

The Ides of March - The Day Before or The Day After

Then fall Caesar or did he ?

Edited by Viren Lobo

An Especioza Trust Production

(Is Marxism dead ? On the 139th death anniversary of Karl Marx. Also happens to be my mother Nora's 22nd death anniversary - 14th March 2022)



Then fall Caesar

Forward¹

MISSION STATEMENT

ICAN - GENDER GROUP



ICAN Vision:

INCLUSIVE, JUST AND HUMANE SOCIETY

ICAN Core Values:

- Respect,
- Dignity,
- Liberty,
- Equality,
- Fraternity

Goal of Gender Group:

Gender equality and justice in society.

Mission:

To promote gender equality through education, training, advocacy, capacitating, dissemination, networking, promoting people's initiatives for all marginalized sections of society, particularly women, Dalits, religious and sexual minorities on the basis of the following propositions..

1. Women's status is an age-old serious social issue of our patriarchal society. Male control over power in a democratic set-up like ours has further weakened women's capacity to contribute towards the development of the society.
2. The ICAN Gender group will, therefore, support every struggle to achieve gender equality and mobilize forces that champion the cause of women.
3. Focusing on this, the ICAN Gender group will work with all and build up a larger coalition on democratic lines as enunciated in ICAN's Vision Document.
4. It is also to be noted that women are victims of discrimination even within the communities that suffer discrimination at the hands of higher castes. This area requires special attention. ICAN Gender group will therefore, approach all groups that make efforts to protect the rights of these sections of the society and appeal to them to initiate reforms within respective communities.

¹ ICAN Gender Core group : Dr Leena, Harini, Kanchan, Mausami, Omprakash

Knowing the social, political, and economic marginalization of women we ICAN gender group, want to work on the transformation process and improve the living conditions of women and initiate their role in transforming social structures, activities at the micro-level, advocacy measures aimed at influencing policy change at the macro level.

In this context we would like to point out that rights of labour, marginalised and minority communities are under threat due to the larger issues related to policy, economic crisis and acquisition of natural resources by Corporate. Provisions in the constitution and various laws relating to equity notwithstanding, these provisions are mostly ignored or bypassed with merely lip service being paid to representational provisions if at all.

Despite progressive laws, there are no real safeguards against gender discrimination in the workplace. Provisions of gender equality at the workplace are primarily those related to equality of opportunity for economic and health provisions and reservations in the political sphere. While these do help raise the consciousness of women, experience at the workplace and in the political sphere indicates that it is patriarchal outlooks that decide the criteria for equal opportunity.

Women are forced to play out traditional roles as homemakers, bearers of children, and other restrictions stemming from patriarchal mindsets. Only a handful of women are in a position to seriously raise issues related to gender equality. Due to being in a minority, they are discriminated against.

Acknowledgment of women's issues is essentially reduced to the creation of a separate women's unit/ Mahila Mandal for the protection of women and women's rights. Keeping this in mind, provisions related to equal pay for equal work, equal opportunities for health care, a creche for children, and reservation for women in the political sphere while being welcome moves, will fail to bring about the equality they supposedly address; unless the fundamental issues related to women's control over their own decision making can be sorted out.

Dalit/ Tribal and other women of marginalised castes, minorities and classes and those who mostly belong to the labour class at that are therefore faced with a dual or triple attack on their dignity. ICAN therefore acknowledges the special attention that needs to be paid to such communities.

Due to the special issues related to international borders, there must be the focus on women's issues in all the following states – Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim, Paschim Bangal, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu-Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Coastal States.

Our Resolve

1. National policies for women framed in 2001 and 2016 have remained only on paper as pious statements never to be seriously implemented. We will endeavour to raise the issue with the states to formulate their respective policies for women. We do note that The Tamilnadu government has formulated its policy for women in December 2021.
2. India has not ratified 4 important ILO Conventions:
 - a. The ILO convention **156 (C156) - Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981** (Entry into force: 11 August 1983);
 - b. The ILO convention No.183 (C183) - **Maternity Protection Convention, 2000** (Entry into force: 07 Feb 2002);
 - c. **The ILO convention No. 189 (C189) - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011;** and
 - d. The ILO convention No. 190 (C190) **Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019**

In Collaboration with other organizations and individuals we will ask the government to ratify these conventions.

3. We will raise voice against the rising trend of crimes against women –like, domestic violence, rapes and sexual abuse of young girls and mobilise popular support for eliminating gender bias in homes, schools and public places.
4. A child's life is closely linked to the life of her mother. Women, therefore, better reproductive health, nutrition, control over child birth. Women and children should get better healthcare which may improve their nutritional status.
5. We will regularly monitor developments with regard to women in the country and the world, and publish our reports and studies.

Strategy:

- Advocacy for women's rights, and dissemination of information. Special attention to be paid to women of marginalised, minority communities and castes and those belonging to the labour class as well due to the precarious nature of employment and related cultural backlash that tends to dehumanise them divorced from the healthy cultural underpinnings that created this division of labour and need to revisit these cultural underpinnings in the modern context to underscore relevant aspects and discard dehumanising ones.
- To establish a linkage between local level to state and national level.
- Collective action for the common benefits and show the way has been achieved through this group.
- Promoting women's active participation in politics.

- Develop and maintain networking and collaboration with CBO' Civil societies, Academic and governmental institutions.
- Promoting gender equality and eliminating violence against women.
- To ensure women's participation in the social, political, and economic process
- Campaign for gender-just policies and measures to eliminate gender-based violence.
- Develop leadership of women and men who are aware and committed to building a gender-just and socially equitable society.

Action plan:

- Capacity building about gender sensitization, legal rights, life skills, health, and education.
- Assuring the accountability and responsibility of government and line department in precisely implementing laws for women and child.
- Protest against any kind of violence against women and make pressure to get justice.
- Organizing awareness programs with men and stakeholders to change their perspectives promote gender equality in our community.
- Help single women, widows, women from dalit and religious minorities, sexually abused and victims of acid attacks secure equal rights with regard to healthcare, education, and social security.
- To ensure their equal rights on ancestral property and land.
- Support, participate and launch woman-centric movements, programmes and activities at the Local and National level.
- Secure cooperation of all ICAN groups in view of the fact that all groups have to deal with women's issues in their respective field

Healthy, Happy and confident woman for a healthy, happy and confident nation

Background

This edition of *Espejo* makes a qualitative shift by placing the question of women's empowerment upfront. Fourteenth of March 2007 was the day, the left front Government in Bengal buried Marxism with State sponsored violence unleashed on Nandigram reneging on the very issue that brought them to power in the first place. Land to the tiller was replaced by Capitalist concerns first, employment and farmer's later. That the people of West Bengal gave a fitting reply to these Philistines is another story altogether. Marked as it was a day of the contradiction between death and life it serves as nodal point between the family within and the world without.. Communism being Humanism minus private property the absence of something sharpening presence is a valuable thought to keep in mind when we try to think of world minus patriarchy and matriarchy. *Mother Earth, our sister is crying out to us for help. Stop this rape and abuse of nature.* Words to this effect extracted from the Pope's encyclical *Laudato si* brought out in preparation for the Paris Convention on Climate Change in 2015.

Women and creation counterpoised to rape, violence and exploitation Rape as means of subjugating an independent people, has been a common refrain in the attempt to suppress many struggles across the country. Salva Judum, the pogrom in Gujarat, army atrocities in the North East being some of the sharper incidents highlighted. There have been other hues as well. Nirbhayya, women trafficking, women IT techies raped by Cab drivers at night brought home very sharply that even after more than 70 years of Independence and Universal franchise, women were not at all secure. On a separate plane, the Degrowth platform seems to reflect the contradiction between production, productivity on one side and overall well being on the other. Production for profit and production to improve the quality of life and living are not the same thing. The latter very much factors in sustainability issues as well. Real growth is not about an increase in the GDP, rather it is growth minus the wastage in transportation of goods from A to B and then similar goods from B to A implying simply the usage of diesel or petrol for the same. Improved health due to healthy living also means a reduction in hospital care. Is there a scenario where reduction in costs does not imply the reduction of the use of labour ? Rather it's increase. Are heavy investments in automated machinery really necessary? Just some of the many questions we ask policy makers in a scenario when burgeoning non performing assets is not a result of protest but wrong policies in place that are attempting to enhance production at the cost of nature and human well being.

At the time of marriage, my mother gave up a higher paying job than my father on the commitment towards the development and welfare of her children. Was this succumbing to patriarchal pressure related to the division of labour or a recognition that quality of life could not be had from money alone ? Certainly the support extended by my mother to all ventures taken up by my father was not one of blind allegiance to her husband but very much related to her own knowledge and talent. That my aunt Marie used to spend quality time with us so that my mother could have **me time** and time with her husband has been another factor shaping my consciousness as also the fact that my mother's elder sister, my aunt Iris who despite being an excellent cook was forced by circumstances to be the major earning member of her family. My mother not being a very good, allowed free reign of her kitchen to all who

ventured there. A side effect that there were very few 'guests' in our house, all considered it to be their home (a fact I was later to learn was not so common as my mother made it out to be), yet as I told my mother, it was her cooking that I savour the most. Contradictions, challenging the status quo, imprinting a different version of family form the monogamous family or the extended undivided one as well.

As I sit writing this, I recall my mother Nora's words, you will remember me, after I am dead and gone. Very true for my father Francis who suddenly became a ship without an anchor and later as I engaged more seriously with women's emancipation issues, a lesson for me as well. Your mother never taught you anything ? was a cry I often heard, but as I tried to seriously respond to this, I realise and even now continue to realise just how much my mother shaped my life and my consciousness.

It was in Marxism in general and in Origin of Family Private Property and the State in particular that I got a glimmer of the many unanswered questions my mother's life struggle left in my mind (as I am sure that of any woman who dedicated her life to serving her family). Was it just a coincidence that my mother died on Marx's 117th death anniversary ? I do not think so. However as we know determinism and predeterminism are two entirely different things. Recent developments in Brain Computer Interface do provide some hint as to the reason why but as we know what exactly is the relation between cause and effect and what we interpret as cause and effect might not be the same. I will leave this point here. Human interaction is law governed even as human thought and actions are independent, so also is the process of change law governed. What attracted me to Marxism, is the subtle difference between a concept of law governed thought and the concept that one's destiny determines one's action. The independent and particular space for the individual is very much in play. It is this space that was one of the major guiding factors in the creation and subsequent development of Akhil Bharatiya Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti. More on that later.

Dedication

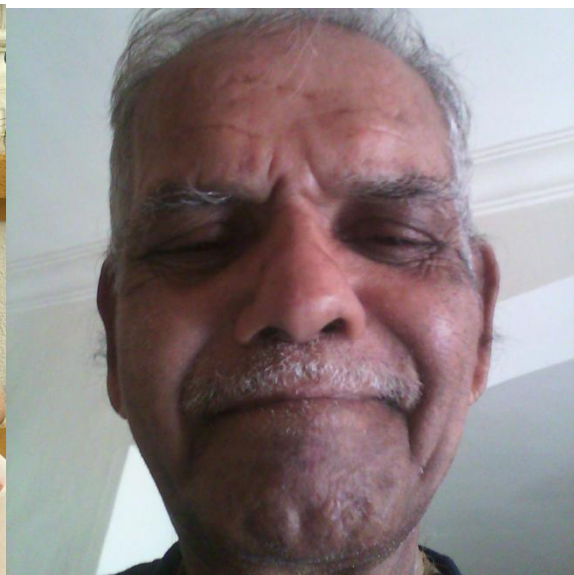
This web link for Aisha was provided to me after 10th December

<https://memories.net/timeline/aisha-desequeira-92397>

It's been over a year since my mother Nora's elder sister Iris and her youngest brother Sydney died. Their memories still remain fresh as ever. The two stories as told by my brother Roy below, reveal contrasting lives that helped shape the diversity of thought and experiences that influenced me. Before we go to those stories a more recent development. My mother's younger sister and the last of the nine siblings alive, passed away on 4th February this year. There is also a flashback to five years earlier to the day my Uncle Henry died and Roy's eulogy on that occasion too.



A Iris



1U Sydney



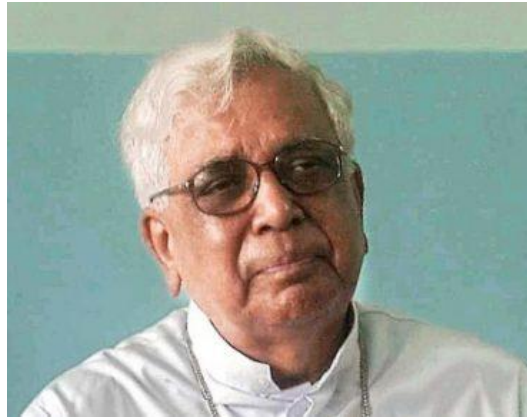


Aunty Sybil goes to meet her brothers and sisters in heaven

Passing away peacefully Aunty Sybil
Smiled at her brothers and sisters waiting to greet her
Just a year has passed since the Lord took A Iris and U Sydney
Today was A Betty's death anniversary too
So in good company she shall be
The end came pretty sudden
Even though she was expecting it for long
Her smile will be missed
Her prayers will take a different turn
As the candle for her we burn
The little things mattered to her
Sweet tooth
Chinese
And household utilities
Frugal, yet saving up for her favourites
How little could please her
And the struggle with specific stories about each one
Her face used to light up
As the little tid bits she remembered
With the railway station nearby
A stone's throw from passers by
An age has passed
Yet today will not be the last
As D'Souza's in heaven
Now stand fast.

Beautiful memories of Aunty Sybil compiled by Sheena

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-CCf8Xbq9c>



Eulogy to my Beloved Uncle Henry D'Souza

As I read the messages from my cousins about our beloved Uncle Henry, I not only feel his loss, but the loss of my parents as well. His sister Nora, my mother and also my father Francis who passed away 6 months to the day. The reason I miss my parents is because I cannot do justice to the man my Uncle Henry was. I forgot to ask my Dad to write something about Uncle Henry before he passed away. But I will remember Uncle Henry for calling me and condoling with me on the news of my Father's death. A memory that I will always cherish and the selfless good deeds he has done, not only for his immediate family but the people in his Parish, his archdiocese, and around the world.

Uncle Henry was a pious and proud man and admired the various successes of his nephews and nieces. He took delight in boasting about them whenever he got the chance. Every time Uncle Henry came over to our house, it was an elaborate affair. There was house cleaning, new sheets on the bed, a special room was made for him and of course "Barrah Kahnna". It was one the few times my mother showed off her culinary skills. You could be guaranteed there would be potato-chops that day. Of course he always preferred my other aunts cooking, Aunty Iris, Aunty Betty and Aunty Noreen. But somehow the day when he came to our home was always special for us.

When I got a scholarship for higher studies to go to the United States almost thirty years ago, there was a limit on the amount of foreign exchange that my parents could give me to send me on my journey and launch my career. Landing in Buffalo New York, with \$750 in my pocket and making ends meet with first month's rent last month's rent and security deposit, surviving on what's left was going to be a challenge. Without asking, Uncle Henry sent me \$500 via my Uncle Joe, his brother in Canada. This was truly a God send and tided me till my first paycheck arrived. I will always remember him with a special place in my heart for that.

I also want to give a special thanks to my two Cousins Debbie and Caroline, who setup Uncle Henry's Skype account. Now talking to Uncle was just a click away, and most of all it was free. I now got to see him and talk to him. Occasionally he mistook me for my Dad, but will forgive him for that.

My niece Genevieve frequently texted him on WhatsApp and sends him the daily quote for the day which ends with “Good Morning”. His last text back to her before his passing was “Gd Mrng”.

As I close my brief eulogy to my dear Uncle, I am happy he is now in his heavenly abode enjoying with my Mother Nora and his brothers Joe, Ossie, Sunnu, and Mervyn. I specially want to extend my condolences to Aunty Iris, Aunty Sybil and Uncle Sydney and pray that you Uncle Henry will watch over them.

Your Loving Nephew,

Roy Lobo

In Loving Memory of my beloved Aunt, Iris Lobo (Feb 6, 2021)

By

Roy Lobo



Aunty Iris was the eldest daughter of George and Aurelia D'souza

She was every parent's dream of a perfect child that you can hope to have

She was intelligent, fair, beautiful, generous, and Kind

And when the time came, took good care of her mother, when she lost her eyesight and became Blind

Aunty Iris married the love of her life, the charming John Lobo

To match her Bol blood, what else can I say, or in Hindi, "fir kya Bolo"

Now John was quite the catch he was tall and handsome and had the Spark

And between them they had three children, Marina, Alison and Mark



Most of her life she lived in Calcutta in a spacious two-bedroom two bath Flat

With a great room, kitchen and balcony, on 23 Royd Street

if you know where that's At

It is located in the heart of the city, and had open doors, so everyone could gather and Meet

Iris and John loved to throw parties, and there was always music and Laughter
While she entertained the priests and religious, who, for a great meal and alcohol, were also After
But there was one rule, visit after 7 pm when all was prim and Proper
Or else you ran the risk of missing out on a great Supper
But she did have a good sense of humor when things went Wrong
And did remember things for Long
For when her godson Luke my brother, when he was Two
Mistook her beautiful mosaic tile balcony floor for the loo, and did his Poo
She could not get over it and would often repeat this comment "But, why You threw my Jobbie Out"
And would burst out into splits of laughter, as she often relived his Shout.

On a more serious Note
And I am not just saying this to Gloat
Aunty Iris was an excellent cook, and her food was oh so Delicious
Of all the dishes she made, meat loaf, potato chops, vindaloo and Rest
for my sister Gemma's pallet her crab curry was the Best

Besides the house chores she had a full-time job as an executive at Nestles
And family orders for dairy products at heavily discounted rates made the
Specials
Do not know how she did it with a full-time job, but somehow, she managed
to make time for Others
And her house was always open and everyone was invited, especially all the
sisters and Brothers

When my dad got the notice of transfer from Bombay to Calcutta
For the family, we thought it was going to be a real Disaster



But Aunty Iris stepped in, and took in my elder brother Viren and I, to stay with them for a few Weeks

While the rest of the family could arrange the move, and allowed my parents good night Sleeps

Growing up her children had all the toys, monopoly, carroms, table tennis and Cars

So, spending time in Aunty Iris's house always took Hours

There were always story books and comics to Read

From hardy boys, Asterix, Enid Blyton to Nancy Drew, that you never ever wanted to Leave

But if leave you must, transportation those days was the most primitive you ever Saw

And often times we returned home with the sound of a tinkling bell, in a pulling Rickshaw



Aunty Iris had a big heart, and brought grandpa into her house when he was diagnosed with Cancer

And took good care of him till the best medicine, had no Answer

And when my mother was in hospital for a procedure, for us, you know it was not a good Day

But she took over duties and bought a beautiful green pant suit for my sister Gemma for her Birthday



I remember when Aunty Iris, Uncle John and Family came to visit us Poona

For it was the first time we got the taste of Champaign and Caviar

Alison and her daughter Gabby was there, who at the time was just Five

Could not stop talking, for she had the gift of the Gab to keep us Alive

Now Aunty Iris had a special relation with my mother Nora

Who would sing her praises, and just adored Her

So, after her children graduated and the house became but an empty Nest



She moved to Pune to be close to her sister Nora for companionship and much needed Rest

As my sister (Elsa) in Pune the longest did Stay

Had the privilege to enjoy Aunty Iris in a great Way

And on the birth of her daughter Rhea, Aunty Iris did Prepare

The finest roast chicken curated with Care

Unfortunately, my mother died too soon, and Aunty Iris moved into her son's flat in Bombay

To provide the necessary treatment for her loving husband John, till God took him Away

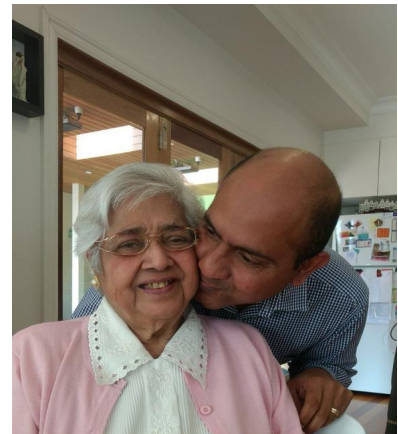


It was obvious that family was important to her, especially her three Children

And she spent a fair deal of time traveling the world to visit them and her Grandchildren

She when to France to visit her eldest daughter Marina, husband Jean Charles and their son Mathieu

And spent time with her second daughter Alison, husband Jean Pierre Chevalier



And their three children Gabriel, Eric and Andrea

To Australia she went, to be with Mark and his wife Anahita

And loved, and could not stop dotting on their two boys, Ryan and Joshua

Now that she is no more, those childhood memories I will always Cherish

And with pictures and photos and writings will ensure they do not Perish



In Loving Memory of my Godfather Uncle, Sydney (Feb 13, 2021)

By

Roy Lobo

Uncle Sydney was the youngest in the family of Nine Children
Had to make do with hand me downs and with no time to whine
Growing up they lived on 34D Rani Rashmoni Road
That was the D'souza family Abode
But how do you survive when the elder children are considered Smarter
You do it by becoming a great self-Starter

While most in the family lived in the heart of Calcutta city Center
Uncle Sydney lived apart near the Calcutta's Dum-Dum airport without any
Mentor

He found his life's love in my Aunt Maya
But being Mangalorean and not Goan that was a little Dire
But Uncle Sydney was no quitter and Soldiered Through
And between them they had three beautiful children instead of just Two

Being my Godfather he would always give me money for my Birthday
And you know as a kid, that went a long Way
And when I moved away, on my birthday he would Call
And he did this for many years as far as I Recall

When we left Calcutta my Mother gave him our gas Cylinder



Safe in the arms of Jesus.
With profound grief, we
inform you that Mr.
Sydney John D'Souza
aged 84 years husband of
Maya D'Souza and
younger brother of Lt
Archbishop Henry
D'Souza passed away on
13.2.2021. Leaving
behind his 2 sons, his
daughter and grand
children. Holy Mass for
the repose of the soul on
15.2.21 at 11 am at
Sacred Heart Church
Dharamtala followed by
burial at Entally
Cemetery. May God
grant him eternal rest

Which in those days difficult to get, but he did Remember

An in every single letter he wrote to my mom till her death, he thanked her for it, as she did Note

And she in turn, preserved every letter he Wrote

Now Uncle Sydney was Proud to be Archbishop Henry Dsouza's Brother

And adored him like no Other

Being religious he went daily for the 6 AM Morning Mass to St. Anthony's Church, to Pray

And every day said the Rosary when at home he did Stay

Being a family man for his wife and children he did Provide

By taking on the daily struggles in his Stride

He did it with little help from brothers and sisters and mostly on his Own

By working those strong fingers almost to the Bone

But those years of service did take its Toll

And he suffered from heart disease and other ailments when he got Old



Fortunately, he got a lot of support from his wife and children Three

That lessened the pain to a great Degree

In addition, Patty Carmel's daughter always considered Uncle Sydney as her Dad

To her, he was daddy and not just Granddad.



Uncle Sydney was also possessive about Her

and told the world that she is his daughter and not Granddaughter.

Now Patty Uncle Sydney's little Girl I must Applaud

Fulfilled Uncle Sydney's and Aunt Maya's dream to go Abroad

She made arrangements for them to go to Oman Twice

And not once did she ever count the Price

Patty came down twice before he died to be with her “Dad”

And the talk of staying away because of Covid restrictions would not be Had.

She spent her Christmas with Aunty Maya and Uncle Sydney to Care

And was also down in the last week, when son Nigel who normally on the Ship, was There.



His daughter Carmel and granddaughter Patty were they on his 84th birthday to Celebrate

And for all present the great food cooked by his wife Maya they all ate.

Nigel who deeply loved his dad and would constantly Call

And his Dad's condition an WhatsApp would message us All

When Carmel with her husband Robert back to Ireland had Left

His will to live was put to the Test

The call from above, his brother-in-law John and sister Iris's voice he could Hear

By their call, he knew the end was very Near



Friday morning the day Carmel was leaving

he began calling Aunty Iris

Without even knowing that she had Died

And the next morning Carmel got the news he was gone from her Mom by his Side



On his passing his eldest son Michael took emergency leave
to give his mother moral Support

And from Ahmedabad to Kolkata he did Transport

But his daughter Patty remains badly Shattered

For she missed him badly, because for her he really Mattered



A Sad Day during the Pandemic in the lives of the D'Souza family to be Remembered

To God his life had Surrendered

So with Sadness in Our Hearts we pray that he is now in heaven with his brothers and sisters to Join

While we take solace and comfort that his Soul Rests in Peace and with the D'Souza clan does Rejoin

Part I

The D'Souza Siblings and more



Wedding of Nora and Francis - D'souza side only partial

Remembering Aunty Enid

Though days long gone by might thoughts are nigh
Of the basketball field where Mum and Aunty Enid
Their skill demonstrated
The house in Jhowtala road used to be overflowing
With Pop and Nana the guests entertaining

Cousins Bridget, Marilyn, Kathleen, Annette and William
All had their special flavour to regale
As we the younger ones
Brought up the tail

Their departure to Canada
Another house did set up
And home to all
Who found their way along with pup

Though name I now do not remember
It certainly was a family member
As Aunty Enid's laughter pealed
And all sorrows healed

The sternness in her voice
Was part of the deal
If rules were not followed
Heel now Heel !

My last memories were of Canada
Where all I met
Minus the sorpotel and sanna

Bridget once to the magazine responded
As on biofuels I propounded
Ready with editing too
My resolve to do better it did renew

So Aunty Enid
Now to you I pray
And Mum, Dad , Uncle Joe and the rest prepare for your stay
Your smile will live on I say
Say Cheese if I may

Mum on her 21st Death Anniversary

To Nora to whom family mattered
It's been 21 years since you've been gone
But remembered today afresh
As your beloved sister and brother join you
A family get together in your memory
On zoom it had to be
A new form of life and living
It's called virtual reality
As technology progresses
Distance will be measured by the mind as physical gets transgressed
Across the continents and the seven seas
As we remember some recipies
A touch of home
As across the globe the signal roams.

Virginia on her birthday

Virginia's birthday today and my mother's too.
Virginia not on the group but remembered as well
As family reunions
Our numbers swell
An ocassion to remember U Osie and A Betty as well
The lifeline in Mumbai
For all who passed by
The trains in Mahim
The sea in Bandra
Kolkatta and Pune too
And now Australia
A grandmother who doted on her two grandsons
And U Osie's booming voice
Different flavours of family
And all are nice

Marina on her birthday

Marina the queen bee and the honey pot
Royd Street abuzz
Marina's birthday today but many moons earlier
Party in the evening
And games galore
With forfeits that can make you blush
On one such Tim got help from Allison
Getting away creditably
Others not so fortunate
And to the sound of laughter
Egged on to complete
Marina the star
And the two sisters on the piano
Did raise the bar
For merriment we did not have to go very far
The sparkle we can still sometimes see
Though family responsibilities
Hit this queen bee
JC got the honey
While others sucked their thumbs
His junior also a JC but with a P
Reminds of P language
And the language on tongues
As French became the in thing
In the centre of town
All I could do was to act the clown
So to Marina on her birthday a toast we raise
Tough times ahead
But smile on her face
As always

On the death of U Sydney

U Sydney and the legacy of 34D Rani Rashmoni Road
The last of the nine brothers and sisters U Sydney was different from the rest
Jessops was his show
And a trip to Dumdum always on the cards
A Maya the teacher with a stern look stays in my memory
The trip down memory lane when I visited them both in Kolkata
Long talks with U Sydney
Carmel and Rob in on some
And the bouncy Patty too
Micheal the self made man
A chip off the old block
With many a story to tell
Nigel met only once
The sailor man with his own tale
Knew both my brothers though.
So bro a silent tear for you as well
Wishing A Maya all strength this loss to bear
Happy memories of a life well lived
U Sydney do send your letters from heaven
United with your brothers and sisters at last
The days of suffering is over
But for those who in this world remain
We join in their sorrow and pain
RIP U Sydney
Your light will shine on
Vanessa holds it bright
And the others too.
The tears we shed will not be few

The Star of David and my Mum

My Mom and the Star of David
A very poignant scene
Mom how long since it has been
A life filled with sacrifice
To ensure we were free from vice
Remember the campaign for women's rights in the church you took
Your steps were never from the book
Unexpected as they turned out
They brought variety to every day
And a change in the way we made out play
One Second was all it took
For you to recognise if I was okay
So today on the 20th year of your death
We drink to your good health
Ours I mean
As the corona bursts a spleen
With you life we have seen

To Aunty Iris

Aunty Iris in the eye of a storm
34D Rani Rashmoni Road
Aunty Iris was the apple of her father's eye
And having acquired her mother's skills at cooking
The transition of the family to 23 Royd Street was pretty smooth
A house full with laughter dance and song
One wished we could stay for long
Later Pune with her sister my mother
And then Bandra for convenience of the family
Aunty Iris her all she gave
The smile on the face
And the tasty dish
I did not have to ever fish
My last talk with her was chirpy
Did not know that very soon that voice would fall silent
But even in the silence
In our minds and hearts she lives forever
Being called to be with her dear husband John
Rest my dear, please rest
Her hand he caught to keep her calm
It worked like a balm
To Marina, Allison, Mark , spouses and their children our hearts go out
Rest in peace Aunty Iris
The struggle will not go in vain
As we all are relieved that you are now not in pain
Yet a silent tear we shed
As your body departs
Your spirit will remain
And so sorrow we disdain. 🙏🙏

U Osie - The booming patriarch

Remembering U Osie on his death anniversary
The cuckoo clock in front of me
A gift from U Henry
Kept by U Henry as a memory of his younger brother Osie
Till his death in 2016.
The cuckoo clock has other memories
The musical by the AICUF way back in 1982 (?)
And the Sound of Music
But this was not the time to say goodbye
A time for the Hi5.
Something Donald knows about.
Family five
The five years between Nora and Francis
The fifth in both families
Married in the fifth month of the year
And the five grandchildren
555 or Capstan were the cigarettes I used to buy for U Osie
From the pan shop below 6 Kelhaven.
The outstretched palm
Reading into the future
Died a week before Rosie and Derek's wedding
Missing his brother Joe by a day
I remembered U Osie in Nongstoin too
That due to another Osie
A singer
The darling of the crowd
A roar when he came on stage
The passing of the train
6 Kelhaven once again
My aunt Marie on the balcony
A Bettie's excitement at the Wimbeldon final between Borg and McEnroe
My world big and small
The patriarch oversaw it all

For Uncle Henry

As I sit here in Nongstoin Meghalaya
News of your passing away filters in.
At first shock I can't believe it And then acceptance of the full life you lived
Many thoughts fill my mind
You in a distant parish in Kharagpur
A source of strength for my mother Nora
Your smile, your laughter
The number of languages you knew
Taking up the cause of Mother Theresa's canonisation
All come fleeting by and all go
But one thing sticks on
God and the Church for you came first
And with it inspiration in a burst
I on a mission for Pope Francis
In the words of Bishop Victor Lyndoh DD.
Bishop of Nongstoin
Your blessings on me you will shower
And to the whole family too
As the smile on your face
I see anew.

Remembering my five senior cousins from Canada

William sitting on a stool listening in
An occasional comment or two blasting in
And then Bridget who my newsletter once edited
The eldest of us all
And special to me for her call
On my newsletter
Support to me she did promise
Which I will hold her to
Then Marilyn whom at Mumbai I did meet
Along with Donald to whom I got to greet
Our short sojourn with A Iris and A Noreen
Marina and Jean Charles were there too
A touching scene it was as Anne pleaded her cause
Kathleen with 'apple of her eye'
And I remember there were sparks that could fly
And before I say goodbye
Annette who being in Vancouver I could not meet
But her studying to be a Doctor
To me was quite a great feat
FRCS I think it was
The creme de la creme as I knew it to be
Annette the feat she did accomplish
And then in far flung Vancouver did vanish
Volunteering for service in Africa too
But not for the animals put in the zoo
And so as this poem I finish
To Uncle Joe and Auntie Enid
Whom we all cherish

To U Merwyn

Uncle Merwyn and his repartee
Jousting with my Dad
A favourite past time at parties and get togethers
The sharp agility of the fencer
One that was got by challenging traditional discipline in childhood
A prankster par excellence
Had his siblings in a trance
The jousters never tired
As those listening in too
It just took a small trigger
For the repartee to figure
And then an hour or more till the dinner gong was struck
Merwyn and Francis took hold of the truck
Sorry this was delayed
Some ghosts were needed to be flayed.

To U Sunno

To Uncle Sunno on his birthday today
A genius and a madman by a thin line get divided
The razors edge between genius and madness
I got to know this when U Sunno had a breakdown
Forced to listen to the will of his superiors and not to God
After his sabbatical some sense into them was driven
Gave him an assignment worthy of his mettle
ISI (New Delhi not Pakistan)
Afghanistan
And then the UN
NY and Brussels
Grandma about this son always thought
So open house for the priests and nuns
And the world reciprocated
U Sunno well looked after
As for us we enjoyed fun and laughter.

Part II

Different Strokes



My Aunt Betty's favourite TV serial

The Tehsin family

Thanks to Arefa this story of the Tehsin family is as alive as the jungle tales she tells. The U Tube interview provides some remarkable insights into this story teller and her inspiration - her father Raza Tehsin. There are other stories as well. Those remembered more vividly by her cousin Himalay. They speak of the heroics during the dark days of the emergency and a glorious tradition in upholding democracy in this country.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3FCN3fC0yg>



A lifetime ago, Saadat and I would stare at the Summer forest sky and try to figure out if the moving spark was a satellite or plane or UFO. Today, I feel sparky myself as he has got the licence to fly all the top wide body air-crafts available to the industry - Airbus 330, Airbus 350, Boeing 777 and Boeing 787!

The first pilot from Udaipur, his journey has been as wild as he is (eating wild red ants for protein and catching and bringing cobras home to a fuming Daddy, for instance). He did his CPL from the U.S. soon after 9/11, a pilot with a Muslim name, mind you. Completed his training in 3 months 20 days instead of a year. Was the only one in a batch of 100 to get a job. Was denied housing in Mumbai due to the Muslim name when Jet Airways posted him there. Has been a front line corona warrior, taking medicine, vaccine and food supply flights to the worst affected countries worldwide. One of the four pilots in the world trained to land on the narrow strip in Seychelles.

The perfect candidate for Man vs Wild, Saadat, you do know how to survive. On land, water, air, civilisation (I know, I know, the last one is the hardest of them all!).

May your seat belt be fastened, your approach clear, your phone on airplane mode and your nose always skyward bound...

France and the Paris Convention aftermath

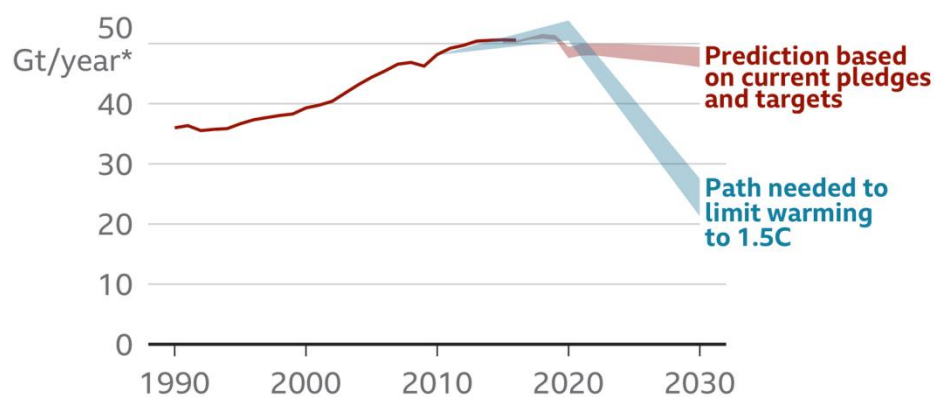
Two of my cousins (Marina and Alison) not only stay in France, their husbands have been a part of the French foreign services. Considering Laudato si, my link with the Paris Convention, I guess tracking this story has a personal touch as well.

<https://www.mondaq.com/france/health-safety/1095388/environmental-commitments-in-french-companies-a-new-role-for-the-social-and-economic-committee>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-35073297>

The world is not on track to limit warming to 1.5C

Global greenhouse gas emissions



*Gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year. One gigatonne = 1 trillion tonnes. Figures include land use, land use change and forestry.

Source: Climate Action Tracker

BBC

Milton Lawrence and the Christian Brothers

My cousin's Debbie's brother in law. Got a report of his illness while working on an assignment for the Christian brothers. Imprinted on my life forever as also the social justice programme of the Christian Brothers.

<https://www.cbu.edu/about/lasallian-tradition/mclaughlin-social-justice-institute-of-lasallian-practice/msji-program-structure/#:~:text=The%20McLaughlin%20Social%20Justice%20Institute,impact%20their%20engagement%20with%20others.>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ934021.pdf>



Br Milton Lawrence
2018-11-06

Milton was an exceptional Brother. I have not met him for the last 32 years because he had been sent to Africa (Gambia) to teach. But as a young Brother he was a compassionate soul who was always willing to walk the extra mile whenever there was need. He spent his whole day doing things for others. A man for others! Without doubt the best Brother to come out of Abu.

He was a great teacher. After returning from Africa, he worked in Columba's for a year or two (not sure) and those boys remember him fondly even now (only a very extraordinary Brother can be popular with the Columban kids!)

He was very good at basketball. When I say very good, I mean he could have been in an international team! It was difficult to stop him from taking a lay-up. In fact, he left Delhi because he hurt his tendon in the ankle while playing basketball and had to recuperate in Goa (not his first time in that old age home, Shantiniwas, where he died).

I am very bad for remembering the exact time-line; but I think the last place that he taught was in St. Columba's.

At least the last three years (may be more) he was afflicted with cancer of the gut. It changed a smiling, energetic, ever ready for action Milton into a moody, depressed, tired and always in very bad pain Milton (all this is hear-say), who just wanted to be left alone. Chemotherapy did him no good and that's when the doctors asked us to rely on prayers. He suffered horrendously with gut pain and was getting pain killer injections every 5 hours. What an existence! The Lord was kind to relieve him of it.

If any of you guys made it to his funeral, you probably attended the funeral of a saint.

He is in heaven and must have got a tremendous welcome in heaven who followed the teaching of His Master to the letter!

—Br James Joseph (1977)

A few lines on Milton with whom I lived and worked in New Delhi, the heady, pioneering years in The Gambia and later, in mid-life maturity, in Zambia.

Milton was an average man in many ways; not too tall, not too short, not too brainy, not too foolish, who would comfortably (and for most times willingly) fit in with the crowd. But in the things that really count he was extraordinary, standing head and shoulders above ordinary.

A man described as 'solid as a rock,' dependable and dedicated. This has been borne out by the appreciation and demand he was in by bishops, principals, teachers and staff, his

students, novices and fellow brothers, and the several close friendships he generously nurtured over the years and across the miles. And in his last years, the leadership and clients of St Anselm's, Kent.

A person who worked in the background with a fine sense of attention to service, and thoughtful sensitivity to other's needs. This was the experience of his religious brothers and the various groups he joined or mentored in schools and parishes that embarked on various projects of practical outreach. These took him beyond his Mathematics and Science lessons to work with youth and young adults in Edmund Rice inspired groups and skills-training centres.

A quiet (not silent) man who got on with what was to be done, whose bed rock was faith, prayer and spirituality. These Milton practiced with his usual dedication and sincerity in a practical, no nonsense, low-key approach to life. In the nineteen eighties I saw his dedication to his students go beyond the school time-table to innovative, weekly gatherings outside school that helped them process the turmoil of teenage years and feed their eager souls. These entirely voluntary meetings were sacred spaces well attended. This I saw echoed in the courses in Community Building that he developed and led for novices and others in Africa.

A man in whom there was no guile, no pretence. A man of simple tastes and life-style. Among the simple pleasures I recall the Sunday brunches on the veranda in Lusaka where he was Director of our International Spirituality Centre and the episodes of Strictly Come Dancing or some British comedy that became a community exercise.

He loved order, with a place for everything and everything in its place, and spent time organizing folders, drawing up procedures, colour-coded and demarcated, so everyone was in the know where things stood.

Like us all, he wasn't without his faults, but unlike so many of us they never became a stumbling block to his goodness. Milton loved too much, often reflected in the intensity of his commitment to projects or people. He often paid the price dearly when they disappointed but he always picked himself up. His biggest heart-break was perhaps the closing of the CB mission in The Gambia where he had been teacher, principal, served in CB leadership and church leadership at parish and Diocesan level most memorably in the Catholic education secretariat. He carried the Gambian people in his heart always. (Today, we have one Gambia Brother in leadership in West Africa, two Gambian novices in Zambia and two others who are to be Finally Professed in December 2018. All who would have known Milton in one capacity or other. Not bad for a country we 'left' over 10 years ago!) But here too he picked himself up and with renewed dedication, he gave himself generously to new and difficult missions in Zambia and later Ghana (as Novice Master) before discovering his personal vocation to the healing EQ (Emotional Quotient) which he studied and practiced with whole-hearted dedication and sincerity.

It is not fair the sufferings, challenges, despair and difficulties he went through with his illness of a stubborn, unresponsive cancer – the very opposite of who Milton was as a person. But we are told that that is how God treats his friends. For surely Milton was a friend of God who engaged in doing the ordinary things of life extraordinarily well. As a brother said, in Milton God walked among us and we never knew. His courageous decision to stop debilitating chemotherapy and face his illness full on was typical of the practical, down to earth, no fuss, faith-based attitude to life.

Milton, friend, companion, brother. Thank you. Enjoy well the embrace of the Mystery we call God as we confidently stand, supported, upon your shoulders.

—Bro Senan D'Souza cfc

Laugh Milton, laugh - I miss your laughter.

It was a privilege to have experienced Milton. I was senior to him during our formation years in Shillong, he being in the Novitiate while I was teaching at St Edmund's High School. Milton would always greet me “Pate Stembur” (Bhan Singh our PT master in 1971-72 gave me this name). “Patiala returned?” The allusion would be to hockey. Then he would burst out in laughter! In fact it was his laughter that was most remarkable. His face would light up and he would convulse – his whole body shaking with joy. In fact even at Mass while I would perform my 'comedy of errors' while serving – I would see Milton out of the corner of my eyes – holding his stomach – rolling in muffled laughter. He must have thought I was the congregational clown. But the laughter was pure - just joy.

Although junior to me, Milton was years ahead in wisdom and maturity. A good sportsman, reliable in soccer and hockey, untouchable in basketball. His outward manifestation in life - serene - calm under pressure, understating the frailties of human beings. A model monk.

It was a privilege to have made him laugh.

—Stephen de Silva (1972)

A view from Australia

Cousins from both sides and in terms of climate a mirror image of India in some parts. A home away from home but questions of a different kind.

<https://www.greenpeace.org.au/blog/why-the-great-barrier-reef-is-dying/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-50951043>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=707pRTxhRNQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18MM0MbIkkA>

Much closer home, cousins on both sides in Queensland. Thankfully all were safe.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/mar/04/before-and-after-aerial-pictures-show-how-floods-swept-through-queensland-and-nsw-towns>

Latvia

The home of my cousin Nigel's wife and a story with a twist as a result.

<https://www.oecd.org/environment/country-reviews/OECD-EPR-Latvia-2019-Abridged-Version.pdf>

Zanzibar

The magical which was once the dream home of Desmond Pinto and family. The magic is being recaptured in many other ways.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1IYdjiWfyI&t=40s>

UK

Glasgow, venue of COP 26 and the sequel to the Paris convention. In UK a son was born to Manish and Robyn, they named him Forrest William Rahi Burman.

<https://sdg.iisd.org/events/2020-un-climate-change-conference-unfccc-cop-26/>

<https://sdg.iisd.org/news/vast-majority-of-climate-actions-must-be-local-cop-26-pavilion-discussions/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-60115969>

Ireland

Home of Blessed Edmund Rice founder of the Christian Brothers, one who watched his countrymen hanged on the gallows for daring to challenge the British authorities . It is also the home of Robert and Carmel.

<https://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/1743>

Ireland's long and contested status as an internal colony of Britain has been important in the historical development of how the Irish remember their past. This article analyzes the historic relationship between religion and politics in Ireland by focusing on the impact of British rule in Ireland and its aftermath on the formation and evolution of Irish identity. My research suggests that one cannot appreciate the role of religion in Irish politics without taking into consideration the impact of British rule in Ireland.

<https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1525/cia.1979.1.1.37>

Abstract: One theory of sexual repression in Ireland describes how it operated to increase the prosperity of the small family farm and the social mobility of the family. A second theory asserts that Irish Catholic dualistic asceticism and Church power are responsible for sexual repression. In this article, general systems theory and cultural ecology are used to demonstrate that the aspects of Irish culture affecting sex were generated by colonial and neocolonial relations.

The Old Man and Omnicron

Ubiquitous and Omnipresent
Both in their own way
But both have a shelf life too
So goodbye to one for now
For the other it will be soon
A mother for her little baby crooned
Take care of him Mother Mary
This world is quite contrary
Raising a child in times like these can be quite hairy.
There was one born a few days before
Forrest William Rahi Burman
My grandnephew
Big dreams from his parents Manish and Robyn
Climate Change and Time travel have on his destiny been stamped
Uncle's, Aunts across the globe his visa have ensured
So into 2022 he will crawl
And when he in distress he will bawl
Not yet time to go to the Mall
Be a good boy
Or Omnicron will get you
In early days it was Bhutto
Still earlier Hitler
Now we have the juicer and the mixer
Squeeze every drop out that wretched Omnicron.
Immunity booster it shall become.

The Ray of hope and the Child

The child into the new year crawled
Except for his paternal granddad
All inflicted with the Omicron
His granddad symbolised hope
Unaffected by sickness all around
This story had a similar twist in far of Udaipur
Told to his granduncle the other day
A different twist for his nine year old aunt
Who could not make it to Canada
Mother to blame
Cannot say for sure
But certainly in some distant land
Somebody did have the cure
Though only five, she has regularly been making videos
Of the daily dose to be taken
Her confidence and audacity
Even the bold she has shaken
A new generation in the making
Different hues
And different tunes
A tribute to the diversity we find
And the cry of mother earth her body to drape
The baby paused awhile
And thought
What will it be
My style.

US

The magical story of an early immigrant from India whose daughter is now President of the United States

<https://www.deccanherald.com/international/world-news-politics/the-american-love-story-of-kamala-harris-s-parents-886749.html>

A story very close to where I once stayed . Fires a way of life in those parts. This one not very far from where Kavita, Jason their daughter Diya and Natasha live.

<https://apnews.com/article/wildfires-business-fires-colorado-environment-0c284c0a48e583e5ce28140d24870f7b>

Canada

This story caught my interest due to personal reports from Canada about people being holed up in their houses, power outages and driveways being snowed up.

<https://www.theweathernetwork.com/ca/news/article/canada-records-temperature-below-51-c-for-the-first-time-eight-years>

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/over-200-000-people-left-without-electricity-in-canada-s-ontario-what-power-company-said-101639298450618.html>

A great history of Goans of Karachi. A Goan community center in Brampton, Ontario and the President, Selwyn Colaco is interviewing Menin Rodrigues. The introductory photos are of the centre and the music is the composition of a local Goan musician.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KEDCh3y8MI&t=46s>

Ukraine

Extracted from a message circulating on What's app.

Let's first start with Why is Ukraine important? And Why does Ukraine matter?

Ukraine is one of the biggest countries in Europe on territorial basis with 41 million highly educated people strongly motivated to work.

But that's not all.

How Ukraine ranks!!!

1st in Europe in recoverable reserves of Uranium Ores.

2nd in Europe & 10th in World in Titanium Ore reserves.

2nd in World in Manganese Ores Reserves (2.3 billion tons or 12% of world's reserves).

2nd largest Iron Ore reserves in world(30 billion tons).

2nd in Europe in Mercury Ore reserves.

3rd in Europe & 13th in World in Shale Gas reserves (22 trillion cubic meters).

4th in world in total value of natural resources & 7th in World in Coal Reserves(33.9 billion tons).

Enough for Putin to set an eye on Ukraine?

Ukraine is an agricultural country!!!

1st in Europe wrt Arable land area.

3rd in world by the area of Black Soil (25% of world's volume).

1st in world in exports of Sunflower & Sunflower Oil.

2nd in world in Barley production & 4th in Barley Exports.

9th place in world in production of Chicken Eggs.

16th in world in Cheese Exports.

Ukraine can meet food needs of 600 million people across World.

Can you imagine what boost it can give to Russian Economy?

Still more to come.

Read on.

3rd largest producer & 4th largest Exporter of Corn in world.

4th largest producer of Potatoes in World.

5th largest Rye Producer in World.
5th in World in Bee production (75,000 tons).
8th in World in Wheat Exports.
Ukraine is Highly Industrialized!!!
1st in Europe in Ammonia Production.
2nd in Europe & 4th largest natural gas pipeline system in World (142.5 bln cubic meters of gas throughput capacity in the EU).
3rd in Europe & 8th in World in installed nuclear power plants capacity.
3rd in World (after U.S. & France) in production of Locators & Locating equipments.
3rd largest Iron Exporter in World.
4th largest exporter of Turbines for nuclear power plants in World.
4th World's largest Rocket Launchers producer.
4th in World in Clay Exports.
4th in World in Titanium Exports.
8th in World in Ores & Concentrates Exports.
9th in World in Defence industry products.
10th largest Steel Producer in world (32.4 million tons).

<https://www.vox.com/2014/9/3/18088560/ukraine-everything-you-need-to-know>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589>

<https://theprint.in/diplomacy/ukraine-dissatisfied-with-indias-stand-on-russia-invasion-pleads-to-modi-to-talk-to-putin/845925/>

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/russia-ukraine-crisis-what-it-means-for-india-and-investors/articleshow/89792293.cms>

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/watch-can-ukraine-russia-crisis-have-heavy-impact-on-india/videoshow/89778446.cms>

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Ukraine-crisis-a-gift-for-China-that-keeps-on-giving>

Part III

Spiritual/Ecological Connections & Our Common Home



Nora Lobo and the Star of David

Suggestions for the Synodal Church given to Bishop Ganava - Diocese of Udaipur

Background:

Upfront would like to mention that the early church was a community and not hierarchical. The early church came up at a time when there were 'free men' and slaves. Patriarchy was entrenched in society. Post this however at the Council of Arles, the Church declared nature worship as Paganism.

In the encyclical *Laudato Si*, the Pope Francis begins by saying *"Praise be to you, Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who sustains and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs.* This exhortation to God through Mother Earth is significant as it makes it clear that this practice is not 'idolatry' as was commonly understood when Nature worship was branded as Paganism by the Church. The Pope then goes on to say *"This sister now cries out to us because of the harm, we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of goods which God has endowed her.... See ourselves as Lords and masters....entitled to plunder her at will.*

The Pope is unequivocal in his stand for Social Justice as an inextricable part of the concern for the Environment. He says that today, concern for the environment is reflected in the *"islands of greenery"* we find around us... *"It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining indifferent to human trafficking"*... *"unconcerned about the poor"*, or *"undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted"*. Further he says *"The Christian tradition has never recognized the right to private property as absolute or inviolable and has stressed the social purpose of forms of private property"*. The church however defends the *"Legitimate right to private property.. but she also teaches no less clearly that there is always a social mortgage on all private property in order that goods may serve the general purpose that God gave them"*.

The meaning of sin has been defined as a break from God, neighbor and nature. Francis of Assisi was one who embodied a process of healing this rupture.

The Pope exposes the limitations of Technology and Finance to address the issues facing us today and the need for scientists and other concerned practitioners to learn from 'believers'.

- i. *"Science and technology are not neutral"*.
- ii. *"The specialization which belongs to technology makes it difficult to see the larger picture"*.
- iii. *"The fragmentation of knowledge proves helpful for concrete applications and it often leads to loss of appreciation of the whole"*.
- iv. *"Absolute power of a financial system, a power which has no future and will only give rise to a new crisis after a slow, costly and only apparent renewal"*.

He brings home strongly the fact that

- i. *"There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself"*.

ii. *“There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology”.*

He cautions that *‘a misguided anthropocentrism need not necessarily yield to biocentrism.... which entails yet another imbalance’*. Further he says, *“Human beings cannot be expected to feel responsibility for the world unless, at the same time, their unique capacities of knowledge, will, freedom and responsibility are recognized and valued”*.

Stressing the importance of local knowledge and involvement in the context of cultural ecology he mentions the folly in *“Overlooking the complexities of local problems which demand the active participation of all members of the community”* and solution which evolve *“need to be based on the local culture itself”*. While stressing the importance of self improvement, he points out its limitation thus *“self improvement by individuals will not by itself remedy the extremely complex situation facing our world today”*. *“Social problems must be addressed by community network and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds”*. *“Around these community actions relationships emerge develop or are recovered and a new social fabric emerges. Thus a community can break out of the indifference induced by consumerism”*. ... *“being at peace with himself or herself... peace which is much more than the absence of war”*.. it is *“closely related to care for ecology”*.

Subsequent to the publishing of the encyclical at Santa Cruz, Bolivia, on 10th July, the Pope apologises for the use or misuse of Christianity in the brutal colonisation of indigenous and other peoples. To quote from the article Resistance and Reconstruction written by Ashish Kothari

“Many grave sins were committed against the native peoples of America in the name of God. I humbly ask forgiveness not only for offences of the church herself, but also for the crime committed against the native people during the so called conquest of America”. On the question of the role of Capitalism, he had this to say at Santa Cruz. *“And behind all this pain, death and destruction there is the stench of what Basil of Caesarea called ‘The dung of the Devil’. An unfettered pursuit of money rules, the service of the common good is left behind once Capital becomes an idol and guides people’s decisions, once greed for money presides over the entire socio-economic system it ruins society and as we clearly see it even puts at risk our common home”*.

Ashish Kothari however mentions that there were some aspects of the encyclical that made him squirm, namely the reference to God as an all powerful creator. To this my reply to him was that the Pope is countering the trend where man considers him/herself to be all powerful. To the extent that mere good wishes do not amount to anything and that there are nature and societal developmental laws (distinct from manmade laws), I agree that we need to understand these and bend before these laws if we are to bring about a real change. At Santa Cruz, the Pope concludes thus *“The future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of the people and their ability to organize”*.

Some fundamental propositions for the Synod

The background above raises some fundamental propositions for the synod and the creation of the synodal church.

- a. The role of the hierarchical church is to dismantle hierarchy, a contradiction in terms but not impossible. It has been done before, many propositions set forward by Pope Francis himself.
- b. Seeped as the church is in patriarchy (the raging question of having women as priests not yet resolved as yet) a struggle within a struggle to dismantle patriarchy and the patriarchal tenants on which the Church has been formed. There are precedents we can look at but for now will leave these questions and issues mostly unanswered for now.
- c. Pope Francis appeals to Politicians, scientists, financiers and administrators to learn what they can from the spirituality of religion. The importance of tribal spirituality which is nature based has a lot of relevance as the female goddess Shakti (energy) as being the foundation for Prakriti (nature). For now will leave this here as fundamental to the dismantling of patriarchal concepts and the concept of an all powerful God (male) which science understands as the fundamental laws of nature and the laws related to the origin of and historical movement of the universe.

Coming to communities and culture as fundamental to the creation of the synodal church am expanding outwards to encapsulate a process that embraces non Catholic, non christian communities in general and communities of small farmers, small and traditional fishers, pastorals, tribals and wage workers in particular. These communities are as Nitya Ghotge described it, at the cutting edge of common land protection and management and therefore also vital to recreating the threads that will seriously address Climate change.

Concrete suggestions:

The Jesuits have conducted a fairly comprehensive approach to addressing questions related to recreating the synodal church in relation to giving operational shape to their four Universal Apostolic Preferences

- a. Showing the Way to God & Ignatian Sprituality - in this the 500th year of Ignatian enlightenment.
- b. Walking with the excluded
- c. Journeying with youth
- d. Caring for our Common Home

The above provides some sort of road map as it shows the link between missionary/ social work, work of the parishes , schools/ hospitals and working with the youth and communities. Without parallel processes taking place to activate the synodal approaching all these fields of work by our religious, engaging with the laity will be sub-optimal and not provide the impetus for Inter-religious, interfaith dialogue imperative for developing common cause with the Global community to engage with the issue of Climate change and caring for our common home.

Considering youth to be comparatively fresh (less seeped in the formulas of the past and more open to change for the future), well designed camps for youth, to encourage them to see the links between spirituality, economics, politics and the ecological, economic, political and social concerns we now face.

This much for now.

Regards

Viren Lobo

Fr. Bacher and XINRM

The relevance of the Universal Apostolic Preferences

Father Hermann Bacher, founder of Social Centre which created Xavier Institute of Natural Resource Management can be considered its guiding light, spirit and inspiration. Like him, XINRM gives equal weightage to theory and practise. The images of Fr Bacher with the pickaxe, and father of watershed management in Maharashtra go hand in hand.

Founded around the time of the Paris Convention, the encyclical of Pope Francis - *Laudato si* and *Care for our common home* embodies what XINRM is trying to do. One of our very first lectures dealt with the *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development : Our Common Future*. This report spells out "*A global agenda for change*". The report brought out in 1987, was the forerunner of later developments namely the three UN Conventions on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Desertification.

During our lectures, we learnt what *Care for Our Common Home* means. Mother Earth our sister is crying out to us for help. Stop her rape and exploitation. Many of the lectures taught to us dealt with this. Think globally, Act locally is at the heart of each lesson. Women are at the centre of creation and therefore without women's perspective, development is barren is another important carry home we have from the class room. How women and children can be at the centre of change in favour of the marginalised and excluded is at the heart of the practise we are trying to put to theory.

How children can be developed as future leaders through creation of Children's Parliament around the seventeen SDGs and the relevance of youth such as ourselves bringing about this change in perspective is the focus of some of the assignments we are working on. Thank you Fr. Bacher for making us part of the UAPs that inspired you.

An Ecological Profile of Ahmednagar

- a. Ahmednagar has only 1.57% Forest area.
- b Water bodies in Ahmednagar constitute 3.48 % as compared to 3.3% in the State.
- c. Post monsoon water table in Ahmednagar is increasing but the pre monsoon water table is declining. This indicates probable impact of the Watershed development work in Ahmednagar but concern related to the water use from such watershed development works. The preliminary assessment of water used in irrigation in Watershed development projects indicates a focus on water loving crops. This will become clearer if we undertake an ecological profile of villages where watershed work has been undertaken and locate the cropping pattern in the irrigated areas which have been facilitated by Watershed development.
- d. The highest produce of renewable energy is bagasse which is made from sugarcane cultivation. The map showing land devoted to sugarcane cultivation locates this in the drought prone area of Maharashtra and Ahmednagar in particular. The students have been asked to develop this understanding further in the assignments given to them which will assess the role of technology and infrastructure development in the land use pattern of Ahmednagar District and its impact on overall well being of the people residing in the District.



A journey in the quest of a socially just world

Practise makes a man perfect they say but the link between theory and practise and application of social theory to practise takes more than a lifetime of learning. Inspired by the call of Dr. Verghese Kurien for giving the best to the rural areas of this country I joined Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) to do a Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management. As part of field work I went to study the development of dairying in Meerut. My study highlighted that the resource poor could not get the benefit from marketing of milk. The relevance of the commons for the poor was brought home very strongly. After passing out from IRMA, I joined the Society for the Promotion of Wastelands Development in 1985. I was soon disabused of the notion, as through study I learnt that degradation was caused by unbridled exploitation of the natural resources.

My experiences found two major hurdles

- a. The wrong notion that production and productivity could fix social problems. .
- b. The contradiction between individual aspirations and social good.

The search for democratic governance continues but with the knowledge that technology has now developed sufficiently for decentralised governance to be a reality provided gram sabhas and local forums could get their act together.

The two studies done by Tarun Bose have shown that conditions on the ground are not entirely conducive for this to happen. The struggle of farmers, forest dwellers, pastoralists, fishers and wage workers originating from the village indicate that they are fighting a losing battle. Yet the fight for survival goes on strongly.

This fight for survival and the fight for democratic governance are interlinked with each other and hence the facilitation of democratic forums and democratic governance has been at the core of the work I have tried to do over the years.

Akhil Bharatiya Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti was conceptualised in 2012 when it was observed that small organisations/ individuals had limited democratic space to articulate their issues beyond their local forums. It has been an attempt to knit diverse struggles onto one platform through a voluntary process of which the study done by Tarun Bose now forms a major part.

To give shape to a participatory process of engagement, I realised that in any given situation there are two tactics that relate to forward movement of society

- a. The struggle at people's level namely practise of the masses for their democratic rights in relation to day to day survival and livelihood issues.
- b. A deeper understanding gathered from theory as to essence of democratic transformation of society.

The former has to in some way respond to the spontaneous response of people/ communities to survival issues and atrocities heaped on them. The latter is much more long term and is a gradual process of providing the theoretical underpinnings for struggle. Concretely the farmers struggle is one such. The issues emerging from the process of subsidising agriculture to provide cheap food for the Industrial labour force. With Industry resorting to automation, this subsidised provision of grain is not of essence at the workplace, rather control of grain by Corporates, the basis of survival has now become the main motive. For a large section addressed in Tarun Bose's report, the right to control the means of production namely land and the relevance of nature/ biodiversity to reduce the cost of production is a necessity. However current needs for survival make the question of restoration of the means of production next to impossible. Similar issues face fishers, pastoralists and forest dependent communities.

What is to be done ? This is the subject matter of the discussion that we want to spin off as a result of Tarun's study. The duality of the political process that is an essential part of it is merely a byproduct.

Viren Lobo

https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=302742008479333

This is the interview given to Prasun Lataant based on the report of Tarun Kanti Bose. Apart from highlighting the conditions facing tribals, it also deals with small and marginal farmers, fishers, pastoralists and wage labour originating from the village. It talks of the relevance of renewable energy in the control of local communities as a way to ensure modernisation minus displacement (modern rural communities instead of displacement based urbanisation and industrialisation). Instead of job creation in an automatic factory with an eye on being Internationally competitive. It argues that the same money to generate one job, could be used to save and develop the livelihoods of an entire village.

It also points out that the essence of the farmer's struggle is to save the privileges given to farmers as a result of the wrong anti nature/ anti people policies of the government. Hence the need to relook farming from people instead of Corporate eyes, one which has traditionally kept in mind climatic , topographical and in essence ecological factors in mind. Food subsidy currently subsidises fertilizer consumption and production of big farmers. The real demand of small farmers is to reduce cost of production and hence reduce the necessity of distress sale in the market.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1546377/women-power-in-sarangani-bay-keeps-coral-predators-away>

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/the-maldives-is-being-swallowed-by-the-sea-can-it-adapt?cmpid=org=ngp::mc=crm-email::src=ngp::cmp=editorial::add=Planet_Possible_20220125::rid=E1335172D8894EDB49BC177D45A5D86B

Part IV
Politics of Different Kinds

The Battle for Ayodhya and the establishment of Ramrajya - To be or not to be

The people of Ayodhya (patriarchal thinking of course) demanded Sita prove her innocence
Not having slept with another man
Sita prayed to Dharti mata to spare her the humiliation
She gladly obliged by gathering her in her embrace
Namo demanded people of India
Prove their loyalty
By refraining from demanding their rights for another 25 years.
The time he expects it will take for Ram Rajya to fully establish in India
I wondered
Did Ram create Ramrajya
Or did the people
Ram bowed to their wishes
Here it seems the other way around
So my take on Ram Rajya
Quite different from Namo
Not symbolism of a temple for Ram Lalla
But the will of the people
And non patriarchal mind set at that
One that will embrace Namo too
As a son of the soil
Minus his oversized ego
Will let it go
As a ballon filled with hot air
Embrace the dark clouds
Puncturing them
Bringing rain down on a parched earth
And as farmer's to the rain God's their prayers of Thanksgiving make
A new India is our take
Free from the oppressive and overbearing speeches of the Yogi
A variety of voices talking liberty
Reimagining India some would call it
Establishing a Bharat that never was
And a celebration for a lost cause.



Number of Visitors to NPSSF Website

www.smallscalefishworkers.org

Crosses 50,000

**The National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers is happy to inform all its
sympathisers, supporters, advisers and affiliate organisations**

**that the number of visitors to its website has crossed 50,000
in a little more than two and half years since it was commissioned.**

**We take this opportunity to thank all the visitors to our website
who, in spite of all its shortcomings, have patronised it.**

**We could not get such a huge number of visitors without their
appreciation and recommendations.**

**We would request all our friends and well wishers to
help us overcome our weaknesses and shortcomings in making the website
truly a web platform for the small scale fish workers
the largest primary non-consumptive stakeholders of
our water bodies and their natural custodians.**

Because good fish need good water.

We know we have a long way to go, but

We Believe

Together We Shall Be Able.

Upholding the Republic of Biodiversity

Demand immediate and complete withdrawal of proposed Biodiversity Act Amendment Bill, 2021

A Statement issued by

Coalition for Environmental Justice in India

on the occasion of 73rd Republic Day of India, 26 January, 2022

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)^[1] has proposed comprehensive amendments to the Biological Diversity Act 2002 (BDA)^[2] by way of the Biological Diversity Act Amendment Bill 2021^[3]. Since the proposed amendments are far reaching in nature as well as deeply controversial, the Bill has been referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for review. The JPC has invited comments/objections to the Bill by the end of the month.

Under the Doctrine of Public Trust enunciated as law of the land by the Supreme Court of India, natural resources of the country belong to the people, and are managed by the state as a trustee on behalf of the real owners. The unamended BDA recognizes the public trust doctrine as central to the successful implementation of the law.

In this sense, the proposed changes to the Act constitute a well calibrated and clear attempt to progressively undermine and destroy the sovereign rights and control that the people of India have over their biodiversity, bioresources and associated traditional knowledge, a right that is particularly crucial for adivasis, Dalits, farmers, fishers, vairs, hakims, nomadic and denotified tribes, and such other natural resource dependent peoples whose lives, livelihoods and socio-economic wellbeing are intricately linked to nature.

The Bill contains provisions which promote further centralisation of powers. This is in stark contrast with the law as it exists, which requires biodiversity conservation, protection and its sustainable use in collaboration with State and Local Governments. In this sense, the Bill is contrary to the Constitutional 73rd Amendment (Panchayat Raj) Act, 1992, the Constitutional 74th 74th Amendment (Nagarpalika) Act, 1992, the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and the Forest Rights Act 2006. The provisions of the Bill also stand opposed to the Principle of Intergenerational Equity, Precautionary Principle, Polluter Pays Principle and a host of other such basic safeguards protecting people's and the country's interests now and into the future.

The Bill also seeks to comprehensively dilute sovereign governance mechanisms of the Biodiversity Management Committees subordinating them to centrally controlled parastatals, and thus compromise substantially their oversight to and access over their bioresources. The benefit of this dilution will accrue to private corporations, including MNCs, and especially those involved in AYUSH^[4] industries. This could result in irreversible extractive exploitation of India's bioresources and the country potentially faces loss of control over and extinction of several valuable plant species very rapidly as a result.

The proposed changes in the BDA need to be viewed in conjunction with regulations^[5] proposed to be issued under the Food Safety Standards Act, 2006 (FSSA),^[6] which are also promoted without any respect for the country's federal governance system. The FSSAI^[7] proposals facilitate free passage of genetically modified foods into India even though there is a Ministerial moratorium in place since 2010 against GM food trials and cultivation. Here too the interests of Indian and international corporations are being leveraged over fundamental rights of farmers, food producers and local communities. Besides, the diversity of food cultures of India is sought to be homogenised by extending direct access to such imported foods across the country. In this context we record our gravest concerns that the changes proposed in regulations under FSSA are in concert with essential abrogation of the BDA and the GMO RULES of 1989^[8].

Biodiversity protection and its sustainable use extends centrally to India's biodiverse crop seeds for food & feed which have contributed to her rich cooking traditions - a culturally diverse art developed over thousands of years. Our reliance on traditionally safe and healthy food is now directly under attack and will be junked through these plans to open India's food and feed to GMOs in imported processed foods and feed, and the comprehensive dilution of BDA.

It is deeply worrying that the Government of India is attempting to destroy the very essence of the BDA, which was enacted following one of the most participatory efforts in law making in the history of India. The law, in fact, was enacted in response to India becoming a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity 1992^[9] (CBD) as it "reaffirms the sovereign rights of the States over their biological resources."^[10] This needs to be seen in the context of Article 39(b), part of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India,^[11] which clearly acknowledges that "ownership and control of the material resources" is "of the community" and that it must be "so distributed as to best subserve the common good." On that premise the duty is cast on the Government in Article 48(A) to "endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country."

Significantly, the Government of India has proposed the Bill without consulting State Governments, Local Governments, or the wider public. The Bill has also not been translated into any of the Scheduled languages of India, as was done with the Draft Environment Impact Assessment Notification 2020 following nation-wide public outcry and the direction of

the Delhi High Court^[12]. This may be because the Bill proposes significant and highly regressive changes to the Act which the Government may not want the people to know of.

There are provisions in the Bill which seek to extinguish or diminish the effective control people of India now have over their biodiversity, bioresources and associated traditional knowledge. Through it, foreign and Indian private corporations, research organisations and corporate data agencies from across the world will gain unfettered access to India's biodiversity and associated knowledge and information.

Such provisions of the Bill amount to advancing bio-looting of India's bioresources and the systematisation of biopiracy - which the country chose to actively resist by enacting the BDA and endorsing CBD. Alarming, certain provisions of the Bill extend legitimacy to several cases of biopiracy actively under consideration of the judiciary.^[13] Such dilutions would make it very difficult, if not impossible, to hold any private individual or corporation accountable for biopiracy or bioloot in future. It is to be noted that prevailing safeguards helped India protect its bioresources internationally, especially through legal action in foreign courts, as evident from successes against biopiracy of Neem, Basmati rice, etc.^[14]

Another worrying aspect in the Bill is that it aims to significantly erode the prevailing fragile autonomy of the National Biodiversity Authority.^[15] This is sought to be done by promoting the powers of the Member Secretary of the Authority, an appointee of MoEF&CC, to be equal to the autonomous Chairperson of the authority. In effect, this would turn the autonomous institution into an executive appendage of the Ministry.

In a most astonishing proposition, the Bill seeks to take the BDA out of the prevailing environmental jurisprudence governed under the umbrella legislation Environment Protection Act, 1986. Currently, all offences against the environment and associated rights are considered criminal offences. By way of the Bill, MoEF&CC now proposes to reduce such violations of BDA into mere civil offenses. It appears MoEF&CC has yielded to pressures from the United States Government which -- since the early 2000s -- has been pressuring India to whittle down its strong environmental jurisprudence.

The Government of India has a duty cast upon it by the Constitution to propose reforms to strengthen the BDA in collaboration with State and Local Governments, so that India's biodiversity, peoples sovereign control over bioresources and associated traditional knowledge is protected, and their sustainable use will benefit present and future generations. MoEF&CC – in association with State Environment Departments – is mandated to ensure decentralised and effective implementation of the Act. Instead, the proposed Bill is a retrograde move, a brazen attempt to centralise control of India's biodiversity conservation system in the Central Ministry and will turn biodiversity and bioresources into a lucrative field for profit maximisation by corporate and financial interests. This we are neither able to tolerate nor accept.

On this 73rd Republic Day, We, the People of India, and environmental, social justice and democratic organisations fully reject the proposed BDA Amendment Bill, 2011 as it grossly militates against the interests of the peoples of India and their futures. We make this demand in the interest of our living planet, and in resistance to the corporate loot of natural resources. We demand that the Bill be withdrawn forthwith by the Government of India.

We urge the Joint Parliamentary Committee to initiate nation-wide consultation processes to improve BDA and its implementation, enabling participation of primary stakeholders of biodiversity, bioresources and associated traditional knowledge in a manner accessible to them and in their language. In conducting such a deeply democratic consultation, JPC could call upon State Governments, Local Governments, NGOs and civil society to assist. This process will take time, but it is necessary that this time is invested now in order to safeguard India's biodiversity and thereby her ecological, economic and social securities. Such rigorous assessment can weigh in support of the letter and spirit of the current Act and in securing India.

Endorsed by:

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More than 3,189 women working as manual scavengers have reported violence, beatings and rape threats. Around 260 women stated that they were raped or molested by service providers. While about a hundred of these women said they had complained about the private house owners and service providers who had raped or molested them, in 95 of these cases their complaints were not recorded because of their caste, gender and nature of occupation. Six women also stated that they were sold as manual scavengers, and then sexually exploited, to private house owners for an average period of 2-3 years at a time. The pandemic has further escalated this crisis, not giving these women manual scavengers a chance to escape the system due to increased demand and placements by private contractors and sub-letting agencies in rural areas. Many of these workers also contracted COVID-19 during the first two waves in India. ... In order for the situation to really change, and not continue to exist in these dangerous and insidious ways, the government must be more proactive in recognising, rescuing and rehabilitating manual scavengers across India. These so-called 'service providers' too must be recognised and prosecuted. In a situation where even children are being caught in these vicious cycles, immediate action is the only answer.

A survey found that several manual scavengers across states are working in bonded labour-like conditions.

... According to the survey, Jharkhand has the highest number of sanitation workers employed in the areas of Hazaribagh, Jamtara and Godda, cleaning sewer tanks. While earlier it was largely women manual scavengers working in 'dry latrines' in toilets constructed under Swachh Bharat Mission, the survey shows that children below the age of 12 – especially girls – are now being employed as manual scavengers in local settlements for this work, through unknown middlemen. ... Maharashtra has highest numbers of child labourers in this respect, at 12,562, with Sangli and Satara seeing the most numbers of boys between the ages of 8 and 13 working as manhole cleaning assistants. Tamil Nadu is not far behind Jharkhand, with 309 manual scavengers working in Ariyalur alone. Following this, Odisha, Tripura and Madhya Pradesh are the worst performers, including when it comes to hiring children in bonded labour-like scenarios. All these states have 'service providers', who keep the workers tied in cycles of debt, in both semi-urban and rural areas. The survey found that Tamil Nadu has the highest number of such service providers who are migrant workers from Bihar and West Bengal. Chhattisgarh has the highest number of resident service providers. A group of 20-25 people has formed the 'Maila Pratha Andolan' to employ scavenging families. While pretending to be custodians and protectors of these families, they in fact spread misinformation on the legality of manual scavenging and ensure that the scavengers remain trapped in inhuman, unsafe working conditions.

Manual Scavenging Is Continuing Unabated in India – and Even Children Are Forced Into it: Pragy Akhilesh and Ranbir Kumar, January 25 2022

<https://thewire.in/rights/manual-scavenging-is-continuing-unabated-in-india-and-even-children-are-forced-into-it>

While the government refuses to come to terms with the continuing prevalence of manual scavenging in India – recognising only 58,098 manual scavengers for rehabilitation and compensation across the country – our survey across 14 states found that the number of manual scavengers in the country, including children and those working under conditions that can be defined as bonded labour, is in fact increasing. ...

This is part of a 24-part series starting next week, covering the sanitation crisis in each Indian state. Each part will be accompanied by a visual documentary on the specific state, highlighting the effects of the Swachh Bharat Mission and the continuation of manual scavenging in India. The series is based on the Rehabilitation Research Initiative (RRI India) and South Asian Labour Network (SASLN) study in 27 states, between 2017 and 2021.

Please also read:

Manual Scavenging in India, The Banality of An Everyday Crime: Shiva Shankar and Kanthi Swaroop

<https://journals.library.brandeis.edu/index.php/caste/article/view/299>

Abstract: Manual scavenging is the practice of ‘manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of, or otherwise handling, human excreta in an insanitary latrine or in an open drain or pit’, and its existence is a crime of genocidal proportions. The vast majority of people forced into this degrading occupation are women from Dalit castes. The Government of India has outlawed the practice through two Acts of 1993 and 2013, yet it continues everywhere in the country. This essay argues that the persistence of this crime is a consequence of the criminal indifference of a casteist society, and that resistance to it has largely been the heroic effort of the victims alone.

Part V

Health, Happiness and the Hope Gene

Freedom To Stay, Freedom To Move : An Interview With Harsha Walia

Liam Hough, [ROAR Magazine](#)

<https://popularresistance.org/freedom-to-stay-freedom-to-move-an-interview-with-harsha-walia/>, drawing on <https://roarmag.org/magazine/harsha-walia-interview/>

Harsha Walia has been involved in anti-colonial and anti-capitalist migrant justice movements for the past two decades. Her first book, [Undoing Border Imperialism](#), offered a movement analysis of the foundational connections between migration, borders and imperialism, with insights into the grassroots organizing her work comes out of. Building on this, her latest work, [Border and Rule](#) offers a crucial resource for going beyond nation-based thinking about border regimes around the world and building an internationalist movement for their abolition.

In *Border and Rule*, Walia avoids comparisons of one border regime or another as “worse” or “better,” focusing on how borders are consistently a “method of capital” involved in seizing and holding territory and in the segmentation of the working class. Capitalism has always depended on the racialized ordering of social groups and the restriction of pools of labor. Border regimes are the institutional form of a racist logic that sees certain lives as more or less valuable, more or less disposable.

She shows how both right-wing and liberal perspectives converge on the idea that we are living through a “migration crisis,” only differing on whether they see this as more of a threat or a tragedy. Rejecting this crisis image as inaccurate and alarmist, Walia frames the current situation as a crisis of displacement and immobility. The true crisis is around why people move — dispossession, war and spiraling ecological destruction — and the mechanisms designed to then keep them out of sight and out of mind.

Grounded in her own experiences in solidarity struggles and the dedicated study of an array of radical thinkers and movements, *Border and Rule* helps us to grasp the deep links between forms of violence that are too often thought of as separated from each other: the connections between borders and racial citizenship, settler colonialism, imperialism, patriarchy and environmental destruction.

The book pushes for a no border politics that involves imagining and fighting for a genuine alternative to the world in its current shape. This means creating alternatives not only to the besieged visions of the right wing, but also to the already murderous and profitable border regimes as developed under neoliberalism. We need to build confident movements and organizations with the ambition of radically changing this world. *Border and Rule* is a challenging and aspirational work that urges us to aim for that kind of global solidarity and liberation, and it should be studied closely.

— Liam Hough

Liam Hough: In Looking At The US-Mexico Border, You Show How It Has Always Had Three Functions In “Processes Of Expansion, Elimination And Enslavement.” Regarding People On The Move, On The Other Hand, You Talk About Migration As A Form Of Reparations. Could You Elaborate On These Points Please? How Unique Is The US-Mexico Example In Terms Of How Border Regimes Function?

Harsha Walia: I think the southern US border with Mexico is illustrative in terms of thinking about border formations and also how we think of contemporary social movements. In the US and Canadian context, anti-migrant border controls are often seen as separate from anti-Indigenous and anti-Black genocide. Those forms of violence are often seen as parallel to each other — where the shared connection is systemic racism and white supremacy — but generally migrant justice, Indigenous rights and Black liberation are seen as distinct struggles. Black and Indigenous organizers and scholars such as Audra Simpson, Shannon Speed, Robyn Maynard, Black Alliance for Just Immigration and the Red Nation, however, have repeatedly pointed out that is not the case and highlighted the problems with such an approach.

First, bordering practices are structurally bound up in anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, as well as imperialist expansion. Often, we think of the border as a kind of domestic issue that is separate from global politics. The example of the US-Mexico border, however, is of a border that was formed as a direct result of conquest and the forced annexation of over 525,000 square miles of territory from Mexico. The US seized all of that territory in 1848 after the imposition of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which followed the full-blown military invasion of Mexico. This is the history of numerous nation-state borders: they demarcate territory in ways that are bound up in the workings of empire. The British, the French, the Dutch were literally creating borders wherever they went in the so-called post-colonial era when borders were imposed by these European powers. We often naturalize the existence of borders, which removes them from this entanglement with empire. This is why Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz argues that pervasive liberal rhetoric like [“a nation of immigrants”](#) is part of a narrative that erases the violence of conquests and borders upon colonized communities.

Further, the formation of the US-Mexico border in the 1840s and 1850s is bound up in Indigenous genocide and anti-Black controls. When the US forcibly annexed territory from Mexico, sovereign Indigenous nations — including the Comanche, Apache, Seri, Coahuilteca and Kiowa — were forcibly assimilated into the US nation-state. This is, in fact, the entire history of settler citizenship in places like the US, Canada and Australia. Immigration and citizenship were weapons to further the genocidal elimination of Indigenous political and social formations. The Dawes Act and the Indian Citizenship Act in the US basically imposed US citizenship on Indigenous peoples, and a condition of this violent assimilation was that Indigenous peoples had to agree to live on individual plots of land that were carved from the US government’s confiscation and partitioning of their tribal lands.

Around the same time as the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act was passed. This allowed slaveholders to kidnap and capture Black people they claimed had escaped. After the 1848 annexation, slave owners also formed militias to patrol the US–Mexico border to prevent Black people from escaping to Mexico. Some of the earliest bordering practices at the US-Mexico border were not only to keep migrants *out* but were also to control enslaved Black people and keep them *in*. Contemporary immigration enforcement draws heavily from this foundational terror of anti-Black violence, particularly

the regulation of Black movement. Rinaldo Walcott and Idil Abdillahi write in their book [BlackLife: Post-BLM and the Struggle for Freedom](#) that “Movements that we now call migration are founded in anti-blackness, taking their logic from transatlantic slavery.”

"Much of this migration is a result of ongoing colonialism and imperial displacement.

A final point is that today migrants are also, of course, Indigenous and Black people (importantly, not mutually exclusive). So, in our thinking about who is a migrant and who is a refugee, it is very important that we do not erase the experiences and often disproportionate violence against Indigenous and Black migrants and refugees. A large proportion of Central American and Mexican migrants and refugees to the US are Indigenous; a huge number of migrants and refugees trapped in Mexico are from Haiti and from the African continent, many of whom now organize through the [Assembly of African Migrants](#); and the historic and contemporary material relations and roots of anti-Blackness form the basis of today's murderous European border policies — as described in the expansive formulation of the “[Black Mediterranean](#).” And here, returning full circle to the first point, so much of this migration is a result of ongoing colonialism and imperial displacement, underwritten by anti-Indigenous and anti-Black violence: whether military occupations, land thefts, resource extraction, capitalist trade agreements, labor exploitation or climate change.

As Stuart Hall put it, “Migration is increasingly the joker in the globalization pack.” As such, we can understand migration as both an act of individual self-determination and as an expression of decolonial reparations and redistribution long due.

Your Analysis Is Rooted In The Theorization Of Racial Capitalism, Which Has Become A More Prevalent Term Thanks To Many Disparate Struggles Of The Past Few Years. You Stress That This Perspective Sees Racism As Both “A Manipulative Tactic Of Divide-And-Conquer And The Basis Of Material Social Relations.” Could You Give A Summary Of How You Interpret And Use This Framework And How It Should Challenge And Deepen Leftist Understandings Of Capitalism?

The framing of racial capitalism that I draw on is rooted in the works of Cedric Robinson, Neville Alexander, Robin D.G. Kelley, Angela Davis and the larger Black Marxist tradition. Cedric Robinson theorized the linkage between racial expropriation and capitalism as racial capitalism — so as to make clear that the social construction and the real differentiation of race is not a secondary outcome of capitalism, but rather that racism is constitutive of capitalism.

What is crucial here is that the racial expropriation of land, labor and life itself is *innate* to capitalism. Capitalism actually relies on, requires and reproduces racial hierarchies. In that sense, there can be no anti-capitalism that is not also anti-racist and there can be no anti-racism that is not also anti-capitalist. Contrary to the claims of liberal market orthodoxy — and the core assumptions of much of the left, past and present — capitalism does not produce a universal relation of waged labor. Racism is a material structure that is foundational to labor exploitation, to conquest, to territorial expansion, to dispossession, to enslavement, to corporate ownership, to surveillance, to bordering regimes — really to the entire maintenance of the so-called Global North vis-à-vis the Global South.

These are necessary understandings to move us away from the constant debates about whether race or class is more important, or whether race is simply identity and class is material. The forefront of global class struggles are struggles against racial capitalism and its various tentacles: whether it's migrant domestic workers leading struggles as workers, as feminists and as migrants; struggles against police because they are the enforcers of racial capitalism; struggles against gentrification and evictions led by low income communities of color; or strikes against Amazon, Uber and the whole gig economy — while seemingly disparate, these are all fundamentally part of the fight against racial capitalism.

We Are Repeatedly Presented With The Idea Of A “Migration Crisis” Or “Border Crisis.” You Reject These Terms, Arguing That The Reality Is A Crisis Of Displacement And Immobility — A Position That Would Echo The Claims Of People On The Move Everywhere. Could You Elaborate On This Please? How Does This Focus On Displacement And Immobility Also Go Beyond Simply Reframing How We Think About Crossing State Borders, Say In Relation To Gentrification?

I, alongside others, reframe the term “migration crisis” for a number of reasons. I think the global migration crisis is more accurately described as a crisis of displacement and immobility. The emphasis on displacement forces us to interrogate the root causes of conquest, capitalism and climate change that are the real culprits and drivers of displacement. And, further, when we say “migration” crisis, we tend to assume that most people are actually able to move in the search for safety — when in fact most people are immobilized. Jennifer Hyndman and Wenona Giles note that less than 1 percent of refugees living in camps around the world find a permanent home. People are not able to move because border controls are deadly and people are being contained at border sites, in refugee camps, through interdiction, pushbacks, restrictive visa requirements and smart borders etc. So, I think reframing the migration crisis as a displacement and immobility crisis illuminates that most migrants are forcibly displaced and systematically immobilized. Displacement and immobility, then — not free movement — is the reality of racial imperial management in our contemporary era.

"There can be no anti-capitalism that is not also anti-racist and there can be no anti-racism that is not also anti-capitalist.

Second, language such as “migrant crisis” or “refugee crisis” is a pretext to shore up further border securitization and repressive practices of detention and deportation. Images and language of swarms, floods, caravans or invaders all depict and villainize migrants and refugees as the cause of a “border crisis.” Whenever the state claims a crisis, its responses end up in service to the state and reconfigurations of state power. Perhaps most ironically and offensively, the migration crisis is declared a *new* crisis with Western countries positioned as its primary victims, even though for four centuries nearly 80 million Europeans became settler-colonists across the Americas and Oceania, while four million indentured laborers from Asia were scattered across the globe and the transatlantic slave trade kidnapped and enslaved 15 million Africans. Colonialism, genocide, slavery and indentureship are not only completely erased as continuities of violence in current invocations of a “migration crisis” — they are also the very conditions of possibility for Western notions of bordered sovereignty.

Finally — and this is more semantics but important nonetheless — is that questioning who is considered a “migrant” within the narrative of “migration crisis” blows open the lid on global asymmetries of power. We never talk about business travelers, expats, diplomats, vacationers etc. as migrants. Even though there are millions of people on the move today, including

people Columbusing all around the world on luxury yachts, people hopping on airplanes in first-class every week, people with investor class immigrant visas, that kind of movement is not surveilled, scapegoated, scrutinized or considered problematic. In fact, under our system of colonialism and capitalism, that kind of movement — representing power and dominant race, class, caste, settler status in the empire — is actually celebrated and sought after.

Gentrifiers, for example, are the new colonial pioneers, usurping land and property and building gated communities enforced through policing. So, when we say, “migration crisis,” we are not actually talking about all kinds of movement or anyone on the move. In fact, embedded in the language of “migration crisis” is the anti-Black idea of a certain kind of inherently undesirable movement: the unregulated, ungovernable movement of predominantly racialized poor and oppressed peoples. When the state and mainstream media invokes a “migration crisis,” it is not all movement or any and all people crossing borders that they have in mind. Rather, it is specifically displaced and immobilized people on the Other side of whiteness and capital and empire who are being dehumanized, who are being contained and who are being surveilled and captured by carceral systems and borders.

Another Key Side To Your Work Has Been To Present Today’s Bordering Practices And The Management Of Migration As More Centrally Involved In Imperialist Expansion. Could You Discuss This In Terms Of What Is Specifically New Compared To Classic Dynamics Of Imperialism And How They Have Been Understood? You Critique A Lot Of Ingrained Ideas Around Migration And Borders; How Has Your Own Thinking Changed In Recent Years?

I think my ideas have changed in lots of ways, including many of the ways named above. Specifically, in relationship to the dynamics of imperialism that you ask about, I think we need to pay more attention to how the outsourcing of border controls is increasingly a method of maintaining imperial superpower in the world, especially for the US, Canada, Israel, India, Australia, New Zealand, the UK and western and central EU countries.

As we know, imperialism is a root cause of global migration, but now the management of global migration and the outsourcing of border controls is also becoming a means of preserving imperial relations. US, Australian and European subordination of Central America, Oceania, Africa and the Middle East compels countries in these regions to accept external border checkpoints, offshore detention, migration prevention campaigns and expelled deportees. This becomes part of the conditions of trade and aid agreements. It is countries in the Global South including Libya, Mali, Mexico, Nauru, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Turkey and Sudan that have become the new frontiers of border militarization.

In the US, Customs and Border Protection has trained 15,000 border agents from 100 different countries. Journalist and author Todd Miller writes in his book *Empire of Borders*, “Close your eyes and point to any landmass on a world map, and your finger will probably find a country that is building up its borders in some way with Washington’s assistance.” All the horrors that unfolded under Trump’s Remain in Mexico protocols, and now under Biden, are a result of border outsourcing. The US funds immigration enforcement in Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to stop migrants and refugees well before they even reach the US-Mexico border.

Europe has similarly constructed an entire fortress around itself that extends far beyond its borders. Countries across the Sahel region in Africa are especially pressured to accept

outsourcing of EU borders, and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa diverts billions of euros earmarked for aid to twenty-six African countries into surveillance and military equipment to prevent refugees from leaving the continent. Frontex is expanding its patrols and interceptions in the Mediterranean — already [the world's deadliest border](#) — as well as drone surveillance. Most EU development, trade and aid agreements now force African countries to implement border checkpoints and migration prevention campaigns, such as anti-smuggling and interdiction operations.

What we can take from all this is two things: first, that borders are not fixed lines simply demarcating territory. They are productive regimes firmly embedded in global imperialism, and border controls exist far beyond the territorial border itself. Second, we have to understand the critical role of immigration-related diplomacy in terms of current global relations. Immigration diplomacy through the soft power of aid agreements — or in some cases, outright threats of trade war — compels countries across Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Oceania to accept outsourced migration controls. All of this globalizes the violence of borders, further cementing imperial and colonial relations.

Could You Talk More About The Various Nationalist Pitfalls That You Critique On The Left? While The Border Regime Is Basically There To Segment The Working Class — And Is A Barrier To Working Class Power — Arguments For Stronger Migration Controls And Hostility Towards Migrant Workers Have A Long History Within Much Of The Broad Left Itself. How Should We Try To Counter This Tendency And Build More Meaningful Solidarity?

The growing global reliance on migrant workers demonstrates both the centrality of bordering regimes to racial capitalism, as well as the failures of the left nationalist position.

To begin with, two points of clarification. Firstly, what I mean by migrant workers is not all people who migrate for work but, rather, those workers under state-sanctioned programs of temporary migrant work. Low-wage and temporary migrant workers are tied — I would say indentured — to one employer by contracts and visas. They are subjected to dangerous working conditions, forced labor and wage theft, and are denied access to labor protections, social services and full immigration status.

And secondly, what I mean by the left nationalist position is not oppressed peoples' struggles for national liberation, but specifically the widely held position that the form of the nation-state can guard against the ills of globalized neoliberal capitalism. This left nationalist position maintains that the state has been captured by multinational corporations and has withered away under capitalist globalization.

In the case of migrant workers, their distinct ordering of legal-but-deportable labor generates structural hierarchies between racialized migrant workers and citizen workers, and further affixes race to citizenship. This is not a question of just bad employers — though, of course, there are many bad employers — but of bordering regimes that facilitate the segmentation of certain workers *as* migrant workers. There is an entire class of workers, who are suddenly in a different position in both the labor force and in the nation-state. Even though they are our neighbors and in the same workforce as us, they have completely different rights and entitlements.

"The growing global reliance on migrant workers demonstrates both the centrality of bordering regimes to racial capitalism, as well as the failures of the left nationalist position.

How does this happen? Through the border. Migration has been controlled by borders in order to both create an imperial racial regime of terror, as discussed earlier, *as well as* produce pliable labor segmented by nationality and race. The border acts as a spatial fix for capitalism and is a key pillar of both globalized racial capitalism and racist citizenship. Capitalism requires labor to be constantly segmented and differentiated — whether across race, gender, ability, caste or citizenship. These stratifications *cheapen* labor, because there is no such thing as “cheap labor” — the conditions of capitalism and other forms of manufactured vulnerability create cheapened labor. Lack of full and permanent immigration status is key to creating pools of hyper-exploitable, cheapened labor. “Migrant workers” is just a euphemism for Third World workers, and jobs like farm work, domestic work and service work that cannot be outsourced are being insourced. Insourcing and outsourcing represent two sides of the same capitalist coin: deliberately deflated labor and political power.

The state has not withered away under neoliberalism. While austerity certainly means a weakened public sector, the financial and carceral systems of the state that guarantee capital flows and social control of people have expanded. Borders are not intended to exclude all people or to deport all people, but to create conditions of “deportability,” which in turn increases social and labor precarity. It is necessary to understand how important migrant workers are to racial capitalism because it shows us that the border actually works in the interest of capital and *not* against it.

And this is precisely why left nationalists are wrong. They have a misdirected approach — which is also a racist approach — calling for us to “shut down the border” to migrant workers. In this formulation, migrant workers are essentially scab workers who are lowering the wage floor and stealing jobs from citizens. Migrant workers do not suppress wages; bosses and borders do. Free capital *requires* immobilized labor, which the border produces. Also, for migrants to be successfully pitted against workers in this way presupposes that migrants are not also workers participating in and leading class struggles. So, we see how this kind of purportedly “left” nationalism actually dovetails perfectly with right-wing and bourgeois nationalism by increasing immigration enforcement, reproducing the logic of scarcity and scapegoating that austerity depends on. This blunts class consciousness and maintains the international division of labor upon which capitalism relies.

This is where it is very important for left movements to take up the [call for status for all workers](#), as put forward by migrant worker organizations. This means that all migrant workers should have immigration status, right to collectively organize and unionize, full rights to labor protections and full health and safety protections. The only way to fight back against the cheapening of labor is to engage in an internationalist fight against racist citizenship and racial capitalism. That is to say, we need to fight *for* immigration status, labor protections and living wages for all workers — and to make the divisions created by the border obsolete.

These Points Around Imperialism And Nationalist Protectionism Converge Very Specifically Today In Relation To Climate Change. With The Ecological Crisis Deepening, How Should We View Initiatives Like The “Green New Deal,” Which Seem To Center Global North Solutions To An Emergency That Is Experienced

Disproportionately In The Global South? How Should We Approach An Internationalist Struggle Against Border Imperialism In The Context Of Ecological Catastrophe?

Not all, but a lot of Green New Deal initiatives are focused at the site of the Western nation-state. These programs of expanding new “green” jobs, expanding the public sector and lowering emissions are basically green programs of welfare state redistribution in the Global North. They generally outright fail to take responsibility for the massive extraction of imperialism — or imagine us ending capitalism. They fail to address climate debt and the reparations owed to those countries in the Global South that are most vulnerable to climate disasters, despite being the least responsible for climate change.

Without a transnational and global justice approach, a Green New Deal maintains colonialism and existing inequalities in a warming world. A global Green New Deal geared toward decarbonizing would necessarily require global demilitarization, decarceration and decolonization. Especially with the rise of [eco-fascist tendencies](#) among the far-right and liberal state responses of [securitizing borders](#) to [climate refugees](#), it is imperative to have an internationalist response to climate change that advocates for a no border politics.

Border And Rule Finishes With A Section Focused On Building Movements, Advocating A Leftist No Border Politics That Is Implicitly Abolitionist, Anti-Colonial And Internationalist. There You Present The Simple But Challenging Vision Of A World That Is Capable Of Being A Home To Everyone. Could You Talk About This And To What Degree You Think The Basis Of Such A World Already Exists?

I would say for myself — and, if I may, for the comrades and the organizations that I have been alongside, since this is a collective struggle — a no border politics is expansive. It includes the freedom to stay and the freedom to move, meaning that no one should be forcibly displaced from their homes and lands, and that people should have the freedom to move with safety and dignity. Those two freedoms may seem contradictory, but actually they are necessary corollaries. The crux of a no border politics is nestled in the broader politics of home. How do we create a world where we all have a home? Where we can all claim home, where we are all at home in our bodies, where the earth is cared for as a home, where non-human beings have a home? Thinking of home is not a sentimental matter — at the edge of climate catastrophe, it really is a pressing political issue.

Many people think of a no border politics as just opening the border but the world stays as is, which then inevitably raises claims like, “Oh, if you got rid of the border then everyone will come here,” or, “There’ll be a brain drain in the Global South.” But a no border politics is not only about opening the border. Thinking with organizations like [Les Gilets Noirs](#), [Mijente](#), [No One Is Illegal](#), [the Sans Papiers movement](#), opening the border is not enough if we still have mass inequality and social differentiation. A no borders politics is more expansive than the site of the border itself. A no border politics is about dismantling all bordering, all ordering and all exploitative regimes. We have to dismantle all the systems that uphold a system of apartheid that even allows the Global North to exist in relation to the Global South — or the conditions of the South within the North. We have to eradicate this asymmetrical reality of who is displaced and who is forced to move and under what conditions. We need to fundamentally change this world: no more military occupations, prisons, police, borders, drone wars, sweatshops, corporations or banks. This is all part of the revolutionary horizon that we need.

About the editor:



Viren Lobo who was influenced by liberation theology during his college days did an MBA from Institute of Rural Management Anand. He has been working the development sector since he passed out from there in 1985. Employer, employee and other contradictions observed by him during his thirty year stint at Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD) forced him to examine the relevance of Marxism as a way of looking at reality in relation to change he sought to bring. During the course of his work covering more than twenty States, he noticed a link between the livelihoods and ecology which he pursued strongly as Executive Director SPWD. The limitations of existing organisations to deal with the complex questions society posed motivated him to set up Institute of Ecology and Livelihood Action as the transition needed to address issues he was looking into at that time. The contradictions arising out of the a series of Bills that were passed during the last five years encouraged him to use the enforced sedentary life imposed on him to use his creativity to write plays. These were the first of a series which have helped serve the purpose of putting on paper the complex dilemma and diverse social opinions he came across.

About Especioza Trust:



Especioza Trust is named after my great, great grandmother who widowed at an early age brought up her only son Aogustinho (seated in centre). Shortly after a family reunion in December 2013, we got news that the family home at 84 Porvorim had been illegally sold to a builder. My aunt Marie stepped in and after getting the required mandate from the family not only got the family home back but the previous ancestral home of 85 Porvorim as well. Since then it became her project in memory of her widowed great grandmother till her death on her mother Amy Lobo's 117th birthday (25th July 2019). Since the informal trust set up by her could not achieve fruition I decided to keep the struggle and memories alive by carrying on her mission to bring unity within the family and dedicate the work of the Trust to all widows and single women of the world. My Aunt/Cousin Hazel Cardozo the daughter of Liban Pinto one of the two brothers born on my birthday (6th September) has helped me to give this project shape. The other brother Lucian in whose name the house was, also happened to be born on my birthday as well. The spiritual connection and the necessity for me to step in also come from a lot of other quarters which need not be documented here.

Viren Lobo