

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON

“MARXISM & CONTEMPORARY SOUTH ASIA: *RELEVANCE & ISSUES*”

Organized by:

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, South Asian University

&

Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung

The aggressive expansion of capital and the ‘creative-destruction’ nature of capitalism had brought the whole social world within its ambit of influence. These exteriorities are not a matter of chance to capital but a matter of choice. This choice could only be deciphered or tackled by instruments such as historicity, critical thought or revolutionary praxis. Capitalism is aggressively pursuing its agenda of restructuring the consciousness of the modern society as individualism asserts, discipline, profit maximising nature and utilitarian thought, inequality and indifference become normative forces. It has connected the whole world through globalisation and free trade only by further disconnecting the labourer from means of production and thus successfully alienating the produced commodity from the producer him/herself. Capitalism continues to change the forces of production and thereby the social formation leading to drastic changes in the way the world appears to us. This has happened globally.

With the onset of neo-liberalism, the hegemony of capital over labour can be starkly felt in South Asia. Capitalism has indeed revolutionised the forces of production affecting the way social relations are organized. It has changed the idea of work & belonging to society with increasing threats to public institutions and security-welfare schemes. The unleashing of new productive forces have rendered older ways of organising resistances ineffectual and have necessitated need to reimagine struggles. Public spending cuts and austerity have occupied the centre stage in discussions, public debates and policy decisions. Markets have shown a profound impact on the design and working of Higher education institutions. Censorship can be observed from the domain of films, books and school curriculum to institutions of learning. Religion and nationalism have found an appropriate fusion with capitalism and are now marketed more than ever. Use of media and the transformation of representative democracy into a spectacle with massive corporate capital inflows have started redefining the parliamentary politics as well. Alongside these, the neo conservative tendencies are on rise as the perfect bed partners of the neo-liberal ethos.

Crossing borders have been made conducive to capital and fiercely difficult to labour. Capital and financial flows are eased and legitimized by states under the garb of free trade and regional associations. While adding to unhindered accumulation process it has simultaneously affected the organizational dimension of labour. The increased segmentation and division of labour within and across borders has erected a huge challenge to the unification of workers furthering the exploitation. The fragmentation of the labour force has been furthered by the identitarianism (of 'recognition' variety) that has acquired significance and posed itself as a competitive 'other' to the category of class. The working class consciousness again needs to be reconceptualised as the forums and frontlines of struggles need redefinition and relocation. The struggle and contradicting forces ought to proliferate with the advancement of capitalism. The challenge that haunts us is how do we go about it?

The revolutionary praxis in the current contexts has diminishing contributions from and on South Asia amidst the expansion of capital. An in-depth analysis of the root causes of injustices in society is mandatory, simultaneously following ways and forms of strategizing and organizing the social forces that lead us gradually to achieving social justice and egalitarianism. In the current circumstances, how do we conceptualize resistance and solidarity in the ever changing forms of capital, workspaces and the idea of work itself? How are the different socio-cultural categories in South Asia such as caste, gender, tribes (adivasis) etc. are to be seen/placed vis-à-vis class? How do we unite the struggles and movements across, with the emergence of nuanced supply chain managements? How does the political economy of different domains look like if the labour-capital contradictions are to be resolved? These are only some of the many questions that we confront today.

This conference acts as a platform to facilitate an exchange of ideas and reflections on critical questions haunting Marxism, social justice and working class politics. Paper submissions are invited which can analyse, critique the present and contribute to discussions on conceptualising resistance and the alternative ways of organizing social forces. If capitalism sows its own seeds of destruction or creates cracks in the wall of society, the idea of this two day brainstorming sessions is to empirically identify these seeds of destruction and conceptualize how to connect the various cracks leading to a revolutionizing force/praxis. The papers may deal with the theoretical debates within Marxism or intervene in those debates through empirical researches as well.

The conference will discuss the following issues (which are not exhaustive):

- Working class politics under Neoliberal Capitalism
- Global Economic Crisis and Austerity and its impact on South Asia
- Crisis of Bourgeois Democracy and possibilities of reimagining an alternative
- The workings of ruling class Hegemony: Discourses, knowledges and Politics of Consensus
- Political Economy of Identity Politics in contemporary South Asia

- Old Resistances, New Resistances: The Significance of the Shifts
- Primitive accumulation and development of contemporary capitalism
- Agrarian question and contemporary development discourse
- Labour-Capital dialectic at/in the New sites/ways: Organising the New Labour

The potential paper presenters will have to submit an abstract of approximately 500 words by 20th of July 2016. The final papers will have to be submitted by 20th October 2016. The conference will be held on 11th and 12th of November 2016 at New Delhi. There is limited amount of financial support only for those coming from outside Delhi and NCR. Abstracts may be submitted at conf2016.southasia@gmail.com. For any further queries please contact Atul Chandra, Kalyan Kumar and Prabudh Singh or at the above email address.

Format of the final paper:

- Abstract: 500 words; font should be Calibri point 11; 1.5 line spacing
- Papers: no more than 8,500 words including footnotes and references; font should be Calibri point 11; 1.5 line spacing.
- Abstracts and papers must be submitted as MS Word documents via email to conf2016.southasia@gmail.com.

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