

# MARXIST

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|   |    |
|---|----|
| Editor's Note   | 3  |
| PRABHAT PATNAIK<br>Some Comments About Marx's Epistemology                            | 7  |
| RAGHU<br>Defence Procurement Today:<br>Threat to Self-Reliance and Strategic Autonomy | 16 |
| CC RESOLUTION (2010)<br>On the Jammu & Kashmir Issue                                  | 57 |

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## Editor's Note

There has often been an interesting debate in trying to understand Marx's famous statement that "philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it". Can change happen without interpretation? Doesn't the process of interpretation itself lead to change? Are these two aspects – interpretation and change – disjointed?

Professor Prabhat Patnaik discusses this in connection with some observations about Marx's epistemology. Interpreting the world to maintain the status quo and interpreting the world in order to change it have their different epistemological positions. Professor Patnaik discusses this on the basis of "a position of 'epistemic exteriority' vis-à-vis the world being interpreted, and a position of 'epistemic interiority' vis-à-vis the world being interpreted".

Prabhat Patnaik says: "In arguing for changing the world rather than merely interpreting it, Marx was really arguing for interpreting the world from a perspective that is epistemically exterior to it."

The importance of the difference between these two positions is particularly great today in the context of neoliberal capitalism. The argument which says that there should be "labour market flexibility", that wages should be kept down, that trade union activities should be restricted, and that social wages should be cut, all in order to attract investment, so that the growth rate of output and employment in the economy could be increased, is

exactly analogous to the argument that said that the slaves should remain meek before the masters for their own good. It represents an epistemically interior perspective, which is being assiduously promoted at present by much of “liberal opinion”. An epistemically exterior position in contrast will recognize the necessity for transcending neoliberal capitalism for human freedom.

In the background of the whipping up of communal nationalist jingoism that we witnessed during the election campaign and, subsequently, post the dramatic changes brought about by abolishing Articles 370 and 35A vis-à-vis Jammu & Kashmir, a discussion on our defence capabilities merits a discussion.

Raghu discusses issues connected with defence procurement. India has been a major, if not the world’s largest, arms importer over the last decade. As several defence analysts have pointed out, Indian armed forces badly need modernization. “The Army has 68 per cent vintage, 24 per cent current and only 8 per cent state-of-the-art equipment. The accumulated deficit in weapons and ammunition is such that India would be strained to withstand 10 days of conflict, a weakness noted during the 1999 Kargil conflict and not changed much since.”

With the new government assuming office, with its aggressive drive for privatization, defence production is now opened up for 100 per cent FDI. Instead of strengthening domestic public sector units which have served the country all these decades to the best of their ability, this government has opened up this sector which will further undermine our self-reliant capacities so crucial in a sector important for our national security.

Currently, foreign companies are obliged to offset 30 per cent of the value of contracts as sub-contracts to Indian offset partners. With the private sector being allowed to enter defence production, the Indian partner could be a public sector undertaking, or a private entity. We had seen how in the Rafale deal, the initial offset partner, PSU Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, was replaced

by the private inexperienced Reliance Aerostructure headed by Anil Ambani. The French corporate, Dassault, that manufactures Rafale jets has now entered as a joint venture partner with Reliance Aerostructure and announced that it will exercise full control over technology. Hence, the objective of absorption of technology by Indian entities is virtually nullified.

The new defence procurement policy announced in 2016 allows the offsets contract to be signed and communicated to the government even up to two years after completion of the contract. This has very serious security implications.

Raghu argues that the “current policy framework for defence procurement, production and R&D needs to be completely overhauled, along with all its processes and institutional mechanisms”. The explicit objective must be maximizing technological self-reliance by upgrading and revamping the existing massive infrastructure and R&D capability in the public sector and synergistically developing with competent private sector entities to strengthen India's self-reliance in the defence industry.

As a document, we are re-publishing the CPI(M) Central Committee Resolution ‘On the Jammu & Kashmir Issue’ adopted at its meeting held on November 19-21, 2010.

Taking advantage of the fact that this issue of the *Marxist* is being published late, this document is being reproduced in the light of all the recent developments concerning Jammu & Kashmir.

This resolution came in the background of the mass protests that erupted in June 2010 with stones being thrown at security forces which claimed the lives of 111 youth due to police firing. This had deepened the gulf between Indian and Kashmiri people even further.

In the current context, of abrogation of crucial provisions of Articles 370 and 35A, the jingoistic nationalist propaganda aimed at manufacturing consent obfuscates the history of how

and on what terms the Dogra Kingdom of Jammu & Kashmir acceded to India. This document provides a brief history of those circumstances and the developments after Independence that led to the deepening of the alienation of Kashmiri people.

August 16, 2019