

Special Article

Patriotism of cowardice and enslaved Mind

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(The Russia-Ukraine War has entered its second week. There is a general complaint that America has been running its one-sided narrative about the war in the media. In India too, from the very first day of the war, sometimes mutually complementary and sometimes contradictory mini-narratives of the government and the civil society are also floating in the media and social media. This article was first published in February 2019. Comrade Ramswaroop Mantri reminded that the article is also relevant in the context of Russia-Ukraine war. Therefore, it has been re-issued for your kind reading.)

1.

The modern industrial civilization has witnessed two World Wars. The researchers of war have yet not been able to estimate the magnitude of casualties/deaths – both military and civilian – which occurred in these two World Wars. The estimated figure of people killed in both World Wars is between 10 to 15 crores. World Wars I and II were preceded and succeeded by many major battles. Wars of independence were invariably fought by all the colonized countries. Even the Cold War that began after the end of the World War II and lasted until the dissolution of the USSR, has been described by the scholars as a special kind of world war. Cold War was also characterized by a large number of deaths. There have been many direct and proxy wars during and after the Cold War involving sometimes two countries and sometimes five-six countries. In many wars of the nature of internal conflicts such as those that followed the dissolution of Yugoslavia, civil war was accompanied with racial massacre. In the last few decades, Islamic terrorists have redefined the concept of war which now includes the features of traditional war, counter-war and civil war. In response a new concept of 'War Against Terror' (WAT), has emerged which is global in nature.

In the First World War, chemical weapons were used, but not nuclear weapons. World War II witnessed the emergence and consolidation of US supremacy over the erstwhile colonial powers primarily due to the former's use of atom bombs on Japan's Hiroshima and Nagasaki cities. Since then, on the one hand the world is living in the danger of a nuclear war, and, on the other hand, the same nuclear weapons are considered as a deterrent to the third world war. The weapon-manufacturing countries are competing against each other in the race to produce extreme weapons of mass destruction. Meanwhile, the discussion on the imminent third world war has also been continuously occurring on the world stage. Since the end of World War II, it is believed that Europe and America had sworn that the third world war would not be fought on their land. In this context it becomes pertinent to take note of Albert Einstein's words, "I do not know with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones."

India also played a role in these ongoing wars. The path of India's colonization by the British was paved by numerous battles and treaties. Being a British colony, India participated in the two World Wars, even though the participation was limited in nature. In 1857 and 1942, India fought a direct war against the colonial power. In the middle of the World War II, under the leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose and collaboration with the Axis countries, the *Azad Hind Fauj* (Independent National Army- INA) fought the freedom struggle of India in its own way. In the struggle of 1857, millions of Indians sacrificed their lives for the sake of independence. Also in 1942, according to Dr. Lohia, 50 thousand patriots were killed by the British. After independence, in 1948, 1962, 1965, 1971 and 1999 India fought wars with its two neighbors - Pakistan and China.

This brief recounting of wars has not been done to show the scale of the destruction of lives and resources or its drastic effects on human beings, although it is a matter of separate problem altogether. However, if the imperialists will keep on looting, wars will also keep on occurring. The looters will continue to wage wars against the countries that are looted. Simultaneously, the imperialist forces will keep forcing these countries to wage wars against each-other and will also fight amongst themselves for the dominance on various resources. Further, the brokers serving the interests of the imperialist powers in the countries looted by the imperialists will keep waging war against the working classes of their own countries. Therefore, wars are inevitable until this exploitative capitalist system

exists. The aforementioned details have been made in order to demonstrate that while living in the civilization of the wars, India's mainstream civil society, which, to a large extent, includes the intellectual class as well, has no serious understanding about war neither for their own sake nor for the country, nor for the world. The same civil society is not only ignorant of the world's war-industry; it doesn't have any idea about the potential role of India in current or future wars (if any). It is said since World War II that the next World War, whatever form it takes, will be fought on the soil of Asia. But the Indian civil society has no anticipatory thoughts about the possible role of India in that war, and how the consequences of that war will impact/shape India. The same civil society has no knowledge of the reasons behind the success of the erstwhile invaders' and colonists' in defeating the Indian forces in the wars. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the civil society is an illiterate lot even regarding the two major wars of India's independence - the armed struggle of 1857 and the peoples' struggle of 1942.

It may be due to the fact that a civil society has decided to deliberately overlook the wars by focusing its attention on other areas of national life concerning country's strength and prosperity. There are many such countries in the world including Japan. In India, with Gandhi's support it can be said that we, as a society, doesn't endorse perpetuation of violent conflicts. But the dream of civil society in India is to see India as a superpower soon without being actually aware of the real network and pace of growing military-world. Rather, a part of civil society considers India as a super power owing to it being a huge market and the associated economy. This civil society of India displays its patriotism in a variety of bizarre ways and appears to be fiercely full of exhortations of war. In this context, the situation has now become catastrophic - that it attacks in groups, even sometimes alone, 'the hidden traitors in the house'. It has become a common practice that such elements of civil society openly abuse even women in the name of patriotism.

Needless to say, in reality, the civil society of India does not know its country. Nor it feels any sincere attachment to it. It cannot even think of making any sacrifice for the country. In spite of this, it is seen always afflicted with patriotism and war hysteria posing itself as a sole master of the whole country. Such groups term themselves as civil society of India, but its members would be termed as illegitimate citizens of India if they are tested on the touchstone of the Indian

Freedom Struggle and the Indian Constitution. In the words of Kishan Patnayak, this enslaved mentality has irreparably dented their minds. In my journalistic writings over the past 20-25 years I have written many a times about this phenomenon of the Indian civil society. One may notice that this pathology shows no sign of abatement rather it grows in intensity with the passage of time. So, despite the repetition, here it has been briefly considered once again.

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With the making of 'new India' with the New Economic Policies, patriotism possessed the civil society like a ghost. Simultaneously, its already narrow sense of citizenship became narrower, and the virtues of humanity also decreased. The fact is known to everyone that the resources and labour of the country has progressively been robbed in the interest of corporate capitalism in the last three decades. In the rule of Narendra Modi, this process has turned into a blind race. The private sector is being promoted at the expense of the public sector against the spirit of the Constitution. All democratic institutions are being destroyed. The democracy is changing into a *mobocracy*. India is stuck badly in the clutches of neo-imperialism. The deeds of the political leadership which resulted in the loss of freedom, the Constitution, the resources, the labour, the constitutional institutions could not have been done without the collusion of the civil society. But the civil society is not ready to accept the blame of being country's traitor and imperialist forces' slave as the same civil society has unjustly enriched itself-socially as well as economically in the last three decades. As the treacherous conduct and slavery of the civil society of India increases, its pompous display of patriotism will also take new forms. The corporate capitalism will readily sponsor such performances in the full fledged manner, so that the vast population devastated by robbing continues to be intoxicated by the drug of patriotism. The civil society will continue to tell this deprived and excluded population that the cause of their problems is not the loot of corporate capitalism, but the Muslims. However, the impact of this jingoistic atmosphere is such that even Muslims do not want to be behind anyone in the race of showing patriotism!

The ideals of patriotism projected by the civil society keep changing from time to time. But there is a fundamental condition for this ideal-man - his faith in capitalism should remain intact. For the past few years, its ideal is Narendra Modi and *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS). Take the RSS first. Since its

establishment the RSS has a deep desire to be labeled as a patriot. It is said that God's bounty is boundless. Today's divinity resides in corporate capitalism. With the grace of corporate capitalism, RSS is distributing certificates of patriotism today! It tells that the army of his volunteers can take the front even before the Indian army! The bunker made from cow dung will fail China's invasion of Dokalam! Nation-protecting *yagnas* safeguard the nation from external aggression! Soldiers should regularly read *Gita-Ramayana* to enhance their bravery! Through some of his leaders, it also tells those soldiers are meant to die in the security of the country as well as the seats which will be won by BJP in the upcoming *Lok Sabha* elections in the atmosphere created by the death of soldiers in Pulwama and on the border! Its workers are caught while spying for the Pakistani intelligence agency ISI, but it does not matter to the patriotism of the RSS! Because in its eyes they are 'holy sinners'!

Narendra Modi, whose government allowed 100 percent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the defense sector when he became the Prime Minister, explains that the traders take more risk than the soldiers for the country! He also tells that the business runs in his veins! 'Patriotic' businessmen are seen running with him in the country and abroad! Perhaps in this raid, Narendra Modi one day went to meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif without an official program! In the Rafale aircraft deal, the name of the public sector company Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL) was removed and was replaced with the newly formed company of industrialist Anil Ambani! The way he openly and publicly announces his intimacy with his industrial friends, he also does the same about the army's operations! The interest of merchants is paramount for him, provided they are big businessmen! The risk takers of Modi, sometime leave the country and flee abroad!

This personality called Narendra Modi is the ideal of patriotism of the civil society of India. In the case of patriotism, the civil society worships him unquestioningly. So, Narendra Modi too considers himself to be above the questions and is confident that his worshippers are capable of taking care of all the task. Even after the terrorist attack on security forces in Pulwama on 14th February, he was busy in filming himself, inaugurating events and giving speeches to the election rallies by giving an open hand to his worshippers!

A little discussion about the Pulwama attack must be made here. In any systematic country, the task of investigating the deaths of soldiers in the terrorist attack is the first and foremost. And so far some clues must have been found out by now. But nothing like this happened in India. So far the number of soldiers who were martyred in the attack is itself not clear to the public. Somewhere the number is written 42, somewhere 44 and somewhere above 40. If the mistake in the Pulwama attack has also happened due to same lapses on behalf of the government, as the Governor had said immediately after the attack, then it should have been honestly detected. Accountability should have been fixed, and under the law, the culprits should have been punished. The truth of taking responsibility of the attack by *Jaish e Mohammed* (JEM) should have been further ascertained for the sake of military security in future. But sadly, February 14th was sunk into the war cry. The death of these para-military soldiers carry no value, because they were not members of the civil society that has been well-fed by the loot of corporate capitalism. Yes, they could be used to do politics; and that use has been made thoroughly.

In democracy, the military establishment works under political leadership. But at the same time it is also necessary that political leadership is not working under the pressure of imperialist powers at least in the matter of security of the country. The Indian Air Force (IAF) entered into Pakistan in pre-dawn hours on February 26 and dropped bombs at the training camp of JEM situated in Balakot. According to the Foreign Secretary's statement, this was a 'non-military preemptive action' of the Air Force. The President of America had given a statement that India would do something big to avenge the Pulwama attack. In retaliation of the IAF action, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) entered in the Indian territory and attacked a military base. Indian pilot Abhinandan Varthman had to land in the Pakistani territory due to damage to the MiG-21 fighter aircraft. The US president again said that a good news will come from Pakistan. The Indian pilot was released by Pakistan.

After Indira Gandhi, America has been dictating India more or less during the tenures of all Prime Ministers. On October 1, 2001, JEM attacked the assembly in Srinagar, in which 27 people were killed and 60 were injured. The then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee wrote a letter pleading US President George Bush to persuade Pakistan to stop facilitating terrorists on its soil. Until then, 9/11 had happened and Vajpayee had been first after Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair in

joining the US's "new war" against terrorism. But America stood with Pakistan, it is with her even today. It is understandable that America dictates Pakistan, but how can it give directions to India?

There has been a continuous demand for war from the civil society in the events that took place from February 14 till today. There has been no war, and it was not meant to be. Of course, more than 50 Indian soldiers have been received martyrdom in a fortnight. There's still no certainty regarding the number of terrorists that have been killed across the border in the air strike by IAF. Bombs dropped in Balakot were purchased from Israel. The war-mongers, in their enthusiasm for war did not care to discuss that why did India start buying arms from Israel, who used to buy arms from Soviet Russia and won three wars against Pakistan on their strength? Will India's security be predicated on weapons purchased from abroad forever? Will the weapon selling countries continue to provide India with weapons that could secure its boundaries in the possible third World War or in any other war? Will the security of India be given to the private companies established by the players of crony capitalists guided by the lust of profit at the expense of the Public Sector? Will America, the 'Mecca' of the civil society, to whom it has been worshiping for the last 40 years, will stop giving arms and other financial assistance to Pakistan? And, will India become a superpower on the strength of the purchased weapons?

The air strike took place 12 days after the Pulwama incident. It was well thought out that there should be no civilian casualties in the attack. But what justifies the decision of keeping military bases of Pakistani Army, which caters the terrorists, out from the target of the attack in the war? Any war usually takes place between the two armies of the two countries. If the war-demanding civil society considers this action to be the destroyer of terrorism, then it is not aware of the nature of Pakistan-based and international network of terrorism. The business flows in the prime minister's blood. War cannot be fought with a commercial instinct; only political trade can be done in the name of war. War is the art of *Veer Rasa* (heroic essence). The *Sthayii Bhava* (enduring emotion) of *Veer Rasa* is *Utsah* (enthusiasm). Poetics have said that this feeling is found only in those men and women who attained the sublime nature. Those whose anger overturns their wisdom all the time cannot live in the spirit of valor associated with the war.

Actually, the war-mongers and their heroes are guided by the feeling of hatred. There is no need to state towards whom this hatred is directed. Every person knows his/her feelings well. Since India's defeat in the 1962 war China has occupied 20,000 square kilometers of land of India. The Parliament of India had passed the unanimous resolution to reclaim its lost territory. But the war-monger civil society of India never demands war against China. It also never demands for boycott of America, who has been the savior of Pakistan since the beginning, which kept Osama bin Laden hidden in its territory. The point to be stated is that the civil society always indulged in demanding war but is grossly unaware of the basic spirit of the war with which it is fought in true national spirit. A civil society having coward and slave mind can make quarrels not war. The most worrying aspect of this negative mentality of the civil society guided by hatred can have an adverse impact on the psychology of the security forces in the long run.

3

Considering RSS and Modi as their ideal for patriotism is not limited to the RSS/BJP camp only. There are a great number of people associated with political parties other than RSS/BJP supporters. With them, all the highly educated professionals and government officers are also involved, who, despite all their capabilities, are essentially political illiterates. The RSS/BJP brand patriotism derives a great strength from them. The secular progressive camp of the civil society is against the RSS/BJP brand patriotism. But it has been relegated to the margins. There is nothing in their kitty other than repeating some of the prevailing facts against the RSS/BJP or making jokes about and on the devotees of Modi on social media just to tease them or make fun of them. The secular progressive camp is not being able to regain its strength and there are several reasons for that. The most important reason is that by being a covert supporter of capitalism it automatically stands with the RSS/BJP. Apart from this, its strategy of sustaining 'war' status with RSS also strengthens the RSS/BJP. Its opportunistic behavior with non-BJP political parties and politicians hinders the strenuous political stream to set a decisive alternative to capitalism and thus brings lasting benefits to the RSS/BJP. Most of the intellectuals and activists who fight for social justice in this camp promote the political power of the RSS/BJP by abusing Hinduism and its Gods/Goddesses. There are also individuals and groups in the secular-progressive camp that are always full of anger towards the Indian State. In anger, generally they forget to make a difference between the governments

formed in the Indian State and the State itself. Their anger often leads them to the opposition of the Indian State. The advantages of this go to the RSS/BJP only. There is also a special group of *Bharatiyatawadis* (scholars interested in exploring and employing Indian systems of knowledge) in the civil society. They connect themselves with Gandhi. However, it is often found that most of them distort Gandhi and the RSS becomes their last refuge. A new 'ideologically neutral' group is also there which has come out of the womb of corporate capitalism directly. It has a long range from the *saffron* to the *red*. However, its brand of patriotism is identical to the RSS/BJP's.

In the last three decades, the secular progressive camp has not been able to comprehend a patriotic narrative apart from the RSS/BJP. Now it does not even seem to have this desire. It talks about the 'Idea of India' in such a manner as if India resides in any book. The secular progressive camp can be seen in using its intellect, which it never suspects, either in certain identity discourses or tie-ups or in the mugging for governmental posts and prizes. The RSS/BJP's brand of fake, hollow and hypocritical patriotism prevails because there is no authentic alternative to it. Therefore it is prevailing. As long as this brand of patriotism will run, the real crisis before the country - freedom from the anti-imperialist forces - cannot be resolved. This is a big 'achievement' of the RSS/BJP that, by making an alliance with corporate capitalism, it has provided credibility/reputation to cowardice of the enslaved mind in the country.

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