE RAILWAY SAVE INDIA - A CAMPAIGN BY AIR

what is being hidden is the fact that the actual plan is to hand over the ownership of the Indian Railways, piece by piece, to private capitalists.

Assured Returns for Private Capitalists

On October 24th 2015, the Railway Minister addressed a meeting in Singapore, organized by the Singapore government and the World Bank. At that meeting he declared that “Private players can participate in upgradation and horizontal expansion of stations including construction of malls, laying new tracks, creating separate freight and passenger corridors to reduce decongestion etc. by adopting equity route and work with Indian companies on zero risk basis with assured financial returns”. This means that he is guaranteeing Indian and foreign capitalists of assured profits with zero risk, for investment in the Indian Railways. This is music to the ears of every capitalist, Indian and foreign.

The Railway Minister has announced, over the past one year, that he intends to raise the Rs 8.5 lakh crores announced in the February 2015 budget (a) from LIC and World Bank (b) by handing over 400 select railway stations all over India to private companies for redevelopment (c) other means of converting railway assets to money.

The Indian Railways signed an MOU with LIC in March 2015, for a loan of Rs 1.5 lakh crores to the railways over the next five years to fund increased rail capacity. However the condition for these loans laid down by LIC is that they will be used only for financially viable projects which will ensure an annual rate of return of at least 14% every year!

Maximum Returns With Minimum Investment

To increase its capacity, Indian Railways can either (a) build new Railway tracks in places where there is no rail connectivity-- however in this case, the returns will be low or (b) build additional tracks alongside already existing tracks which are

congested by heavy traffic (this is called “decongestion”) and in this case the returns will be high.

Since the Railway Minister as well as lending agencies want “maximum returns with a minimum of investment” it is clear that they will choose alternative (b). However this is a typical profit centric method of investment which is totally in conflict with the needs of the Indian people in various parts of the country. After Independence, the route length of the Indian Railways stood at 54,000 kms, while today it is at 65,000 Kms, with the addition of only 10,000 kms of new routes. However the track length has increased to 1,15,000 Kms, by laying additional tracks along the existing routes. While it costs Rs 10 crores per km to build a new railway line, it costs only Rs 6 crore per km to add a new line along an existing track. Major portions of our country still do not have rail connectivity. Providing rail connectivity to the hinterland regions would assist in development of those regions and greatly benefit the people there, and would prevent the overcrowding of the metro cities currently taking place. Such investment, though capital intensive, will not yield high returns in the short term but will be advantageous in the long term for all round development of the economy as well as the different states of India. However successive governments have followed the shortsighted policy of maximum returns with minimum investment.

With this in mind, the Railways identified 24 routes where additional tracks would be laid to “decongest” the existing routes. The identified corridors include the Golden Quadrilateral, Howrah-Chennai, Delhi-Howrah, Howrah-Mumbai, Delhi-Chennai, Chennai-Mumbai and Mumbai-Delhi. This means that additional tracks will be laid along the existing rail lines. The entire LIC loan will be utilised for decongestion and not for creating new rail lines.

Also the loan of LIC is at a concessional rate approved by the

Reserve Bank. Hence the utilization of these funds on profitable routes will further increase the revenues of the railways.

In the second week of January, 2016, the Railway Minister went on a three day visit to USA to make a presentation to the World Bank and attract investments. He had claimed that a major part of his 8.5 lakh crores would be coming from this imperialist dominated institution. He claimed World Bank has agreed to invest money in Indian Railways, but the details are not being disclosed.

Earlier on 30th of October 2015, the Railway Minister was in London and addressed top British Financial Corporation chiefs. Again, details of what was promised and what was obtained are being kept a secret.

“Bullet Train”-Not Better Rail Services for the Masses

During the visit of the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Abe to India in late December, 2015, the details of the Indian Railways plans to introduce a “bullet” train from Mumbai to Ahmedabad, at a cost of nearly Rs 1 lakh crores, was announced. This project had also been announced in the last Rail Budget of 2015. Japan has offered a 50 year loan at 0.1% interest for 80% of the cost of the project, with a moratorium for the first 15 years. The Indian Railways expects the bullet train project to be running in seven years. However what is being hidden is that this bullet train will serve only the rich, because the one way fare between Mumbai and Ahmedabad will be around Rs 3,000, comparable to flight travel. The maximum number of people who are expected to use this service is around 50,000 people per day, whereas the Indian Railways carries 25 million people per day, hence only 0.2% of the travelling public will be using this bullet train. The question which the Railway Minister refuses to answer is why is so much money being spent on a service which will cater to 0.2% of travelling public, when the masses of people across the country have



been demanding more rail services for the parts of the country where train service is either woefully inadequate or non-existent, as well as better services on the existing routes.

The first batch of 30 DRM's (Divisional Railway Managers) has already been sent to Italy for specialized training in High Speed Train Operations during the month of September 2015. These have been selected from the areas identified for the introduction of high speed trains. The officials would be trained on the various aspects of making tracks fit for running high-speed trains, their maintenance and security aspects. The railways has decided to introduce high-speed trains on Mumbai-Ahmedabad, Chennai and Lucknow-Delhi routes in the first phase. A survey of railway tracks on the above-mentioned train routes has already been made by a joint team of rail experts from South Korea and India. The team has already submitted a report to the ministry of railways. Thus, the Indian Railways is pushing full steam ahead on this project of introducing high speed trains even though it will cater to a very small percentage of the travelling public.

The millions of travelling

people desire better services, increased capacities, increased safety and conditions of travel fit for human beings. Clearly, these are not the concerns of the ruling class, whose interests the Railway Minister and his government defend.

Secret Deals for Privatisation

On August 7th, 2015, the Rail Minister held a closed door meeting at the Bombay Stock exchange with foreign and domestic investors including multinational i-bankers, FII's, domestic insurers like LIC and other financial institutions. The media or workers representatives were not allowed in this secretive meeting. The meeting was called by the Railway minister to understand from these money lending capitalists what were their demands and conditions for investing in the Indian Railways. Though the minister claims that he wants to introduce transparency, holding secretive meetings with money lending sharks exposes his claims as hollow. The Indian Railways belongs to the people of India and the Railway Minister has no business to have secret meetings with money lenders.

In January 2nd and 3rd, 2015, the Prime Minister of India, Modi, the

Finance Minister, Jaitley as well as the top Government officials of the Finance Ministry were closeted for two days with foreign and domestic finance capitalists in Pune, for discussions on how to privatize the Indian Public Sector Banks. Here again the media or workers representatives were not allowed. The Indian Public Sector banks are holders of the savings of the Indian working people and the government of India has no business to hold secret meetings with private profiteers who want to get hold of these accumulated savings for their speculative purposes.

Public-Private Partnership Model

Prabhu announced that 400 railway stations will be redeveloped through private participation. While the railways would nominally own the land, the station development and exploitation for business would be handed over to private companies. According to the Railway Minister, 30-40% of the Railways' revenue should come from such non core business, as against only 2% currently earned from such non core business. Currently the railways earns the bulk of its revenues by transporting goods and people,

which is considered its core business. However, it is believed that with the real estate industry in a severe crisis, this scheme does not look likely to take off soon.

Selling Railway Property to Private Capitalists

The Railway Minister has asked SBI Cap, the investment banking arm of the State Bank of India, to draw up a plan to earn resources from the railways property. Also they have been asked to draw up a plan for creation of a holding company structure for the Indian Railways which will include the various subsidiary companies now functioning under the Railway Ministry such as IRCTC (Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corp.), IRCON, RITES, IRFC (Indian Railway Finance Corporation) and others. It is thought to sell the shares of these companies to the private parties as another means of raising money. This is another means of introducing privatization.

The Railway Minister is also actively thinking of how to encourage private trains to run on the existing railway tracks, reducing the Indian Railways' own operations. He is reported to have said "Eventually we have to get more private sector in the operations of the railways. Today, we are not able to get them because there is so much of congestion. If we create this capacity and availability, then private sector can come in and this will also generate for us a lot of money eventually, without making any investment. We will own the network, they will operate the trains. We can make money out of it." It is obvious that the private capitalists will operate the profitable sections of the railways, such as carrying goods and catering to the needs of the rich by providing bullet trains etc, while the Indian Railways will be left to run the loss making part, namely the carrying of millions of working people at subsidized rates and in inhuman conditions. This is the direction in which the Railway Minister and the government want to

take the Railways.

Fat Salaries for the Top Officials

A few months back the Railway Minister wrote to the Chairman of the Seventh Pay Commission with a request to increase the salaries of the top railway officials, i.e. the Chairman of the Railway Board, Railway Board members (there are 6 members) and General Managers of the zonal railways (there are seventeen GMs). For example, he requested that the Chairman of the Railway Board be given a salary equivalent to that of Cabinet Secretary and Chief of Army Staff, the top posts in Administration and Armed forces respectively. He also requested for the salaries of the GMs to be elevated to the ranks of the Chief Secretaries of the states.

It may be noted that several of the posts of the top Railway officials are very lucrative posts, with hidden gains that run much beyond the official salaries. It may be recalled that in 2013, one of the railway board members was caught in a scandal offering Rs. 10 crore to the then Railway Minister for the post of Member-Electrical, a post that has much financial power for sanctioning projects!

Deteriorating Working Conditions of Railway Staff and Disregard for Passenger Safety

The Railway Minister has no time to address the grievances of the lakhs of agitating loco pilots, guards, signal and telecommunication staff, engineers, linesmen, etc. who are finding their working conditions deteriorating from day to day due to under staffing and increased workloads.

On 14th of December 2015, thousands of loco pilots from all over India demonstrated in front of Rail Bhavan, the Railway Ministry's headquarters in New Delhi. They were demanding implementation of the recommendations of three committees constituted by the Railways -- (a) High Power committee to look into the working

hours of the running staff- drivers and guards (b) Safety Committee-headed by Dr. Kakodkar, ex-chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and (c) SPAD (Signal Passing at Danger) Committee. These committees had recommended (i) not to increase the number of trains operating and also not to increase the speed of the trains since the tracks were already over strained to full capacity (ii) to restrict the sign on to sign off times of the running staff to less than 10 hours. (iii) to restrict the continuous night duty of drivers and guards to a maximum of two as well as a number of other measures connected to the working and security of the workers and travelling public. However the authorities have been increasing the number of trains as well as the speed of the trains. The running staff, the drivers and guards are forced to work for more than 12 hours at a stretch, seriously endangering themselves as well as the public. Also due to overstretching of the work of drivers, the number of signal passing at danger (SPAD) cases were rapidly increasing, leading to suspension of the drivers.

For example in June of 2015, there was a major fire at Route Relay Interlocking (RRI) cabin of Itarsi Junction on the Central Railway. More than 300 trains pass through this junction every day and it is one of the busiest stations in India. This fire completely disrupted rail traffic for two months in the busy holiday season and inconvenienced millions of poor people who had booked their tickets. The reason for the fire was that a part of the RRI was due for replacement since 1998!

Railway Workers Oppose Privatisation

It is neglect of such safety procedures that the railway workers are protesting against. However, the Railways continue to violate the recommendation of their own committees and the Railway Minister has not yet replied to the genuine demands of the railway men.



Amazon in India

Workers Caught In E-Commerce Jungle

* Angry Workers of the World

3rd of November 2015: around 100 workers of the food delivery / e-commerce startup company, Tiny Owl, occupy their office in Pune and lock in their boss for two days. They take this 'boss-napping' action after management announced large-scale job cuts due to a crunch in funding. Further north in Gurgaon, near Delhi the startup company, Zomato, laid off a tenth of its 3,000 employees during the previous months for the same reason...

27th of July 2015: around 400 delivery drivers of India's biggest e-commerce company, Flipkart, go on strike in Mumbai, demanding better pay and conditions. Their conditions are similarly dismal as those of their 4,800 colleagues who ride delivery motorcycles for Amazon in India...

The disputes in Pune and Mumbai are expressions of the fragile nature of India's 'start-up bubble', the share-inflation based boom of retail and service companies, which use both new technologies, like mobile phone apps, and cheap labour for their

business success. The fragility is both external and internal. Externally, the recent jitters that went through the stock market in China can be seen as a sign towards the brick-wall that the model of 'non-profitable' share-inflation based expansion a la Amazon is about to hit. Internally, the discontent of workers within the newly developed software departments, warehouse clusters and delivery networks rips apart the facade of the sanitised and effortless world of online services.

Before looking at the conditions of Amazon workers and their colleagues we give a broad overview about the e-commerce and retail sector in India.

1) The Political Tension Around the Retail Sector

The retail and trading sector in India plays a major role in terms of stabilising a society that is being deeply shaken by the rapid process of proletarianisation: the death of the peasantry and increased rural poverty on one side, slum cities and a lack of urban/industrial jobs on the other. Impoverished masses enter small-scale trading, e.g. as street hawkers or small shop owners. Their small-scale business is connected to a trading class, which has held their positions as middle-men often for several generations and managed to become a strong political lobby, largely, but not exclusively, represented by the ruling party. The state is in a difficult position given that the trading sector is, on one hand, a social container for large-scale un- and underemployment, but, on the other hand, the sector is

Up to now the state in India has limited foreign-direct investment in the retail sector to 49 per cent, meaning that big corporations like Walmart, Amazon or Carrefour have not been able to act as 'independent' retailers.

very under-developed and starved of capital for, e.g. investment in logistics infrastructure, modern cold-storage, retail supermarkets etc. The under-development of the retail and logistics sector has its negative feedbacks into the production spheres and industries, the circulation of commodities and the realisation of their value takes too much time, e.g. the truck-journey from Maruti Suzuki - India's biggest car plant near Delhi - to the export port in Mumbai takes up to eight days and results in substantial losses through damaging of the transported cars along the way.

Up to now the state in India has limited foreign-direct investment in the retail sector to 49 per cent, meaning that big corporations like Walmart, Amazon or Carrefour have not been able to act as 'independent' retailers. This political decision was



(Amazon warehouse in the hinterland of Delhi)

made less due to mere protectionism of the rich established local traders, but mainly because of the fear of what kind of social repercussions a rapid concentration process in the retail sector would have on the millions of poor traders. In the US, an already highly concentrated retail region, Amazon is said to be responsible for 200,000 job losses in smaller retail shops and companies during recent years. In India, one expression of the social tension within peasantry and traders were the 'Patel' riots in Gujarat in August 2015, when tens of thousands of 'lower middle-class' people, fearing social degradation, protested. This led to clashes with the police and seven people being killed. The general economic crisis and lack of funds increasingly pushes the BJP government to open the sector for 'industrialisation', funded by capital from around the world. Currently one of the main forms this funding takes is the so-called 'e-commerce bubble'.

2) The E-Commerce Bubble and the Centralisation Process in the Retail/Logistics Sector in India

Basically e-commerce companies like Amazon, Alibaba or Ebay provide an internet platform or apps for suppliers and buyers, and organise how the commodities get from those who sell them to those who buy them. They take a transaction fee, which is their profit. If we believe the hype of those who claim that we live in an 'information society' of immaterial networks, then e-commerce and the internet would create an ideal virtual and decentralised marketplace of manufacturers of goods or providers of services on one side and owners of internet-able mobile phones who want to buy their stuff on the other. The connection between them would theoretically be direct and non-hierarchical. Instead we witness a massive concentration and centralisation process: e-commerce companies like Amazon and Alibaba or e-service companies like Uber

become extremely huge central powers, (co-)commanding the labour of millions. In the case of Alibaba, the company's sales on the site account for 12 per cent of China's total retail market, Alibaba has 367 million active buyers, more than the population of the US and Canada combined, and fulfils an average of 30 million orders daily, nearly double the volume of the shipping leader, UPS.

How Can We Explain the Concentration Process?

First of all, the internet is not as immaterial and non-hierarchical as people might think. To set-up and maintain global software platforms requires many workers, Amazon employs thousands of IT workers in office towers around the globe. The organisation of a modern logistics network requires not just know-how, but command over warehouses, supply-chains and delivery workers, too. This 'material backbone' of the e-commerce companies alone would not be able to explain the rapid centralisation process. It is the intertwinement of this material logistical backbone and the aggressive trading of goods through discounting with the expansion of the companies on the financial market, e.g. in form of shareholdings.

The massive share-boom of companies like Amazon or Alibaba or the Indian version Flipkart allows them to do two things, which then in turn leads to further concentration and centralisation:

- a) the share income allows them to lower the prices of their commodities and to undercut their competitors; and
- b) Amazon in India (like Alibaba in China) acts like a bank. They grant credits to selected suppliers and manufacturers, which would face difficulties or long bureaucratic processes on the general banking market. Amazon then subtracts the credit repayment from future



(Richard Branson getting high on cocktail of low paid service labour and start-up bubbles)

transactions. In India, Amazon have issued 64 billion USD credit to smaller vendors since 2011, offering 3 to 6-month loans of between 1,000 and 600,000 USD around 40 per cent of Amazon site sales are through third-party sellers, who are also potential credit clients. Amazon's also offers selected local manufacturers from India the chance to enter the global export market through the Amazon online-platform ("Global Selling Program"), something which would be difficult to achieve as independent suppliers without global connections.

Both the credit and export connection result in a long-term dependency of the suppliers on the e-retail companies. We witnessed a similar process in the retail sector in the UK, where companies like Tesco entered the real estate market and shackled their (food) suppliers through cut-throat financial contracts. This is the rough background to the massive centralisation process and its internal contradictions are clearly visible, both in terms of the instability of the stock market-based expansion and in terms of emerging workers' power, which goes hand in hand with material concentration processes.

A Shaky Loss-Making Gold-Rush

The competitiveness of the e-commerce companies within the retail sector is largely based on the immense inflation of their company share-value. Between February 2014 and May 2015 foreign hedge

funds and investment firms have invested around 5 billion USD in two dozen technology and e-commerce start-ups in India. Flipkart alone, as the biggest e-commerce company in India, raised 1.9 billion USD on national and international investment markets in 2014, amongst others from the Investment Authority (Qatar), Tiger Global (US) and Naspers (South Africa). In 2014 Amazon invested 2 billion USD in India. Amazon boss Bezos allegedly delivered the cheque jumping from some India themed cart-vehicle, dressed as a Rajasthani bride-groom, posing for the cameras. India had "surpassed" his expectations by hurtling past the 1 billion USD sales mark within 12 months of launch, the fastest billion anywhere in the world for Amazon, said Bezos. "We've never seen anything like this."

Indeed, share-value is enormous (Flipkart is valued at 11 to 15 billion USD), the sales volume is considerable (Flipkart sold goods for 7 to 8 billion USD in 2014-15), but officially the three major e-commerce companies Amazon, Flipkart and Snapdeal all ran losses in 2014, between 30 and 60 million USD (other sources put the losses at a higher level: Flipkart is said to be losing Rs 2.23 for every Rs 1 of revenue, Amazon loses Rs 1.90 and Snapdeal Rs 1.72, according to Trak.in). This is not an aspect limited to India or the 'start-up' phase of e-commerce: In the UK the

internet retailer Asos's share price went down by two-thirds in 2014, the online supermarket Ocado is yet to post an annual profit despite launching in 2000, and Amazon's market value shrank by a quarter in 2014. The company posted a third quarter (2014) loss of 437 million USD (£290 million), despite sale rising 20 per cent to 20.6 billion USD. A similar situation exists in the wider 'info-tech-sector': AirBnB and Uber, valued at 26 billion USD and 41 billion USD respectively, have raised over 8 billion USD in funds respectively, without yet actually making a profit for their investors. Pinterest, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Instagram have been valued at 11 billion USD, 19 billion USD, 20 billion USD, and 35 billion USD respectively and yet none have any source of income.

These losses can only partly be explained by tax avoidance strategies, but rather more so by the peculiar 'price-war' of modern retail: expand through gambles and ruin your competitors in hope for future monopoly profits. The official losses don't mean that a few people don't get rich: in 2015 Flipkart's founders Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal made their debut on the Forbes India Rich List at No. 86 with a net worth of 1.3 billion USD each.

Although the growth rates of e-commerce sales are considerable, the total volume is still modest. The Indian e-commerce industry is still

only a fraction of the Chinese market (460 billion USD) which promises future market expansions and attracts capital from all over the globe. In March 2015 the Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba offered 5 billion USD for the Indian's second biggest e-retailer company Snapdeal, but the deal failed, because Snapdeal's main shareholders expected at least 7 billion USD.

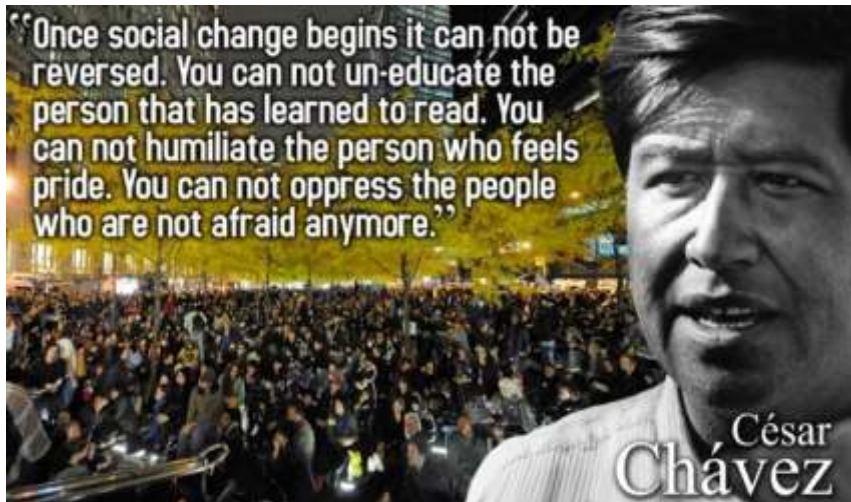
The inter-connection of e-commerce companies in India with Alibaba would link them directly to the shaky conditions on the Chinese stock market: in the aftermath of the Chinese stock market crash, a financial wing of the Alibaba corporation came under state scrutiny for having helped unofficial lending companies to loan significant sums of 'grey-market' money to investors for stock market speculation. Alibaba now enters the Indian market via e-commerce subsidiary Paytm. In August 2015 Paytm was granted provisional approval by the Reserve Bank of India to offer a wide array of financial services, e.g. debit cards, savings accounts, online banking and transfers - a further global integration of the financial and retail sector.

Linking Up With the (Small) Traders

The e-commerce companies link up with a selected few of the smaller shop owners. This is less due to tax

"As a result of capitalist exploitation, those having warrior or intellectual mentalities are transformed into the disgruntled slaves of the capitalists. They have no alternative but to toil at the behest of the capitalists to fill their bellies. Those warriors and intellectuals who are turned into workers under circumstantial pressure carry a simmering discontent in their hearts. This group are known as the "viksubdha shudras" or the "disgruntled workers". These disgruntled workers – the exploited intellectuals and warriors – give systematic expression to the frustrations of the masses to end capitalist exploitation. This is the class with revolutionary distinction."

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



and FDI policies (the e-commerce companies are not supposed to be 'retailers', meaning, owners of the commodities themselves), but more so in order to save investment in storage space. This can also be seen as a political act to appeal to the representatives of small traders and their lobby who benefit, in the short run at least. For example, a medium-size grocery store in Gurgaon (Milano Mart) has been featured in the media because its sales are supposed to have increased by 20 per cent in three months of partnering with two start-ups PepperTap and Grofers. PepperTap, a Gurgaon-based "hyper local grocery service" offers delivery within two hours. PepperTap, which connects the neighbourhood grocery store to the nearby customers, earns a commission on every transaction. The company does not have its own inventory. It hires and trains manpower, which is deployed at 'partner stores' in each location. These people get the orders on their mobile devices, collect the supplies from the partner stores and deliver to the consumers. In the short-run the start-up companies save investment in expensive storage space in congested Delhi, but in the long run it is more likely that these small traders will lose out in cost comparison with more sophisticated storage and supply-chains.

Representatives of the bigger traditional retail companies criticise the e-commerce companies and their business model: on one hand, the e-

commerce supply-chain depends on smaller local traders, on the other hand the price competition will bankrupt these traders in the long run. They also criticise the fact that foreign direct investment (FDI) in retail is limited, while e-commerce companies can obtain 100 per cent FDI by formally acting as service companies. The boss of the major retail Future Group Biyani said: "The growth of virtual retail [...] is entirely led through reducing the prices of products that are subsidised by the investments made by foreign private equity funds and venture capitalists. On the other hand, retailers in the real world face severe restrictions on fundraising, especially when it comes to foreign funds, whether through external commercial borrowings or through equity." Amazon lobbies to change FDI rules that preclude the company from selling goods directly to Indian customers. That change would clearly benefit Amazon, but would mean possible bankruptcy for Amazon's current 'clients'. For example, the camera equipment company, Fotocolor, gives Amazon 6 per cent of every sale on the site: "If Amazon were allowed to sell directly to customers", Fotocolor's boss Nichani says, "Fotocolor wouldn't be able to compete".

App Managing/Exploiting Low Wage Labour

More substantial for global capital is not the integration of small traders, but the vast pool of cheap labour in

India. Many e-commerce or e-service companies try to enter the market of 'personal services', e.g. of domestic cooks and cleaners, drivers and couriers. For example, Uber Technologies Inc plans to invest 1 billion USD in India 2015. According to the Financial Times newspaper, Uber hopes that the investment would enable the company to reach 1 million daily journeys in India. Estimates put the number of current Uber journeys in India at 200,000 per day.

Companies like Flipkart are trying to integrate the elaborate logistics structure of the famous 'dabbawallas', Mumbai's lunchbox delivery men. This personal delivery service of home-cooked food for office staff was founded in 1890 and is based on a patriarchal hiring system from certain rural regions of Maharashtra. Today 5,000 low-paid dabbawallas serve 200,000 customers in Mumbai. They pick up the food from clients' houses, sort the deliveries nearby at big railway junctions and deliver the food to the clients' respective workplaces, using a simple, but effective coding system that does not involve a single computer. This involves 400,000 transactions per day (including the return of empty tiffin carriers) with an error rate of 1 in 16 million transactions. This high rate of dependability earned the dabbawallas a six sigma designation and an ISO 9001 accreditation. The structure of the dabbawallas is hierarchical and a type of closed-shop system. Since 1890 they've only been on strike once, in 2011, when the bosses of the association called a one-day work-stoppage in support of the political leader Anna Hazare. It is not surprising that Richard Branson, Flipkart and other companies want to tap into this traditional patriarchal system of low-paid work, which, over decades of experience, has managed to develop an intricate logistical structure, and to siphon it off via modern technology and retail circulation. Under the deal with Flipkart made in early 2015,

dabbawallas will make deliveries assigned from a Flipkart hub while collecting hot meals from customers' homes. Flipkart said the dabbawallas had undergone training at the company's delivery centres and "would start with a paper-based tracking system, moving on to apps and wearable technology".

Stock Market Bubble, Trade and Credit Chains, Price-War: Creating a Fragile Pyramid Waiting to Collapse

We can now see how these central e-commerce companies function via trade and credit relations as a link between global financial markets and thousands of small traders, manufacturers and service workers. In India 30,000 small traders and manufacturers sell their goods through the Amazon web portal which offers 25 million different items. Snapdeal sells goods of 150,000 merchants. Some of the 12 million different items are produced by entrepreneurs in one of the world's largest slums, the Dharavi neighborhood in Mumbai. If we take into account the loss-making price-war, which basically requires greater and greater sums of global credit money, we can make out the scope of this wager on future profits and we can imagine the impact of a possible crash on thousands of smaller economic units.

Declining Purchasing Power

The future of e-commerce in India is hyped by referring to the massive increase of mobile-phone based internet access. The number of

mobile internet users in India is expected to reach 213 million by June 2015.

There were 173 million mobile Internet users in India in December 2014. Flipkart says that 75-80 per cent of internet orders come from mobile phone apps and decided to shut down its general internet portal and reduce its communication solely to mobile apps. The significant share of mobile phones also indicates that, e.g. home internet is rare because of shoddy housing, frequent power cuts etc. and hints at a deeper structural problem for the future expansion of e-commerce: the limited purchasing power in India. At 1,500 USD, India's per capita income is less than a quarter that of China's 6,800 USD. **Working class wages have been declining since 2009.** The scope for the massive expansion upon which the price-war is betting seems limited.

3) The Working Conditions and Workers' Interviews

Having so far mainly focused on the bubble-aspect of e-commerce, it can nevertheless not be ignored that these companies set-up a modern warehouses and delivery network, which employs a new generation of workers. We are not just waiting for the bubble to burst, but hope that workers' struggles arise, which turn this vast structure of exploitation into a global network of unrest.

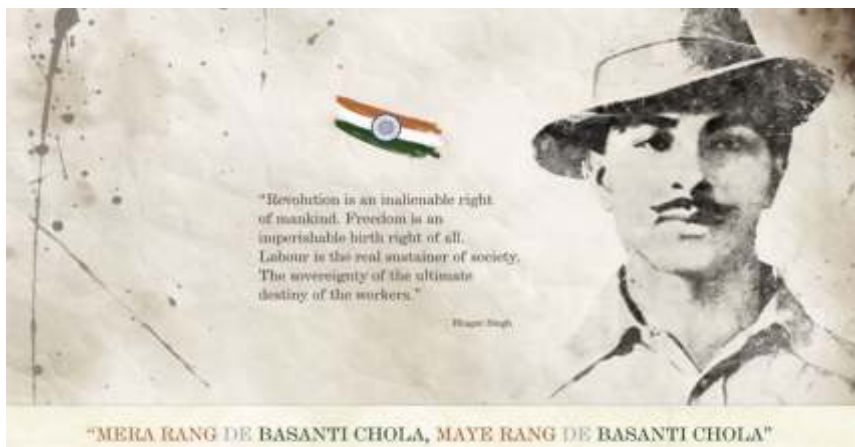
Flipkart has currently 17 bigger warehouses in India, covering 1.5 million square feet of storage capacity. For example, workers in the recently opened 'fulfilment

centre' Newspeak! in Lohari, which is close to Gurgaon, store and supply consumer electronics and durables to the northern parts of the country Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh which is a very extensive catchment area. Amazon has 12 central warehouses (total 2.5 million square feet) some of them owned and run by outsourced logistics companies, e.g. Patel Logistics. Amazon's largest Indian warehouse in Hyderabad, is 280,000 square feet, which is roughly a quarter that of Amazon's US warehouses. In these warehouses the average workforce ranges between 600 and 1,200 workers.

From these central warehouses, goods are delivered to smaller distribution centre. In towns like Mumbai or Delhi, Flipkart and Amazon run around 15 to 20 of these smaller delivery points, where between 60 to 150 workers sort the deliveries. Flipkart and Amazon make use of their own transport fleet (in Flipkart's case through the subsidiary e-kart), outsourced delivery services and self-employed couriers. Amazon is said to handle as much as 55 percent of its Indian deliveries on its own, which is very different from the situation in Europe or the US. Most of the end-delivery to the customers or pick-up points (often internet cafes) is done by motorcycle couriers; Amazon alone employs more than 4,800 motorcycle workers across India. The delivery drivers for Flipkart in Okhla (Delhi) own their van or lease it. They are paid Rs 22,000 monthly for the contract, but they have to bear all costs for the vehicle. They have to pay Rs 6,000 for gas alone. The situation is similar for the DHL drivers: they are driving a subcontracted truck, their boss might own between 1 and 20 trucks, they are paid Rs 15,000 per month, they work 12 hours a day, six days a week.

The Workers' Experiences

Around 60 km south of Delhi close to the major industrial area IMT Manesar and the national highway 8



a new logistics cluster has emerged. We spoke to workers from three different warehouses.

The Workforce

In total there were around 1,600 workers, out of which 300 to 400 are hired by Amazon Seller Services directly. Those directly employed comprised mainly of management. The warehouse workers are hired through two contractors, one of them Om Enterprises. Om Enterprises also hires workers for nearby Myntra (Binola) and Flipkart (Bilaspur) warehouses. The 70 housekeeping workers are hired through the contractor, Spiffy. According to the workers we spoke to, there are female workers employed, also on the shopfloor as pickers. While the male shift finishes at 7:30pm, the women workers finish at 6:30pm.

Warehouse workers' wages are Rs 8,500 per month, five working days per week, 10-hour shifts. There are two tea breaks of 15 min and one lunch break of 30 min. There is a canteen, food is expensive, one thali Rs 50. According to workers employed in the photo-studio department, overtime is paid triple rate, which means Rs 115 per hour. There is not much overtime though.

The housekeeping workers take care of the premises (gardening) and cleaning inside the warehouse. They earn Rs 7,500 and have only four days off per month.

Many sellers don't have the means to provide professional photography of products for the website. So Amazon has built studios inside its warehouses to snap those images for them. The manager of the photo-studio department is supposed to earn Rs 250,000 per month. There workers have to take pictures of each item which is sold through Amazon and upload pictures and descriptions onto the Amazon website. Around 40 workers are employed in the department, only on day-shifts. They get one year contracts, which then have to be renewed.

The pickers in the picking department have scanners; one

worker said that they can see the productivity target time on the scanner, but that is not confirmed. One worker said the target is 150 to 200 items per hour, another worker said 60. If targets are not met workers have to go to a 'feedback session' with management. You can have three feedbacks in two months, then you are out. In the packaging department the hourly target is 60 items.

The Leaflet

We handed out leaflets to workers who came out after shift (most workers leave in buses from the company premises, so there is no chance to talk). The leaflet described the situation of warehouse workers in Europe. A group of 20-30 workers gathered. Many were angry with the low wages and the fact that wages were not increased after a year. ("We should earn at least Rs 20 to 30,000 per month for the hard work we are doing"). People were also angry with the increasing workload. In packaging the work pressure is constant, no relief during the shift. A security guard asked us not to stand in front of the company. When we moved on and re-gathered around 50 metres away, he followed us and repeated that we should move on. A manager also arrived and shouted "Associates, move on!". We told workers about the strikes at Amazon in Germany and the organising in Poland and left our contact details.

Amazon Fulfilment Centre (FC) in Okhla

The Amazon FC in Mohan estate opened in May 2015. Goods arrive from Taoru and are delivered to smaller distribution centres. Unlike the warehouse in Taoru it seems that Amazon runs this FC directly. There are around 250 workers. Two of the managers we spoke to had worked in Taoru before; they commuted daily from Delhi, which is between 2 and 3 hours each way. Amazon uses G4S security guards and 22 Sodexo housekeeping workers. They are paid Rs 8,000. They said that there are packaging targets of 100 items per hour. The canteen is expensive,

40 to 60 Rs for a thali (meal). We met a young picking worker, he used to work for Myntra, he was paid Rs 9,000. He shifted the job because of better payment at Amazon, where he gets Rs 10,500 after ESI, PF is deducted [insurance]. He is a graduate (he studied to become a teacher). He does social work in the village back home in Uttar Pradesh, helping poorer kids to get an education. He was interested in the organising efforts at Amazon in Germany and Poland. Many of the warehouse workers and delivery drivers have a higher level of education. Apart from the Amazon FC there are more than 15 smaller delivery warehouses of different forms in Okhla, each with around 40-60 delivery staff. Most of the delivery staff is between the ages of 18 and 28, earning Rs 10,000-15,000 a month, with one weekly day off.

Work Process

Fashion items are unloaded and placed on locations by the 'inventory' workers. From there pickers pick the items, They have modern scanners. Quality controllers used to check the actual fashion items, e.g. garments for flaws, but this has changed. Now quality control means that the packaging and the correct destination is checked. There are around 140 tables for quality checkers, but usually only half of them are used. The quality controllers used to be able to sit down during work, this has changed, as well. After the quality control, the 'logistics' department sorts the items into destinations and for 'Myntra logistics' and 'third party' logistics and pack the items into bigger transportation bags, which weigh between 10 and 20 kg. Apart from the pickers most workers use the computer system during work, e.g. to check the destination of an item or to register rejections. Workers used to be trained on different jobs, now they largely stay in their respective departments.

Work Pressure

The pickers have direct targets of

SUCCESS ALONE IS NOT GREATNESS

Arun Prakash

Who does anytime
Anything for anyone
Unless he is willing
To do so for himself.
The population of the world
Is 7 billion today
Of them 1 billion
Is over 60 years old
In decades to come
This will double to 2 billion
Yet 43% of the world
Is younger than 25 years
In some countries
It is high as 60%.
This job seeking population
Continues to migrate to cities
Rural population now at 50%
Will reduce to one-third soon
How then to create
Jobs for 8.5 billion
Within the next 20 years
When multinational giants of the
Automotive steel petrochemicals
Electronics and other industries
Are now reducing workforce
Is state intervention
The only answer?
In the 21st century
These jobs cannot be created
By the existing economic order
With its roots in the
Industrial revolution
Of 18th century Europe
That spread its tentacles
Worldwide spilling over

From the 20th century.
This can only be done by
A creative destruction
Of the existing order
The capitalist economy
That produces few capitalists
And governed by market rules
Produces few entrepreneurs.
So a new entrepreneurial spirit
is a must
Which would introduce
innovations
Of a technical, administrative
and financial nature
A dynamic and open business
culture
It would be to develop
New business models
To create fresh economic
opportunities
And generate wealth
To build up the economy.
Till now academia hasn't done much
To study socio cultural factors
That influence entrepreneurship
This becomes all the more important
In this millennium
As emerging technologies of the
Coming years will revolutionise
Food and energy production.
Competition of open minds
Must give way to cooperation
To find ways for
Solving human problems
Without in any way ignoring

Cultural socio economic
characteristics
Only such clear thinking minds
Will be able to contribute
towards
A creative destruction of the
old order
For establishing a strong
foundation
Of self sustaining local
economies.
The bedrock of capitalism
Success or profitability
Alone is not greatness
A big heart is needed
When the purpose
Is far beyond money.
These new age entrepreneurs
Would be driven to greatness
By a higher calling of
Universalism in human societies.
But then who does
Anything for people
Unless they are willing
To do so for themselves.
Like street performers of conscience
keepers
Sadviaras wait to begin the ultimate
crime
A social revolution armed with
genuine love
Destroying hate that's past the
chronicles of time.

how many items to pick per hour, around 120 items, so have the workers doing the packaging, around 65 items. Management announces over the loudspeaker system if pickers are too slow, they call out the worker's name and company ID. They only occasionally print out a list with the achieved productivity. In the other departments there are no direct targets. Management says that workers are only allowed to finish work once their daily target is met, but usually workers leave on time, whether the target is met or not.

Beyond the Warehouse

Workers have heard about

conditions in the nearby Amazon warehouse, where the work pressure is supposed to be higher, but so are the wages, around Rs 12 to 14,000 for quality checkers. The fact that the warehouses pay Rs 1,000 per month more than many manufacturing companies is a reason to work there. The workers in Binola had not heard about the Flipkart/Myntra delivery workers' strike in Bombay that was happening at the time.

5) The Signs of Discontent

We are sure that a lot of informal discontent is brewing and collective steps are taken. Below just two examples of two current official

disputes in the sector. Amazon workers' conditions are similar around the globe, so are general conditions in modern logistics. This is a basis for transnational exchange of workers' experiences and coordinated steps. The disparity between management's obsession with 'resilient supply-chains' and 'reliable personal services' on one hand and the enormous fragility of their businesses in monetary terms on the other symbolises blatantly the contradictions of modern capitalism. These are subjective and objective preconditions for a strategic intervention.

Iishvara Pranidhana

Shrii Shrii Ānandamūrti

This process of expanding the mind to attain liberation from the bondages of fetters and enemies is sadhana (meditation). And the best method of sadhana is *Iishvara Pranidhana*. Will it suffice to practice Iishvara Pranidhana while sitting alone at home? The one who performs bad actions in society and attempts to practice Iishvara Pranidhana at home for hours will not succeed: impure thoughts will certainly flash in the mind and disturb the smooth flow of the process of meditation. One cannot be successful in Iishvara Pranidhana if one does not sincerely observe the other [moral] points of Yama and Niyama in the external world. Those who say that the practice of dharma is purely an individual affair are mistaken. Dharma is very much the concern of the entire society. Unless one's sincere endeavour to follow the path of dharma is extended to collective life, one will never free the mind from the bondages of pettiness, and sitting in a closed room in the name of dharma [sublimely righteous] sadhana will be an utter waste of time.

Bhidyate hrdayagranthishcidyante Sarvasamshyah

Ksiyyante casya karmani tasmin drste paravare. – Mundaka Upanishad

The narrowness of a unit mind in bondage is removed by the sustained effort to perform sadhana at home and in the society at large. Through the all-embracing practice of sadhana one will achieve the fullest expression of one's potentialities. If the mind is narrow, Brahma (Consciousness) sadhana is futile.

Brahma sadhakas love people not by considering their nationality, but as manifestations of Brahma. They could never wage a war based on the petty sentiments of casteism or provincialism {sentiment for a state}, but would readily take up arms to defend justice and righteousness against the evils of injustice. They are constantly aware that Parama Purusa (Supreme Cognitive Principle) is their Father and Parama Prakrti (Supreme Operative Principle, their mother. *Hararme pita gaorii mata svadeshah bhuvanatryam.*

The friendly glow of fireworms and the happy twinkling of stars become almost indiscernible on the night of the full moon. And on the day of the full moon one cannot see the moon if the sun shines brightly in the sky. When a bright entity appears, the less luminous fade away. With the appearance of the big, the small disappear. As one's mind begins to expand, one's small-I begins to lose its existence, and in the final stage of expansion, vanishes altogether.

Na tatra surya bhati na candratarakam

Nema vidyuto bhanti kuto'yamagnih.

Tameva bhantamanubhati sarvam

Tasya bhasa sarvamidam vibhati. – Katha Upanishad

In His presence, the moon, the stars and even the brilliant sun becomes lustreless. Electricity has no light before Him, what to speak of fire. All these shining objects derive their brilliance from Him. Their existence depends entirely on His existence. He is an embodiment of effulgence. He is the source and foundation of all life in the universe. All entities shine with His radiance. One will have to accept Him as the only object of one's mind. One who does not do that is a fool, and will eventually lament with tears of sorrows in the eyes,

Vrtha janama Gounayalu hena prabhu na bhajalu

Khoyayahin soha gunanidhi

Hamara Karama manda namilala eka bunda

Prema sindhu rasaka avadhi

– Narottamdas Thakur

Alas, I spent my life in vain pursuits. Never having worshipped the merciful Lord, I have lost the most precious treasure. How woefully unlucky I am that I did not receive even one drop of the nectar of His divine love.

PBI demands Vigilance Enquiry

PBI has been launching protests demanding a Vigilance Enquiry into various scam of WODC project work at Gochhapada, Mathura and Palsagora Gram Panchyat of Boudh district & Paddy Procurement in the name of landless farmers having no land.

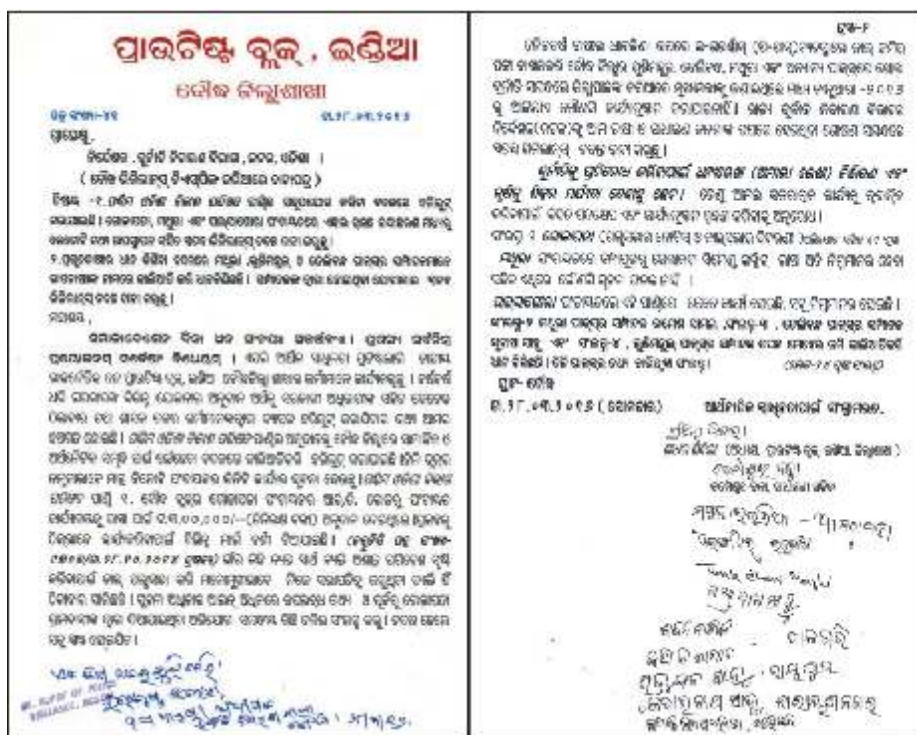
According to the PROUT the entire India is divided in to 44 socio-economic zones and Odisha has two zones Koshala Samaj (17 districts) and Utkala Samaj (13 districts). In comparison to Eastern Odisha, the Koshali people are socially and economically very backward. Hence the Congress government formed the Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) and kept some funds in the budget for the developmental work. Any project sanctioned by the council is at the mercy of local political party leaders and the construction works are done by their own whims. In Boudh district many projects were done for the interest of the party leader. Thus, there are so many instances of misappropriation of funds and low quality construction are done without any information being given to the rural public.

Since many years, the farmers have been suffering a lot due to the exploitation of Rice millers, Civil Supply department, Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society (PACS) and paddy black marketeers jointly with the state and central government are preparing the Paddy Procurement Guidelines in such a system by which they can exploit the farmers at will. The farmers are compelled to make a distress sale and in some financial crisis the farmers attempt to commit suicide. In Odisha near about 200 farmers committed suicide this year which is a shame for the government.

Proutist Bloc, India Boudh Unit received many complaints from the villagers of different blocks. Villagers put their complaints to the BDO, PD (DRDA) and the Collector for enquiry. But the District Magistrate and the administration remained silent due to political interference. A meeting was held by the District Committee of PBI and decided to demand a vigilance enquiry about the projects done under the WODC Fund. In the first phase, a complaint was given in Gachhapada GP of Boudh Block, Mathura GP and Palsagora.

Eventually scams were uncovered in Paddy Procurement during Khariff Marketing Season 2015-16 by the 42 PACS of Boudh district. After the Proutists received many complaints from the farmers (deprived and suffered) they began investigation on the basis of their complaints. Our cadres searched for the collected information from the official website and by use of The Right to Information Act. Our cadres found many irregularities and land scams being done in the name of the landless persons including various forms of forgery and fraud. These irregularities are being carried out by the Secretaries of three PACS. Among the scams uncovered in Mathura (Harbhanga Block) and Telibandh (Boudh Block) there was an attempt to deprive poor farmers of the right to sell directly to the markets thus forcing them to sell to middlemen linked with the local

administration. It was suspected that the Revenue Inspector and other officials were responsible for manipulating the land records. In the name of various farmers, land and crops are given and taken and the actual farmers have no idea what the government officers are doing in their name. In Kuntabandha and Rundimahul it was found that funds were given to people who did not even exist or in the name of dead farmers. Out of 509 farmers there are 6 farmers who sold paddy by showing their land as outsider's bhagchasi which is large ghotala in Rundimahul PACS.





Mass Rally on the Boudh Town Busstand

So, the district committee decided to conduct a mass rally and demand a Vigilance Enquiry into the scams of WODC project work at Gochhapada, Mathura and Palsagora Gram Panchyat of Boudh District and Paddy Procurement by the PACS (Mathura of Harbhanga Block, Telibandh of Boudh Block and Rundimahul of Kantamal Block).

A mass Rally started from Ramliila Maidan at 11AM and street corner meeting held on the road. Then it reached the Vigilance DSP office .Local Inspector Chapadhari Pradhan called on behalf of DSP to discuss the demands of PBI. Tankadhara Majhi, Shridhara Ghibila (Chairman), Champeswar Danta (General Sactetary), Dharanidhara Lauria, Susant Hota and Kedarnath Sahoo went to discuss with the DSP Harekrusna Behera as the representative sent by the vigilance SP, Brahmapur. The allegations are discussed pointwise for 30 minutes. After the discussion a people's protest was held and DSP Mr. Harekrusna Behera addressed and assured the participants he would send the memorandum to the Director of the Vigilance Department in Cuttack immediately. If the authority directs them, then they will conduct the investigation soon in the interest of the mass and farmers. After he assured, the protest was stopped. This demonstration was joined by in the Tankadhara Majhi, Panchanan Sahu, Bipin Barik, Mahan Lauria, S hatrugna Sahu, Gandaram Sahu.

Finally PBI asks the question to the people of Odisha – How after all these scams did the Food Supply and Consumer Welfare Department received the national **E-GOVERNANCE AWARD**! PBI puts this question to the award master in the Centre!

AMURT Relief for Begusarai fire victims



Due to recent accidental wildfire in Begusari District of Bihar, many villages of Begusarai District of Bihar have been burnt and fire victims became homeless. In response to urgent needs the Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT) consisting of monks and volunteers has been rendering services to the fire victims at Fateha, Bachwa and other villages in Begusarai Dist of Bihar. More than 500 houses and wheat crops were also burnt . So far our volunteers have distributed cooked food, Puri, vegetables, clothes and other essential commodities. They are led by Acarya. Arindamananda Avadhuta Jay Prakash Jyoti, Viirendraji and others.

Amiirii Rekha Must for Economic Democracy



Patna : A rally of PBI activists was organised here demanding the creation of Amiirii Rekha (ceiling on wealth) in order to eradicate poverty and to make available economic justice for all. Hundreds of Proutists assembled near Gardanibagh police station and marched towards the residence of the Governor to submit a memorandum containing their demands including drawing Amiirii Rekha. The processionists were addressed by an ardent Proutist R.P.Nirala and Gopalji Singh. Police stopped the processionists well before the Governor's residence and did not allow them to proceed further. They however agreed to take their representatives to the Governor's house for

submission of the memorandum. The processionists agreed to their proposal and thereafter they sent the team of their delegation led by the Chairman of the PBI Bihar State Committee Shiv Narayan Prasad to submit the memorandum. The other members of the delegation included Rajeshwar Kumar Singh, General Secretary ,Bihar State committee and Acarya Santosananda Avadhuta.

The delegation tried their level best to meet the governor without success. Finally they had to hand over the memorandum to the personal assistant of the governor. The memorandum has requested the Hon'ble governor to use his good offices to convince the government for enactment of the law to bring Amiirii Rekha into existence. It said that despite a lapse of almost 70 years after gaining political independence, an ordinary Indian is yet to taste the sweetness of economic liberation. Poverty, unemployment, price rise, terrorism, corruption etc are always before their eyes making their day to day life miserable. While on one side a few persons are living in the house of millions of rupees, on the other side millions are not having a roof over their head. Some are earning millions of rupees every month, while farmers and labourers are forced to commit suicide due to inability to eke out a living. The dragon of unemployment has compelled engineers and PH.D. scholars to apply for the job of peons. The price of essential goods are rocketing sky high and corruption appears to have become omnipresent. Therefore it is felt that there should be restriction on the accumulation of wealth. Minimum requirements of life have to be guaranteed to all, as well as limit has to be fixed for the maximum acquisition of physical wealth.

Their other demands were :

1. Agriculture to be accorded the status of industry, it has to be managed as a cooperative enterprise.
2. Hundred percent employment to be guaranteed to enable everybody to exist with peace and dignity.
3. Medical care and education free for all.
4. Planning is to be made on block level with due involvement of the local population.
5. In order to prevent the expanding influence of corruption, the use of paper notes of higher currency like 1000 and 500 has to be stopped forthwith. All transactions to be done through the banks with the help of smart cards etc.
7. The right to recall the elected representatives once they betray their pledges made in their election manifesto.

Patna has once more become a battleground for PROUT - for justice, equality and humanity.



PROUT Awakens Once More In Chattisgarh



Bhilai (Durg, Chhattisgarh) : A working committee of Chhattisgarh State branch of Proutist Bloc, India was formed with following persons as its office bearers :

Manharan Tikaria	:	Chairman
Ishwar Baghel	:	General Secretary
Kunal Dani	:	Finance Secretary
Tanu Dani	:	Women's wing Secretary
Kunjram Sahu	:	Adviser

The meeting here was attended by the national vice chairman of the Party, Naiim Khan and national convenor Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta.

Naiim Khan emphasised the need of the political power in order to implement Proutistic policies. He expressed the satisfaction that this body will strive to form a full fledged team with sufficient number of office bearers so that it is capable of delivering the maximum good to the people of Chhattisgarh. He also stressed the need to work hard so that Prout is implemented in letter and spirit. Without Prout the future of humanity is not secure.

Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta spoke about the degenerating political culture in the country. He also said that legislature has been overtaken by mostly undesirable people and therefore it is not in a position to function properly. PBI will therefore initiate a new era in politics where it will be open only to the moralists. He also said that soon a training programme for the cadres of the state will be undertaken and vigorous activities started to organise exploited and suppressed people.

Kunjram Sahu said that due to his old age he is not in a position to take a serious responsibility, but he will be always available to promote the cause of the Party.

Manharan Tikaria and Ishwar Baghel expressed their optimism that PBI will soon give new energy to the politics of Chhattisgarh which is gasping for its last breath.

The body will meet every month to review the work and plan targets for future. The participants committed themselves to persevere with this cause of making Chattisgarh a Proutist state despite any and all opposition. As among the top poverty-stricken state of India Chattisgarh earlier had attracted the dedication of Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar who inspired the first PROUT workers in the state, half a century back. The participants dedicated themselves to materialising the samkalpa of Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar who said,

"I want that the present distressed condition of Chattisgarh should come to an end, and it should have a very bright future. Let the people from other parts of the world come here and learn how far the people here have achieved progress, and in which ways they are going to bring about progress in other spheres of life. Let the light of Chattisgarh be ever effulgent, like a luminous star in human society, so that all may earn and be benefitted by it."

National Seminar on Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji's Contributions at Kurukshetra University

Renaissance Universal (R.U.), organised a one day National Seminar on Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji's contributions to Philosophy, Language, Literature, Music, Science and Economics on 12th April at the Ancient History Seminar Hall, Kurukshetra University. The programme started with lightening of lamp by Prof. Aruna Sharma, Dean Faculty of Indic Studies, K.U. Kurukshetra. She pointed out that Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji's interpretation regarding Dharma is very practical and scientific. According to Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji, Dharma means "to uphold". It also means characteristic. She further said that according to Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji there are two types of Dharma - Svabhavik Dharma and Bhagavat Dharma. Svabhavik Dharma has four tendencies - Ahar (food), Nidra (sleep), Bhaya (fear), Maethun (procreation). Bhagavad Dharma has four principles - Vistara, Rasa, Seva and Tadvasthithi. Vistara means expansion of mind, Rasa means to merge ourselves with the Cosmic Rhythm, Seva means internal and external service and Tadvasthithi means being established in the supreme stance of Consciousness. Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji, being a spiritual master understood the need of the society and thus has contributed so much to social philosophy also.

Ananda Bhushan sang a inaugural Prabhat Samgiita song in Sanskrit language in his melodious voice. Prof. Anamika Girdhar, Chairperson Department of Philosophy, Kurukshetra University delivered the welcome address. While delivering welcome speech she pointed out that it was a rare opportunity to organise such a national seminar, where Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji's multifarious contributions to the welfare of humanity are discussed. She said seminar topics were divided into four divisions: 1. Spiritual philosophy of Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji, 2. Music and culture, 3. Socio Economic Philosophy and Neo-humanism, 4. Scientific approach to meditation and Microvita Science.

Prof. L K Gaur, Chairperson Department of Sanskrit, Kurukshetra University gave introduction. He said the best of all Indian philosophical contents including Vedic and Upanishadic thought was present in Shrii Anandamurtiji's philosophy. He further said that Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji's contribution in the field of music is unparalleled. The lyrical excellence and beautiful melodies touch the heart of everyone. Prabhat Samgiit is a new school of music. Shyam Bang, Secretary, R.U., New Delhi delivered the keynote address. Prof Goel of Economics Department spoke on PROUT. Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji's economics fundamentally guarantees the welfare of the common people by providing them with the purchasing power for the minimum necessities of life.

Dr. Ramnath Jha, Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies, JNU, New Delhi gave a lecture on Ananda Sutram and Microvita. He found the term Ananda or bliss explained 4000 years ago by Bhrgu Muni but here in these sutras, in many places the importance of Ananda is emphasized. However, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti has not just explained this word but has written an entire treatise explaining what is Ananda. Dr. Jha said that it is the first time in philosophy that this was done. Prof. R. K. Deswal, Department of Philosophy, Kurukshetra University, gave a talk on Yoga Psychology of Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji. He stated that we all are Ananda Margis because Ananda Marga means the path of bliss. Everyone wants to move towards the path of bliss. He stressed that according to Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji food has a profound impact on human behaviour. Specifically he discussed about glands and cakras in the new science of Bio-Psychology. He scientifically explained about the vrittis and cakras and glands.

Prof. Uttam Pati, Dean, School of Biotechnology, JNU, New Delhi, Department of Sanskrit and Dr. Sheelak Ram, Department of Philosophy, Kurukshetra University presented papers on Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji's Contribution to Philosophy, Language, Literature, Music, Yoga Psychology and Science.





While in 2nd Session Dr. Prof. S. M. Mishra, Department of Sanskrit, Kurukshetra University, gave a talk on Ananda Sutram and Neohumanism. Dr Satyamurti, Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies, JNU, New Delhi, presented a paper on Shrii Shrii Anandamurtijii's Contribution to, Neo-Humanism and Ananda Sutram and Social Philosophy. He explained the fifth chapter of Ananda Sutram. The beauty of Prout is that it is based on rational spirituality.

Dr. H.S. Sinha, Former Chairperson, Department of Philosophy, Kurukshetra University delivered the valedictory address.

PBI Agitates for Farmers' Rights



Darwa (Yavatmal, Maharashtra): The PBI activists of Yavatmal district took out a procession on 06.04.2016 and marched towards the office of Deputy Collector to hand over their memorandum of demands for forwarding it to the Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis. The Deputy Collector personally received the memorandum and assured the delegation of processionists of forwarding the same to the CM expeditiously.

The poor landless people of the district are deprived of their legal right to own five acres of land which they have been harvesting since several generations. But due to the inaction and corruption on the part of the government officials, these landless deserving tribals and sons of the soil are not allowed to farm the land which they had utilised for centuries.

The government had enacted law on 27 December 1978 accepting the land rights of the adivasis (native tribals), which was further affirmed in the year 1989 and 1990. The Social Justice department of the state government consequently started self-reliance scheme for the adivasis and dalits. In 2006, Forest Rights Act was also enacted. But due to bureaucratic red tape and rampant corruption, the genuine deserving landless are still awaiting the allotment of plots to them. This has resulted in their untold misery and deprivation of even basic rights. The present Central government has been moving towards removing the protections of this act which is leading to countless injustices.

The processionists have also demanded creation of separate Vidarbha state. They feel that they are being ill treated due to administration remaining insensitive to their demands. Once the governance is in their hands the stepmotherly treatment meted out to them will be stopped. The current Chief Minister is from Vidarbha but has done nothing to save his motherland. This is why it is essential that economic power (swaraj) goes to the people of Vidarbha

Krantitai Dhote addressed the gathering and she exhorted them to fight this injustice strongly and said she will lend her full support to them in order to achieve success. The rally was also addressed by the national convenor of the Party Acarya Santosananda Avadhuta, Vice Chairman of the party Dr. S.D. Dhotre and Madhukar Nistane, a firebrand Proutist leader.

PBI UP State Committee is Born



On 27 March 2016 Proutists from Saharanpur, Basti, Kanpur, Sant Kabir Nagar, Sultanpur, Lucknow etc. met in Lucknow. The agenda was to assess and discuss the possibilities of the propagation of PROUT and PBI in Uttar Pradesh, and thereby create and offer a healthy political alternative to the people of the state.

Presiding over the meeting, Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta said that PBI is already actively working in Bihar, Odisha, Maharastra and Delhi, and drawing popular support. He said that in the coming two years the party will become a force to reckon with in the politics of the country and give it a new direction. He said that the biggest crisis in the world today is the absence of a moralist leadership, which has endangered the existence of not only the living beings but also the non-living world.

Jainullabuddin, a Prout supporter from Saharanpur, said that today the country needs a political party which does not discriminate people on the basis of caste, religion, language etc. and works for the well-being of all. He said that he had been searching for such a party for a long time and that PBI fits the image of his ideal.

Senior Proutist Dwarka Prasad from Bithoor said that UP badly needs PBI, because only PBI can liberate the state from the petty politics of caste, religion, money and muscle. He said that people have lost all hopes of any change from any quarter. On this occasion public relations secretary Ravindra Singh gave a power point presentation on Amiri Rekha and explained how the ceiling on wealth can solve the problems of poverty, unemployment, economic depression, inflation and corruption. He said that Amiri Rekha i.e. the ceiling on wealth is the foundation of economic democracy.

Others participants including Ravi Prakash Pal, Swaminath Singh, Ram Ujagar Chaudhary, Rajkumar, Jivan Jyoti Kumar, Ravindra Kumar, Bhutan Ram, Dilip Anand, Ramkesh Chaudhary, Ramkhelavan, Janardan Singh, R.S. Bhagat Kori etc. also expressed their views. It was unanimously decided that PBI must be established in the state. The meeting ended with the formation of PBI's State Committee for UP with the following officials:

Dwarka Prasad	- Chairman
R.S. Bhagat Kori	- Vice-chairman
Janardan Singh	- Convener
Jivan Jyoti Kumar	- General Secretary
Rajkumar	- Publicity Secretary
Ram Ujagar Chaudhary	- Finance Secretary
Dilip Anand	- District Secretary, Kanpur
Swaminath Singh	- District Secretary, Sant Kabir Nagar
Ravi Prakash Pal	- District Secretary, Basti
Jainullabuddin	- District Secretary, Saharanpur
Shrinivas	- Office Secretary and Public Relations Secretary



DRIVE US FORWARD!

Je path dhariyá caliyá chilo prabhu.
Jata tapas more se pathe cálaó áj
Áloke udbháśita satye unmocita
Se path dhariyá cale jábo tyáji láj
Jata tápas more se pathe cálaó áj.

Thákuk shata upal thákuk jata kántá
Joyáre bahiyá jábo mánibo ná bhántá
Tomári rashmi páte tomári bháver shrote
Bhese jábo se je jeman parábe sáj.
Jata tápas more se pathe cálaó áj.

Tomár pathe prabhu náhiko kono bhaya
Karuná kaná dio ei shudhu anunaya
Kete jábe jata moha kete jábe samshay
Driřha pade jábo kariyá tomár káj
Jata tápas more se pathe cálaó áj.
Je path dhariyá caliyá chilo prabhu.
Jata tápas more se pathe cálaó áj

That path of austerities (tapas)
That You, my Lord followed
Drive me forward on it today.
Flooded with effulgence
Set free by Truth (Satya)
That path I shall follow
Casting away fear and shyness.
That path of austerities (tapas)
Drive me forward on it today.

Let there be hundreds of rocks
Let there be many, many thorns
I shall be swept away in the floodtide
Not paying heed to the ebb tide.
Upon Thy silken path.
In the flow of Your Bháva
I shall go on floating.
In that, I am becoming adorned.
That path of austerities (tapas)
Drive me forward on it today.

Upon Your path Lord there is not any fear
Just please give me a wee bit of grace
This is my only entreaty.
All the delusions and doubts
Shall be torn away.
With firm, determined feet
I shall go on doing Your work.
That path of austerities (tapas)
That You, my Lord followed
Drive me forward on it today.

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