**No Straw For The Drowning Humanity**

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The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, because we are the underlings. Underlings we are, for we submit peacefully to the dominant interest of the ruling class, identifying our conflicting interests with theirs and cannot see the deformed intentions of the defenders and what they defend. Only a fortnight ago people of Pakistan celebrated their Independence Day but independence from whom, the existential query was never posed. “Independence” for Fanon “is not a magic ritual but an indispensable condition for men and women to live in true liberation, in other words, to master all the material resources necessary for a radical transformation of society.” Deficient in the material resources, people adhere to a “politically motivated, historically contingent and ideologically fictive” religious identity whose swansong was written way back in 1971.

The seventy-fifth birthday of the country arrived not at an auspicious time. It was the time when Rome was burning while the dominant classes were at loggerheads with each other, and the flute of the praetorian guards was playing the death knell. The country was in a state of catastrophe, inflation had risen to 42%, the gulf in the balance of payment had widened beyond $20 billion, the rupee was in a free fall, power outages were stretched to innumerable hours, and the price of electricity was so exorbitant that even those with disposable incomes were trying to use it carefully to save money to meet other expenses. Jinnah’s sick state was inching towards its logical conclusion, the health of the leader had left unassailable shadows and indelible marks on the country he valiantly won three-quarters of a century ago.

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The situation in Pakistan was almost the replica of 1947 when Mountbatten cleaved the subcontinent into two parts, barring armed forces Pakistan had no viable institution. The corrupt political elite that turned its loyalties from the Unionist party to the Muslim League comprising inept, provincial feudal, with a colonial mindset was prepared to play second fiddle to the repressive state apparatus, with a singular desire to maintain its class privileges. The political conflict did not spare the governor-general, who had no love lost with his premier. The financial crunch was extreme, the first finance minister, Ghulam Mohammad had no money to present the country’s first budget until it was donated by Nizam of Hyderabad. The political and financial fragmentation was complete. Seventy-five years later Pakistan is desperately looking to the IMF to bail it out from bankruptcy and the only institution thanks to the unstable nature of the country’s territorial boundaries that has survived the wrath of time but not the vicissitude of fortune is the military might with its gigantic empire.

Where are the people in the equation? The partition was one of the biggest holocausts of the century, which took place within four years of colonially induced famine led by Winston Churchill, “a rotter, bounder and a cad” for Tariq Ali. The racist premier abhorred the Indians not only for their inferior skin colour but for their breeding habits, for him they bred like rabbits, he was also eager to see the cadaver of Gandhi. Colonialism killed 3-6 million Bengalese in 1943. The partition had almost two million victims, mostly Punjabis and Bengalese. No one asked them about the partition, caught unaware in the religious paranoia they were sliced into pieces, so ruthlessly that even the professional butchers were left in awe. The generations of the migrants and those who joined the country or were later forced to align with it are watching history repeating itself both as tragedy and farce. The lesson is loud and clear; in the war of Troy, people do not matter, those who control the means of production control the means of death and destruction. Proven 75 years ago, it stands the test of time even today.

The partition secured the lives of the leaders that flew in the British plans. Nehru’s India could not wake up to a new dawn, the tryst with destiny remained unfulfilled on either side of the divide. The twilight turned into darkness. Freedom devoid of economic content became a mirage. Both Gandhi’s murder and Liaquat’s assassination proved the point, Bhagat Singh was pushed into history’s oblivion, but the authenticity of his political message was proved beyond doubt. Propertyless were powerless, they could not determine their fate in 1946, and they are powerless even now. If the elections could change their fate, the masters would have ceased to hold them, if not for the sake of democracy in the name of religion. Crusade, capitalism, and democracy all three need the currency of freedom to realize in the market of the international community. Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Palestine are a few dreadful examples.

The refugees who were exiled from India found themselves at the mercy of the feudal that previously ruled Punjab and had boundless power after the partition. In one interview, Chaudry Zafarullah stated that he was offered to choose any office from the foreign ministry to the office of the chief justice of the supreme court to the ministry for the refugees by Daultana. The latter was holding the portfolio of defence and foreign affairs and probably Punjab’s premiership as well. When Mian Iftikhar Rudin demanded land reforms to provide means of subsistence for the refugees, Daultana and Mamdot, two political rivals ensured his dismissal from the ministry. Finally, the federal Sharia court put the matter to rest by declaring land reforms un-Islamic.

Pakistani ruling class has invoked the Islamic card effectively to undermine not only the class interests of the people but to subdue the rights of the minority provinces including the former east Pakistan, a majority province, erased from the public’s mind. The people of Baluchistan, Sindh, and South Punjab, inundated by water, are drowning in the towns and cities while the politicians and the clergy are blaming the disaster not on the mismanagement of the state but people’s sins. Their only sin is the lack of consciousness of slavery, a precondition for freedom. In its power-grabbing rivalry, the ruling class wrongly thinks that people are wearing their chains with a sense of pride and any expression of insolence and a show of paranoia that mimics the concept of freedom, a caricature built and projected by the dominant interests gratifies their minds. “In the depths of their hearts, the masses, secretly know the truth and disbelieve the lie, like catatonic patients who make known only at the end of their trance that nothing has escaped them.” (Horkheimer).

During Bengal’s famine. Wavell, the viceroy, protested repeatedly against the colonial behaviour of the Raj. His correspondence with Churchill was a bitter indictment of the British ruling class. Can one expect to hear a word of concern emerging from the power corridors about the grotesque and vulgar indifference of the brown ruling class of Pakistan as hapless people drown in water, inflation, and misery? The independence offered nothing to Bengalese; they walked out of the federation, the alienation in the smaller provinces is becoming acute, and the indifference of the establishment is adding fuel to the fire. It burnt the country in 1971 it may consume it again. Time is ticking.

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