**Understanding the Indian farmers struggle in a historical perspective (Part I)**

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Not very long ago the world population was flirting with the seven-billion-mark – a majority, as Sartre says, “had the Word”, but very few among them snugged at the top “had the use for it”. The situation has since not changed much. The creators of the world – the workers and peasants – creating it daily with their hands find a scarce space in their creation. Unwelcomed they live in the basement of society but for those who consider the world an object of manoeuvre judge them first and condemn them later to a life of scarcity and abject poverty, in Dante’s purgatory.

When Nietzsche looked to invent a justice that acquitted everyone but the one who judged (the others), he came closer to finding the truth, for justice cannot be above the economic structure of the society. Marx knew it. Nietzsche despite opposing him believed in it and the judges sitting in the highest courts have approved it.

From Eugene Leviné to Bhagat Singh whenever the non-conformists were put on trial, the rationale of Romans’ blindfolding Justitia proved logical. The goddess of justice cannot see but simply judges and the devil’s advocate, the protectors of the golden calf, the owners of the means of production win the day by tilting the balance of the scale in their favour. Money is the divine gospel, and the word of the lord supports the thesis by saying, “For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath”. By enriching themselves, the capitalists and their advocates rightly claim to be doing God’s work, if God works that way.

By restraining the government’s decision and forming a committee, the Indian Supreme Court has asked the peasants to negotiate the unnegotiable. The court watching the unending tug-of-war between the state and the farmers has probably come to recognize the logic behind the Hegelian dialectical master-slave relation. With authority on his side, the master enforces the above relation upon the slave and the latter out of fear or because of defeat consents to slavery but in the process achieves his self-consciousness. The master as victor does not realize the extent of his limits and dependency initially. However, he eventually realizes that his position in society presupposes the existence of the slave: without the slave, there can be no master.

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For the hegemony to prevail, the court – maintaining the necessity of the farmers’ existence as subject slaves – has decided to intervene. Hegel however does not stop here. For him, the slave upon finding the dependency of his master on him struggles to unfetter himself. The fight goes up to the death. To maintain the master-slave relation, both are dependent on each other while each is a threat to the existence of the other.

This phenomenon can be seen from a Gramscian perspective as well. The state having a monopoly of violence rules through consent and coercion. In the farmers’ case, the state in its majoritarian fascism declining the option of consent – non-existent to begin with – went straight to employ the coercive methods. Failing in its strategy, to mollify the farmers, it has advanced its other wing to offer a cosmetic redemption to the farmers. One can pronounce it a face-saving measure. Every face-saving measure may not be a retreat but a technical move of taking “one step backward to move two steps forward”, as Lenin put it, but in this case, it appears to be a real retreat by the state even if it looks like a strategic move. In this retreat where the judicial arm of the state has been supposedly called in for help, the unity of the disparate segments of the ruling class realizing themselves in the state has become evident to the people.

In this dialectical struggle, if the neoliberal state has to follow its dynamics, the farmers too have no option but to fight. Barring a struggle to break the fetters and cutting the inglorious Gordian’s knot there is no room for any negotiations between the powerful and the powerless. That makes Rousseau’s social contract a mere mockery. For Marcuse, the concept of deriving common interests between conflicting and competing individuals, especially when they are unequal is a mirage. Despite their social inequality if the claim of being equals in front of the law is accepted per se even then, between equals, Marx says, force decides, and force has many arms (executive, judicial, and administrative), and they are already in action. The monopoly of violence rests with those who control the law and order, so much for equality.

Marcuse points out that “the entire necessity and the entire horror of legitimate force are condensed, and sanctioned” in the phrase law and order. The same force masquerading itself as the arbitrator has come to the fore as a sympathizer of the aggrieved. However, the peasants with a developed class-consciousness, in an act of great refusal have refused to recognize it as an adjudicator. Their interviews on social media depict their maturity. No solution without the final solution to dispense with market reforms is their unequivocal stance.

During the Algerian revolution, Fanon discovered the revolutionary spark among the peasants. In his masterpiece The Wretched of the Earth, he reveals that “it is clear in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain”. Fanon does not stop here and discloses another quality of the peasants: “the starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays”. This is important to note: separating the revolutionary upsurge from violence is difficult if not an impossible task. Both Marx and Rosa Luxemburg have not ruled out the possibility of a bloodless revolution. Unlike the Russian revolution, Rosa eyed or at least hoped for a peaceful revolution backed by the German people but revolution it had to be. Marx found revolution necessary “not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to find society anew” (Marx, from The German Ideology). Every revolution has its Jacobins and its lady guillotine. The objective conditions in India are ripe. They are screaming for their Jacobins. [PART1 Finishes]

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