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ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

1991-2010 TWO DECADES OF GLOBALISED DECAY

Mukul Sinha

We are about to complete the first decade of the 21st Century. If we add to this the last decade of the 20th century, we now have two decades of decay under the “glorious” capitalist globalization. After 20 years of globalization, people have started realizing the bankruptcy of the capitalist mode of production and the degeneracy of its socio-political system. The rot has gone to the roots. The citadel itself is crumbling and America finds itself entangled in the worst economic crisis. Will it ever come out of this mess or will be the end of the road? That will perhaps be the story of the next decade!

The beginning the last decade of the 20th Century started with the two most important events that have influenced the global politics. On January 16, 1991, American forces started the air attack against Iraq leaving 200,000 Iraqis dead.

The second event was the fall of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin, president of the Russian republic, lead a coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 to grab power that led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Thus started the present phase of globalization.. With all its aberrations and distortions, Soviet Union alone stood in



the path of the Western Capitalist mode of production and the “free market” having a different ideal if not a true socialist system. Globalization bulldozed all that under the hypocritical slogan of freedom and democracy. The resistance however came from the Islamic militants who on February 26, 1993, tried to destroy the World Trade Center, killing five people and trapping tens of thousands of office workers in the tower.

George W. Bush was sworn in as 43rd president of America on

Jan. 20, 2001. This was hardly a good omen for heralding the 21st century! The top item on Bush's domestic agenda was a \$1.6 trillion tax cut. By the time Americans began receiving their tax rebate checks in August, the country's budget surplus had indeed withered. On September 11, 2001 terrorist attack that destroyed the twin towers of the World Trade Centre at New York killing several thousand people. U.S. and British forces attacked the Taliban in Afghanistan on Oct. 7, 2001 which collapsed after two months of bombing. “War

against terrorism” thereafter became a convenient slogan to hit at all those who opposed the capitalist globalization and the total destruction of Iraq followed leading to the death of Saddam Hussein.

The last five years of George W Bush was ofcourse terrible. He presided over the collapse of American economy which exploded with the sub-prime loan disaster in 2006/07. Dozens of major Banks and financial Institutions went bankrupt and the American economy is kept alive by pumping tax payers' money into the corporate sector.

Alongwith the receding economy, the political and moral standards of the societies all across the globe have also crumbled. Three of the most heinous genocides have also been carried out in this period. The “ethnic cleansing” in Croatia left 25,000 dead till January 1992, when a UN supervised ceasefire took place. In 1994, over 800,000 innocent Tutsis are hacked to death by Hutu extremists in the Rwanda genocide. Closer at home, over a thousand innocent Muslims were butchered in Gujarat in 2002. Two countries, Afghanistan and Iraq have virtually been destroyed. Globalization has indeed globalised violence and degradation all across the globe! ■

OLD WINE IN YOUNG BOTTLE THE NEW PRESIDENT OF BJP WITH OLD HABITS

The first major decision that Nitin Gadkari took as the President of BJP on the last days of 2009 was to support Sibusoren as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand! A momentous decision for a man like Gadkari who just a few days back in his first press conference ostentatiously

declared that he did not touch the feet of any person whom he did not respect! Sibusoren must be a very respectable man for Gadkari and his party to be their unanimous choice as the Chief Minister despite his highly corrupt background! So what is the difference between the “old Rajnath” and

the “young Gadkari”? It is Old wine in young bottle? So far as the RSS control over BJP is concerned, Gadkari apparently is the nominee of RSS. Nothing can therefore be expected to change in the ideological level. At the political level, the first act of Gadkari in supporting the minority group of Soren having only 18 MLAs is clearly as opportunistic as his predecessors or else how could BJP with only 20 elected MLAs get into the ministry in a house which has 81 MLAs?

EDITORIAL

The first decade of the 21st century has very few happy moments to remember. In Gujarat we had started 2001 with the worst earthquake of the country followed by the most shameful genocide of 2002. Last few years is witnessing the unusual spectacle of a crumbling American economy having been earlier hit by the deadly airplane attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre.

WELCOME 2010

We of course have our struggle to celebrate. The last seven years have been the testing time for all of us in Jan Sangharsh Manch and New Socialist Movement. With heavy odds against us, we have firmly stood our ground to uphold the secular democracy and during this

time even register the New Socialist Movement as a political party. To advance the cause of the working people and guide the movement, we now have our newspaper, “Elaan”. So while we take lessons from the unhappy past, let us look forward to an eventful 2010. From all us at “Elaan” and New Socialist Movement, we wish our readers a very “Happy New Year”!

NEWS

LIVING IN HELL STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

Mukul Sinha



Those who labor to build cities are destined to be excluded from the cities they built. This has been the history of the slum dwellers all over the world. Consigned to the fringes of the city, they make their jhuggi-jhopdis and live in the filth and dirt of the “effluent zones” of the cities. The residents of the “affluent zones” hate the sight of these miserable “encroachers” but have to tolerate their existence as they are still useful for maintaining the city and as casuals and domestic workers. But as the city expands, the bulldozers push them out farther just as garbage is removed. The story of the mega-city Ahmedabad is no different and thousands of slum dwellers have lost their shanties in the last few years to the bull-dozers.

For over two decades, Jansangharsh Manch has mobilized such slum dwellers to

help them in their struggle for survival and scores of rallies and meetings have been held during this time to demand a proper housing policy for the marginalized sections. The struggle to save the 242 residence of Salatnagar has perhaps assumed

epic proportions since this cluster of slums despite being demolished once by the Corporation and burnt down in the 2002 riots, still survives.

On 19th December, a large meeting was held in Piplaj, the

“new Andaman” for the slum dwellers of Ahmedabad. Whenever a slum is demolished, as an “alternative” accommodation, the slum dwellers are given a small plot of land in Piplaj, which till recently was a desolate, remote area in the outskirts of Ahmedabad. Though two years have passed after the establishment of this new cluster that houses the residents of Mahakali, Banas and other slums which were demolished, there are still no civic amenities like water, streets and gutters. The meeting resolved to fight for the JNURM facilities and a better future.

Earlier, on 4th December, a similar meeting was held in the Motera area by the residents of Valjibhai-ni-kuan to voice the same demand for improving the civic amenities like gutter, streets, drinking water and lights.

ENCOUNTER WITH CBI

APEX COURT TRANSFERS SOHRABUDDIN CASE TO THE CBI

Mukul Sinha



IGP D.G.Vanzara who was the de-facto Police Chief of the Gujarat State due to his proximity with the Chief Minister Shri Narendra Modi could have never imagined that would also be facing an encounter with the CBI. First, as the Chief of the Crime Branch, Ahmedabad and later as the Chief of the Anti-Terrorist Squad, he built up the dreaded team of encounter specialists. He and his team carried out seven “successful” encounters killing around 15 “dreaded terrorists” between 2002 and 2006. In one such encounter Sohrabuddin Sheikh was shot and killed on 26th November, 2005. His wife Kausarbi was injected with Pentothal and apparently burnt to death in the ilol, the village of Vanzara. Her body was never found.

A letter from Rubabuddin, the brother of Sohrabuddin to the Chief Justice of India led to a preliminary enquiry by the CID and later to the filing of the writ petition before the Apex Court. The enquiry revealed that Sohrabuddin, Kausarbi and another person were kidnapped from a bus by the Gujarat Police

when these persons were traveling from Hyderabad to Sangli. The third person, who was later identified as Tulsi Prajapati was also killed in another encounter by the same team in December, 2006 near Ambaji.

After notice was issued by Supreme Court, the investigation was handed over to DIG Rajnish Rai who did the unbelievable; he arrested

D.G.Vanzara in April 2007 alongwith two other IPS officeres, namely Shri Dinesh M.N. from Rajasthan and Rajkumar Pandyan from Gujarat cadre. The arrests of the top Police officer close to the powers shook the foundations at Gandhinagar and Rajnish Rai was removed and the investigation was transferred to IGP Gita Johri. Ultimately, on 12th of January, 2010, the Apex Court passed its final Judgment

and Order, directing the investigation to be handed over to CBI.

In most of these “encounters” Policemen from more than one State are involved. In the Sohrabuddin case, the Rajasthan Police, Gujarat Police, Maharashtra Police and the Andhra Police are involved. Tulsi, who was an accused in another criminal case registered in Gujarat was reportedly brought to Ahmedabad under the guise of producing him before the Ahmedabad Court and while taking him back to Rajasthan where he was lodged in the Udaipur jail, he was apparently shot and killed. At that time Dinesh M.N. IPS was the SP of Udaipur (now under arrest for killing Sohrabuddin) and the two Policemen who accompanied Tulsi to Ahmedabad were working under him and specially assigned to travel with Tulsi! In such inter-state conspiracy, CBI alone can be efficacious. It will also help in finding out the political bosses who were pulling the strings from behind to create the bogey of “Islamic terrorism”.

ARTICLE

FROM FAITH TO STRUGGLE

STRUGGLE OF THE POOJARIS AND EMPLOYEES OF JAIN TEMPLES

Bharat Bhatt

In 1989 a union was formed by poojaris and other employees of the major Jain temples of India managed by the Sheth Kalyanji-Anandji religious trust. The major establishment is in the temple town of Palitana. This trust has branches in four states and is one of the richest religious trusts. Ironically however, the

workers were denied even minimum wages in the place of worship. Initially the union was affiliated to INTUC but felt betrayed. Thereafter the union joined GFTU and thus started the historical struggle.

In 1989 the poojaris and the employees went on strike in all the branches of trust. During the

strike even poojaris (priest) refused to do Puja (worship).It was a total strike for five days which shook the trust and the trustees were forced to pay minimum wages to all the workers. But the struggle continued and in last two decades, total of six settlements were signed and many contract workers were made permanent. The most important achievement is that they now get the same pay scales and dearness allowances as decided by the central pay

commission from time to time. The members of the union also participated in the struggle for democratic rights led by NSM and Jan Sangharsh Manch for housing rights and economic rights for other deprived sections of society. During the struggle in the last two decades, the employees have learnt that the divisive politics in the name of religion, region and caste are against the workers unity and must be opposed. United we stand and divided we fall.

SHRINKING DEMOCRACY A SEMINAR ORGANISED BY JAN SANGHARSH MANCH

SH Iyer

Contrary to the claims made by the protagonists of the new economic order under Globalisation, the democratic space has indeed shrunk. In a day long seminar on 'Shrinking Democracy' that was held at Vasudev Tripathi Hall, Shahpur, Ahmedabad on 20-12-2009 a large number of social activists, trade union leaders, industrial workers, and slum dwellers met to discuss the issue. Welcoming the participants, Dr. Mukul Sinha, Chairman of the New Socialist Movement introduced the subject and said that in the present era of globalization, the voice of common man is being throttled

and democratic space is shrinking in all the spheres, be it judiciary, legislature or executive.

Speaking on the occasion, the former Chief Minister Shri Suresh Mehta was very critical about functioning of Gujarat Government in conducting the legislative and other business. He lamented that whatever little space the MLAs had in the existing democracy was also vanishing. The assembly meets only once in six months for two days. One day is reserved for condolence and obituary. Second day is reserved for shoutings and walkouts! MLAs have no say in the governance now. MLA,



media, and Voters are all managed.

Speaking on the manner in which the democratic procedures to unravel corruption was being sabotaged, Shri Mehta spoke about scam in the SUJALAM-SUFALAM SCHEME. While scrutinizing the accounts of a particular department in the above scheme, the CAG had noticed certain discrepancies and sought explanation from the government, The government first initiated inquiry by an IAS Officer, which, prima-facie, found that there were irregularities. However, for carrying out further enquiry, the government appointed another Committee which also came to same conclusion. Till date neither the report of CAG nor the enquiry report has been tabled in the assembly! He also pointed out that in vibrant Gujarat within a short span of three years, the number of people below poverty line has from 78,000 reached two lacs.

Coming down heavily on demolition of hutments in big cities and urban areas, Shri Mahesh Bhatt said that though the right to shelter has been recognized as a fundamental right, it has still remained a dream for urban poor. The very object of enacting Urban Land Ceiling

Act was equitable distribution of the surplus land so as to provide residential accommodation to the urban poor. Now this piece of welfare legislation has been repealed to make way for shopping malls. Moreover, section 40-J of the Town Planning Act provides for mandatory reservation of 10% land for housing urban poor. However, the real question still remains. What has happened to the 10% land reserved for housing urban of the poor?

Shri Amrish Patel, the General Secretary of GFTU, spoke against creation of Special economic Zones and denial of the labor laws within SEZ. Dr. Mukul Sinha spoke about and exploitation of tribal by the corporate houses in connivance with the government who grab their land and other resources like minerals below their land. He said that the entire issue of "fighting" the Maoists was related to suppression of the tribal resistance. A common view emerging from the day long seminar was that the Judiciary had failed to uphold its historical task of being the watchdog of democratic values and it was left to the people to rise for protecting their democratic rights. ■

LEFT ALIGNMENT



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