

# L i b e r a t i o n

JOURNAL OF LIBERATION, FORMERLY THE MOVEMENT FOR COLONIAL FREEDOM

## Kenya after 50 Years!



### Also inside:

- Donald Trump and the future of immigrants
- Iran nuclear Deal on the brink
- Debate on caste discrimination in the UK

# L i b e r a t i o n

Formerly, the Movement for Colonial Freedom, Liberation was founded in 1954 as the Movement for Colonial Freedom. Today, Liberation campaigns for Peace, Economic Justice, Equality and Human Rights.

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# Dalit Solidarity Network UK challenges UK government on caste discrimination legislation

By Meena Varma



**DALIT SOLIDARITY  
NETWORK UK**  
A world without caste discrimination

In July 2016, the Dalit Solidarity Network UK instructed well known solicitors Mishcon de Reya to write a pre-action letter to the Minister for Equalities and Women and the Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening.

This was a significant milestone for the Dalit Solidarity Network UK, leading a consortium of organisations, including Anti Caste Discriminations Alliance, CasteWatch UK and the National Secular Society who seek to challenge the UK government over the non-implementation of the promised legislation to outlaw caste discrimination in the UK. Well known solicitors, Mishcon de Reya's Employment team, acting on a pro bono basis for Dalit Solidarity Network UK challenged the UK government on this matter with Diya Sen Gupta and Daniel Cashman of Blackstone Chambers, also acting pro bono.

The response to the letter from the government, and the Minister for Equalities, Justine Greening, was to confirm that it will undertake a public consultation on the legislation – to take place over 12 weeks at the end of this year.

Under the caste system, which is practised most commonly on the South Asian continent, individuals are born into

a lifelong hierarchical status. As the former Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening MP will be more than well aware of the human and labour rights abuses suffered by Dalits in South Asian countries as a result of caste discrimination. She has met Dalit groups on her visits.

There is clear evidence of caste discrimination amongst the South Asian diaspora in the UK, affecting Christians, Hindus, Muslim and Sikh communities. Dalits have campaigned since 2007 for the inclusion of 'caste' as a protected characteristic (like race and gender) in the Equality Act 2010.

By an amendment effected by section 97 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013, the ability for caste to become an aspect of race then became an obligation for the Government to so legislate. In July 2013, the government introduced a timetable that set out a series of steps, including a public consultation, intended to lead to the enactment of this caste legislation in the summer of 2015.

Key deadlines in this timetable have not been met, and to date the government remains silent on whether it will make an Order under section 9(5) of the

Equality Act 2010 so

as to provide for caste to be an aspect of race. So what of this recently announced consultation? The goalposts have been moved. We were told in 2013 the consultation would focus on 'how to implement the legislation.' It now appears that the focus will be on 'whether to implement the legis-

lation.'

CasteWatch UK is preparing to mobilise many thousands of Dalits to protest outside Parliament if the terms of the consultation are not fair and equal.

The Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance have stated in their press release: 'The Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance is deeply concerned that the UK Government has decided to consult on the need for the law already agreed by Parliament in April 2013. The Government is blatantly ignoring the will of Parliament and UN CERD's recommendation that the law be brought into force without further delay.'

The National Secular Society has raised the issue at the United Nations Human Rights Council saying It (the UK Government) has just announced a public consultation on "whether additional measures are needed [on] ... caste discrimination ... under the 2010 Equality Act". This in effect invites the opinions of the public, including those of 'so-called higher' caste and those wishing to discriminate on grounds of caste, to oppose the legislation recommended by the UN in accordance with the UK's "international human rights obligations", and required by Parliament.

Theresa May has pledged; "The government I lead will be driven, not by the interests of the privileged few, but by yours. We will do everything we can to give you more control over your lives." Will she stand by this pledge and protect the many thousands of potential victims of caste discrimination rather than listen to the rich lobby that insists there is no caste discrimination in Britain – well not much anyway!

**Meena Varma**

**Director, Dalit Solidarity Network UK  
writes for Liberation.**



They are separated from the crowd and are so dedicated to what work they are doing

Image from: Dalit Solidarity Network



# The election of Donald Trump and the future of immigrants in the United States

Dr Arif Azad



Donald Trump's upstart candidacy, resulting in an upset win, continues to reverberate across the world. Part of Trump's wider appeal was supplied by his explosive and racist stance on immigration issues. Never before has a US presidential candidate couched immigration issues in such openly racist terms as he did. His divisive rhetoric on immigration tapped into the economic and cultural nationalism that underpinned Trump's campaign. On the campaign trail, Trump concentrated his fire on immigrants whom he liberally, and variously, described as rapists and criminals. Though these pejorative terms were applied to all immigrants, Muslims in particular came in for Trump's special verbal lashings. Muslims as a category were described as terrorists and Trump vowed to ban the entry of Muslims associated with terrorism in the US, under his presidency. Trump's public spat with Khizr Khan, who lost his son in the US foreign wars, underlined his hostility to Muslims. Trump was one of the consistent critics of Obama. Trump's anti-Obama diatribe focused on proving that Obama was not born in the USA.

The anti-immigrant strain in Trump's political arsenal remained consistent. He has not spared the Mexicans and Hispanics who have, like other immigrants, played a vital part in US prosperity. In relation to the Mexicans he pushed a consistent line

to build a wall on the Mexican-US border to prevent the ingress of illegal Mexican immigrants. At the height of the campaign, he made it a point to visit Mexico and had the audacity to suggest that Mexico would pay for the immigration Berlin wall. The Mexican government was quick to deny Trump's proposal. This was typical Trump: making his point while maintain a slender relationship with the truth. One of the biggest questions being asked everywhere following Trump's victory is: how much of Trump's campaign rhetoric will find its way into immigration policy once he formally assumes the presidency in the new year? So far guesswork has concentrated on how his campaign pledges are going to impact policy areas of trade, immigration and climate change. One line of argument suggests that Republican establishment will come into play to temper some of Trump's wild-card electoral pledges.

The second line of argument suggests that since he posed as a big boy who can fix all problems he may not be amenable to the political pragmatists in the Republican Party. However, on the immigration issue it has not taken Trump long to indicate that he is determined to push ahead with the deportation of 2-3 million immigrants with criminal records and to build a combination of fence and wall on the border between Mexico and the USA. Since immi-

gration is a policy domain where pro-immigration groups hold limited clout, there is a wider sense that Trump will push hard on the immigration issue as the least resistance is likely to be offered by the historically weak pro-immigration policy actors. Trump has made it plain that immigration is his priority number one. Though the USA has prided itself on being a country of immigrants, anti-immigrant's feelings have been widespread and have been used by politicians for political purposes. Even the outgoing president, Barack Obama, while pushing through legislation offering 11 million illegal migrants pathways to citizenship, his presidency was known for deporting the highest number of illegal immigrants in the entire USA history. Under his presidency, more than 2 million immigrants were deported. The scale of deportations was such that pro-immigration organizations dubbed him the deportation president. Not only that, Obama's presidency also saw an enhanced immigration border patrol on the Mexican Border. This act of showing himself strong and tough on immigration did not endear him to the hostile Republican Party. The Republican Party blocked his modest immigration reform proposals at each step of the legislative process.



Having set out the relationship between Trump's presidency and immigration, there are some areas of immigration policy which are likely to be affected in the short term under Trump's presidency. The first, immigration issue, enjoying low political clout in policy circles, will be the terrain where Trump is likely to exert his mandate muscally. This is already evidenced in his intention to deport about 3 million immigrants with criminal records.

In practice this may prove harder because of the limited judicial and immigration system capacity to handle this target. Secondly, the entry of Muslim immigrants into the USA is likely to be regulated more tightly. Already reports of Muslim visitors subjected to enhanced checks and controls have been the staple of news coverage since 9/11. Thirdly, there are fears that work visas for skilled migrants will face draconian tightening. This would be justified on grounds of native preference or Trump's America first policy. However, businesses are not likely to take it lying down as most of the Silicon Valley is dependent on foreign workers. To an extent, this is already happening in the UK where businesses are resisting the UK government clamp down on skilled migrant labour in the wake of the Brexit vote. Fourthly, the agreement which the Secretary of State, John Kerry, reached with the Australian government to accept 15,000 refugees from Australia's notorious off-shore refugee processing center in Nauru may come unstuck. Fifthly, during the current UN General Assembly Session, President Obama convened a historic summit of world leaders to deal with the growing problem of refugees and migration.

The lynchpin of the agreement President Obama reached with world leaders was the US commitment to raise the US refugee intake from 10,000 to 110,000 in addition to pledging 1 billion US dollars of extra funding. With the ascension of Trump this commitment is under threat of being downgraded; dealing a further blow to efforts to tackle the migration crisis. Sixthly, president Obama's only singular achievement of legislating legal pathways for 11 million illegal immigrants may also be in danger of being reversed as Trump is reportedly preparing to dismantle Obama's legacy piece by piece. Like every other policy area thrown into confusion, immigration policy and pro-immigration advocates face a testing time in the years ahead. Trump's incendiary campaign pledges and his post-election comments on the immigration issue do not inspire much hope either.

**Dr Arif writes for Liberation on important political issues.**

## **Cooperatives Confront Capitalism challenging the neoliberal economy**

**By Peter Ranis**

**Zed Books, 2016, pp. 166**

**Reviewed by James Grayson**

This book provides useful statistics about quantity and contributes to debates around the ownership of capital assets. Many of the co-operatives in Argentina came about through workers occupying factories as a response to, "Planned bankruptcies," by owners. The other exemplar economy, Cuba accepted co-operatives as part of the loosening of state control yet problems remain about bureaucratic approaches to approval. A distortion of the Cuban economy relates to remittances from abroad.

Ranis hopes to offer pointers for use within the American economy which is not renowned for the size or influence of its co-operative sector, "Over 300 worker cooperatives." He is enthusiastic about the potential for the use of the notion of, "Eminent domain," and cites various legal decisions.

His notion of the history of co-operatives cites Robert Owen in New Lanarkshire but is mainly concerned with Marxist analyses. Based in the USA, it is surprising that the Levellers and the Ranters, indeed many of the groups of early European settlers in the USA receive no consideration.



Book Image from Zed Books.

Paperback:  
£18.99

# Kenya: Fifty Years After Liberation

Dan Thea



Kenya was invaded, occupied and colonised in the course of the European Scramble for Africa in the 1880s-1890s. The Mau Mau War of liberation led to independence in December 1963. Having left Nairobi for London in September, I joined the freedom celebrations as best I could from my student 'digs'.

A half century later, circumstances permitted my return home. In spite of having tried to keep up with developments from afar, the Kenya I found was staggeringly different from the one I had left.

The boundaries of the country had not changed much. The Kenya-Ethiopia border had been amicably demarcated; though not that with South Sudan. There is still a tiny island in Lake Nyanza, ("Victoria" to the colonial minded) that is jointly owned with our close friend and neighbour to the west, Uganda. One must not forget the recently arisen wrangle with our eastern neighbour, Somalia, on the demarcation of the eastern seabed, thought to be potentially rich in oil and gas, not to mention fisheries.

In area, Kenya is not a "small country", contrary to the casual characterisation one far too often encounters from commentators and in 'polite' conversation

here in the 'West'. People mean "poor", "underdeveloped", or "backward"; but somehow the word that tends come out is "small". Comparatively Kenya is not small. It is about two-and-a half times the area of the former coloniser, Britain. So, if Kenya is small, then Britain is tiny. Similarly, Africa is a huge continent compared with 'Europe'; where ever one chooses to place the Asia/Europe boundary. From the top of Mount Kenya, Russia appears to be Asian, not European! Why is Europe not part of Asia?

Fifty years of liberation have seen Kenya utterly transformed. The seven million population at independence has reached 50 million; with three million living in the 'diaspora'. The colonial Nairobi town is now a mega city of about 5 million; with Metropolitan Nairobi estimated at about 7.5 million; which is the same as the total population of Kenya at independence. The countryside, once forested and open grassland one now sees farming fields, homes, schools, roads... and milling crowds. My former Sixth Form college, then named Royal Technical College, Nairobi, has been transformed into the massive and prestigious University of Nairobi, recently classified as one of the world's

top 200 universities; joining South Africa's Cape Town and Wits to represent Africa on the list. At a personal level, my mother's thirteen children have amongst us spawned an extended 'family' of over three hundred; scattered all over the country and abroad. I would not recognise most of them if we met at the Annual Serengeti Wildebeest Migration at the Tsavo National Park.

My parents had no idea of such an institution as a "school"; until I ran away from home to find one. Today, school is compulsory for every child until the end of secondary level; with about 1,250,000 children starting each year. My brother's three year old grandson leaves home for school with his two older brothers early in the morning; for what is termed the Early Learning Programme. While his siblings attend class, he plays and socialises with his age-mates; eats and sleeps. At the end of the day, mum picks him and his brothers up. In September about 90,000 young people started university education in the country's 80-odd universities and university colleges. Around 600 medical doctors graduate a year. Very interestingly, in the summer of 2016 Kenya and Cuba agreed on a "healthcare" programme. A very important development is a reported programme to greatly increase the annual number of PhD graduates in order to better meet the needs of such sectors as higher education, administration, economy, and society generally; reassuringly in collaboration with the highly reputed Germany.

Kenya is not a mineral or oil rich country; nevertheless it has advanced substantially economically; being removed from the Least Developed Countries list; to the Developing Countries category; joining South Africa and Egypt.

Kenya, with its historical partners Tanzania and Uganda; then Rwanda and Burundi more recently; and last year South Sudan, are members of the East African Community (EAC). They have very close political, economic, customs, education and legal relations: including an East African Parliament, a Customs Union, an East African Court of Justice; Heads of State Summit; a single visa; and they plan to restore the old Common Currency, etc. The long-term idea is the formation of a political union.

Many projects, including transport infrastructure such as roads, railways, pipelines, internet, etc. are developed in co-ordination.

As with all colonised countries, Kenya was ill-prepared for independence in almost every way. The Mau Mau had valiantly fought for our liberation; as they were entitled to do to liberate themselves from brutal and racist foreign occupation, which openly, legally and in practice classified and treated the African as a lesser human being. The victim countries were completely justified to take up arms to fight for their humanity; and they did. Unfortunately for historical reasons, the Kenyan fighters did not, unlike later liberation movements, have access to external solidarity. They were totally isolated. Later liberation struggles had some outside military and political support, as in the cases of Algeria, Guinea-Bissau; Angola, Zimbabwe; Namibia, and South Africa. In particular, the Angolan liberation struggle had massive and unstinted Cuban military support, best illustrated by the illustrious Battle of Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola; which, additionally, led directly to the collapse of the Apartheid military machine, the release of Nelson Mandela and his colleagues from life-time imprisonment, and the ensuing collapse and overthrow of the Apartheid regime in both South Africa and Namibia. Yes, this truth needs to be more widely known!

In Kenya the British calculated that with their overwhelming modern military equipment, skills and recent war experience in the second world war they would easily and speedily crash the Mau Mau rebellion; 'in a matter of weeks!' They proclaimed that they would retain their grip on Kenya for a "thousand years"; i.e. the time it would take 'to civilise 'the African'.

With the Kangaroo court trial, imprisonment and exile of Kenyatta and the other 'Kikuyu' leaders of the Mau Mau in the remote wilderness of north-west Kenya, the colonial rulers vainly expected quick submission, and return to peace and quiet. So, more war-seasoned troops and modern military equipment, including tanks, artillery, spotter-aircraft, bombers, etc., were brought in. A tougher colonial governor was appointed; as was a new Commander-in-Chief, East Africa, not only for Kenya, but also Uganda and Tanganyika; and military units from Tanganyika and Uganda were moved to Kenya. Contrary to official bluster, Britain was taking the rebellion seriously!

Well, in fact the Mau Mau fighters did not win staggering victories comparable with the Cuban "Bay of Pigs"; the Vietnamese "Dien Bien Phu" or the Cuban/Angolan "Cuito Cuanavale". Neither did we have a Fidel Castro or a Vo Nguyen Giap as military commander; or a Nelson Mandela as a political leader. But we had a military. And a steadfast rear-guard, with the women distinguishing themselves in intelligence and supplies to the warriors. Time was on our side!

As the fighting slowly ended; Kenyatta and his colleagues were released from prison; "Internal Self-Government" was conceded, with the very Kenyatta as Prime Minister; an independence date was set a matter of months ahead; and not the 'One Thousand Years' they had boasted previously!

But, of course, imperialism had crafted a new strategy of neo-colonial exploitation. The USA super-power moved in, sidelining Britain. Democracy was stifled. The Mau Mau stalwarts were sidelined. Internally, joining the 'middle-class' became the goal of the aspirant elite. Leadership positions were exploited for self-aggrandisement, and not to serve. Yes, the traitors were happily subservient to imperialism; while dismissive, oppressive and grabbing with regard to the people. It is fair to say that national development was not prioritised in the early years of independence.

It was only on the arrival of Mwai Kibaki at the presidency that firm development plans were crafted and implemented. A trained economist, former head of the central bank and minister of finance, Kibaki was well placed to lead the governance of the country; and this he did with credit. It was in his presidency that the famous Vision2030 long-term national development programme, with clear goals set and implementation monitored, in such sectors as transport, including roads and railways; universal primary and secondary education; healthcare, etc.

To provide a fuller appreciation of Kenya today, and its prospective future, I aim to write the following articles:- (a) the Kenyan constitution and government; (b) the Kenyan Vision2030 medium-term development program, and Agenda2063 long-term development plan; (c) Kenyan education; (d) Kenyan healthcare and social support. I hope the reader will find them interesting, informative and rewarding.

**Dan Thea, a regular contributor to the Liberation Journal, writes for Liberation on African Issues.**



# Liberation Activity Update

## Ukraine: Defend Civil and Political Rights; Implement the Minsk II Peace Agreement

Report from the House of Commons meeting on 21 November 2016 organised by Liberation and sponsored by Chris Stephens MP and Kelvin Hopkins MP

Liberation Generation Secretary Maggie Bowden opened by thanking Kelvin Hopkins and Chris Stephens for sponsoring the meeting and noted that an Early Day Motion in defence of civil and political liberties in Ukraine had been tabled in the previous session. She welcomed the guests from Ukraine, both distinguished academics. Dr Yevgenii Gerasymenko and an anonymous source.

Professor Gerasymenko, a lawyer, opened. He expressed his thanks to Liberation for the opportunity to discuss the violations of civil and political freedom in Ukraine. He stressed that these violations were not restricted to the Communist Party but extended to other Leftist parties and to any public expression of any support for Marxist/socialist ideas. Even an NGO that had taken its title from a poem by Mayakovsky has been refused a licence.

The attack on civil and political liberties began immediately after the coup when the newly installed government ordered the immediate dissolution of the 32 strong group of Communist MPs elected by 13 per cent of the popular vote in the 2012 elections.

Dr Gerasymenko stressed that the Communist Party had long called for the Ukrainian state to recognise the national, cultural and linguistic diversity of Ukraine and had advocated that these rights be recognised constitutionally by some degree of regional autonomy. The new post-coup government now used this as the basis for its next step: the demand for the judiciary to declare the Communist Party illegal for violating the territorial integrity

of the Ukraine. Similar cases were brought against individuals in lower level courts. During 2014-15 there were over 400 criminal arrests – some without notification (in one case a member ‘disappeared’ in prison for over a year). This was in a period of political turmoil when far-right paramilitaries sought to exercise street-level power and had penetrated parts of the security forces. Dr Gerasymenko was involved in defending many of these cases. In almost all cases the courts rejected the prosecution declarations.

The next stage of legal action to restrict civil liberties was the Decommunisation Law signed by President Poroshenko in May 2015. This was modelled on that adopted by the Republic of Moldova in 2012 but subsequently repealed when condemned by the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission for Human Rights.

This Act was very far-reaching and proscribed the use of any symbols associated with communism or the Soviet Union – symbols including writing that was in any way favourable to the Soviet Union or communism. The use and dissemination of such material became a criminal offence with a prison sentence of five years and the confiscation of property. The same legislation also contained a section calling for the Honouring the Memory of the Fighters for the Independence of Ukraine in the Twentieth Century – legislation condemned by the Polish government as honouring the Ukrainian SS battalions responsible for the mass murders of Poles and Jews

The Ukrainian government used this law to ban the Communist Party from standing in elections and sought to ban the party itself. On 24 July 2015 the Interior Ministry issued a decree prohibiting the Communist Party of Ukraine from standing in elections. Legal proceedings were begun in July 2015 to ban the party itself. The judges in the Kiev Administrative Court hearing the case were placed under considerable pressure by the government (offices searched and computers seized) and ultimately all resigned on the grounds that the case was ‘politically motivated’. Some of them were subsequently subject to criminal proceedings themselves and served with papers for military service. In these circumstances one judge took the case in December 2015 in a hearing from which the public was excluded; the Communist Party and its lawyers were not permitted to be present.

A History of Struggle  
Commemorating the Fiftieth  
Anniversary of  
Liberation;  
Formerly the Movement for  
Colonial  
Freedom  
Stan Newens  
#3

The Communist Party of Ukraine has appealed the verdict to the European Court of Human Rights. This appeal is currently pending; meanwhile the formal ban on the Communist Party itself cannot be enforced. However, the party remains subject to the Decommunisation Law, members continue to be arrested, the party's newspapers have been closed and the one TV channel that was favourable to the Left has been refused a licence to broadcast. In December 2015 the Venice Commission issued a statement condemning the DeCommunisat-ion Law.

Dr Gerasymenko raised the issue of right-wing paramilitaries, their intimidation of local courts and councils and the disappearance and murder of journalists and others. He saw these developments as profoundly concerning. After the coup there were attacks on homes and party offices and the burning of: books, newspapers and records. Although most of the paramilitary formations have now been incorporated into the army, police or security forces, a great deal of extra-legal violence and intimidation continues.

More recently, on 20 October 2016, the Ukraine Parliament had adopted the Law "On amendments to some laws of Ukraine to restrict access to the Ukrainian market of foreign printed materials with anti-Ukrainian content". This has allowed the authorities yet further limit freedom of expression. Although possession of writings by Marx or Lenin, or books from the time of the Soviet Union, is not in itself a criminal offence, any attempt to distribute, or promote them is. Most recently this act has been used to ban an American made film that was considered to present a character from the Soviet era in too favourable a light.

The case of former Communist deputy Alla Alexandrovska, a sixty seven year old in very poor health, who was arrested early in the summer, and remained in prison without access to medical care for six months and who has now been placed under 24 hour house arrest was raised. No trial has taken place.

**Chris Stephens MP** formally welcomed the guests from Ukraine. He said that events unfolding in Ukraine caused him and many of his colleagues' considerable concern. He agreed

to raise within parliament any issues which concerned the involvement by the British government either directly or as a signatory of the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine.

**Kelvin Hopkins MP** agreed with these remarks and noted the importance of resolving the current situation on the basis of the full implementation of the Minsk II Peace Agreement.

In response **Dr Gerasimenko** indicated that such implementation would ultimately provide the only way forward to ensure the restoration of civil liberties across of the whole of Ukraine within a political framework that provides guarantees for peace, free elections and for civil and linguistic rights. Unfortunately the policies of the current government ran directly contrary to such implementation.

The background to this is the intensifying economic crisis in Ukraine. There is very high unemployment. Inflation has sharply cut wages. Pensioners have been reduced to a level where they can no longer afford even minimum heating or housing provision. Corruption is rampant at every level of the state.

In these circumstances the electoral support for the government parties had fallen dramatically. The government parties do not want elections and are fearful that any resolution of the 'Anti-Terrorist Operation' in the East would lead to the return of large numbers of far-right para-militaries to Kiev with detrimental consequences to all.

Free elections, the resolution of the conflict in the East, as well as the restoration of civil rights, do not unfortunately appear to be on the immediate political agenda. Instead, Ukraine is descending into a level of disorder that threaten surrounding states – with 9 million illegal firearms and large-scale trafficking in munitions, drugs and humans.

**In discussion** it was noted that Ukraine is largely dependent on economic and military support from a range of NATO powers – including Britain which currently has 75 military personnel assisting the Ukrainian army. NATO and EU governments therefore have considerable bargaining power, should they wish to use it, to secure policies to lead to a peaceful resolution.

**Maggie Bowden, General Secretary of Liberation** summed up the meeting by thanking participants and pledging Liberation to take up the issues for a continuing campaign – noting that Liberation, as a United Nations recognised NGO, had rights to raise issues at UN sessions in Geneva three times a year.

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## Rise of Radicalization in Bangladesh

Shariar Kabir

Bangladesh emerged as a secular democratic country in 1971 through a bloody liberation war against Pakistan in which three million lives were sacrificed. During the nine month long Liberation War the Pakistani Army Junta and its local collaborators, mainly Jamat-e Islami, branded the Bengali freedom fighters as Enemies of Islam. Jamat-e Islami and other religion based parties that supported Pakistani Army Junta — formed killing squads named ‘Razakar’, ‘Al Badr’, ‘Al Shams’ etc. to murder progressive intellectuals, professionals, secular politicians as well as innocent freedom-loving Bengalis.

The people of Bangladesh always lived with harmony and amity, and enjoyed a rich tradition of secular humanism. The history of Islam in Bengal is almost a millennium old. The Sufis who preached Islam in Bengal respected local cultures and traditions, some of which were integrated in the Muslim societies in Bengal and other parts of South Asia.

History of political Islam in the subcontinent of India begins with the foundation of Muslim League in 1906. It should be noted that this party’s ideological basis was not rooted in the Quran and Hadith. Rather, the inspiration may have come from sectarian religion-based political history of Western Europe. It was Jamat-e Islami founded in 1941 by Abul Ala Maududi that introduced political Islam dubbed with terrorism. Maududi introduced the concept of ‘Dar-Al Islam’ (territory belong to Muslims based on Sharia) and ‘Dar-Al Harb, (territory belonging to non-Muslims that declared war against Muslims) in political discourse.

Maududi was a strong critic of Jinnah’s Pakistan movement, as it was not true Islamic. But Muslim League’s Pakistan movement created a wave of new demand of Muslim identity in Bengal. Pakistan was created on the basis of Mohammad Ali Jinnah’s “two nation” theory. Jinnah wanted a separate homeland for Indian Muslims during Indian independent struggle against British colonial presence.

Though most of the people of East Bengal earlier supported Pakistan movement in 1940s, but after the inception of Pakistan in 1947 when installing Urdu as the State language was suggested by its creators, people of East Bengal rejected it vehemently, and began realizing their mistake. Notwithstanding Jinnah’s wish for a country where religion would be separated from State affairs, soon after his death leaders of the Muslim League, Jamat-e Islami, and other religion based parties decided that Pakistan would be an Islamic country. As a result

‘Objective Resolution’ was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 12 March 1949. The Pakistani ‘Objectives Resolution’ proclaimed-- ‘Sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to Allah Almighty alone and the authority which He has delegated to the state of Pakistan, through its people for being exercised within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust.’

By demographic count Bengalis were the majority in Pakistan. When their demand for Bengali as the State language was denied the people of East Pakistan were enraged. The first peoples’ movement in Pakistan, initiated by the students of Dhaka University, was absolutely secular by nature. The language movement rekindled secular Bengali nationhood so the Pakistani rulers branded this movement as anti-Islam. From the Language Movement of 1948-1952, followed by a series of democratic and cultural movements, the concept of a secular Bengali Nationalism took a concrete shape. The 24 year journey from a language movement to the liberation struggle of Bangladesh largely was de-radicalized the politics and society of Bangladesh. Bengali identity replaced the Islamic Pakistani identity that created in the 1940s. The leaders of the Bangladesh Liberation War said many times that this struggle is for secular democracy, not merely for a separate country.



**Shah Ahmad Shafi, one of the founders of Hefazat-e-Islam .**

*Image from: Georgetown Security Studies Review*



The Constitution of Bangladesh adopted on 4 November 1972 declared four basic principles of the republic, namely-- 1) Democracy, 2) Nationalism, 3) Secularism and 4) Socialism. In order to protect secularism from radical politics and ideology -- formation of political parties or any other organization on the basis of religion, caste or creed, was prohibited in 1972's Constitution, which was never liked by pro-Pakistanis. One of the major mistakes of Bangabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's government was its failure in clean up the administration of those with a residual Pakistani mindset. Those who sincerely served Pakistani government during the 1971 war had remained in the new Bangladesh administration and they tried to minimize the spirit of the Liberation War that enshrined in the Constitution.

Jamat-e Islami started expanding its socio-economic-cultural base and an underground terrorist network since early 1980s. JEI started receiving huge amounts of Saudi money for the so-called rehabilitation of their "Shaheed" Razakar and Al Badr activists' several thousand families along with fund for 'reconstructions' of mosques, madrassas and Islamic Centers supposedly 'destroyed' by 'Muktibahini' (Freedom Fighters) with the assistance of Indian Army during the war of 1971. JEI received billions of dollars from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries during 1980-1990s and used the money to expand their political, economic and social network.

The irony of the history of Bangladesh is that a country created on the basis of secular democracy, had been, for most of its existence, ruled by pro-Islamist and pro-Pakistani radical forces. When these evil forces were in power we have seen Jamat-e Islami systemically infiltrated every layer of the administration including Defense Services. JEI also setup hundreds of

new madrassas, English medium schools, colleges and universities, publications and media houses over more than three decades. They also founded nearly 500 new Islamic NGOs, banks, insurance companies, industrial and business enterprises controlled by their party leaders when BNP-Jamat led coalition was in power from 2001-2006. From 2001-2006 we have seen unprecedented persecution of religious minorities, mostly the Hindus. In order to convert Bangladesh into a monolithic Muslim country BNP-Jamat alliance forced more than quarter million hapless Hindus to leave Bangladesh and take shelter in neighboring India. Nirmul Committee (Forum for Secular Bangladesh) and other progressive members of the civil society strongly protested ongoing persecution of religious minorities but the ruling Government didn't pay any attention to our cry. On the contrary several NC leaders were thrown behind the bar including Prof. Muntassir Mamoon and myself. Our arrest had drawn the attention of international community, many international human rights bodies, and individuals including Nobel Laureates, who condemned such arbitrary arrests and repression of minorities and free thinkers by BNP-Jamat government. All such actions of JEI contributed to radicalization of Bangladeshi society and politics.

Bangladesh started exporting human resources to Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries since the early 1980s. These oil-rich countries are heavily dependent on foreign labours mostly from relatively poor Muslim countries. There are more than three million Bangladeshi workers in the Middle Eastern countries mostly in Saudi Arabia, engaged in construction work, agriculture and other formal and informal sectors. When these expatriate Bangladeshis return home, along with petro-dollar they also bring 'Wahhabi' ideas and culture with them. They popularized the Hijab and other Is-

lamic dress and lifestyle in the name of Islam. Changes in Muslim vocabulary have also taken place. Gradually "Khuda Hafez" was replaced by "Allah Hafez", "Namaz" was replaced by "Salat": Arabic words like "Bismillah", "Alhamdulillah" "Mashallah" etc. have become a dominant part of conversation but are quite alien to the Bengali culture of the past, and the penetration of Saudi "Wahhabi" culture has largely contributed to the radicalization of the society.

Since 2010 after the creation of "Hefazate Islam" JEI established its command over Quomi Madrassas. Now the entire Madrassa system is controlled by JEI. In 2015 and 2016, members belong to religious minority groups became victims of target-killings, and a new debate started regarding the existence of "ISIS" in Bangladesh. America claimed, "ISIS" exists in Bangladesh but our govt. strongly denied it. The Bangladeshi media as well as public opinion were also divided into two groups debating on existence of "ISIS" or "IS" in Bangladesh. If we look into the philosophy of "IS" and "Al Qaida" or "Hifazat" and "Jamat" or "Hijbut Tahrir" and "Chhatra Shibir" there is no basic difference. Their common target is to establish a Sharia-based Statehood where non-Muslims would be treated like second-class citizens. Whatever differences seen in their narratives are mere tactical, not ideological, as they all follow the intolerant doctrine of 'Wahhabism'. So, physical existence of "IS" is immaterial as long as Jamat - Shibir exists in Bangladesh. 'HUJI', 'JMB', 'Ansar Al Islam', 'Ansarullah Bangla Team', 'New JMB' etc. all are clandestine offshoots of JEI.

Some of our experts on terrorism are surprised to see that youths from affluent families educated in English medium schools and universities have joined in Jihadi activities.

Earlier it was assumed that only financially insolvent youth from madrassas would join Jihad, because of poverty and cultural backwardness. My observation is that hegemony of 'Wahhabism' over the minds of our youth created an area of such a darkness that made them identity-less robots. These youths have no family, no feelings for near and dear one, no relation with the society where they grew up or no feelings for motherland as there is no such concept in the domain of 'Wahhabism'.

There is no monitoring system or de-radicalization strategy to protect our children from 'Wahhabism'. In a recent survey on 'Alia' (public) Madrassa curriculum, conducted by Islamic Foundation, it was found that writings of Abul Ala Maududi are still widely distributed. Though 'Secularism' and 'Democracy' are two basic principles of the Republic as mentioned in the Constitution, Islamic Foundation research found in some Madrassa textbooks were democracy, secularism, nationalism, and socialism are mentioned infidel ideas and those who follow these doctrines should be considered as apostates. Islamic Foundation recommended a drastic change in the Madrassa curriculum almost two years ago. When Sheikh Hasina's government assumed power in 2009 an Education Commission was formed headed by Professor Kabir Chowdhury to promote the spirit of the Liberation War, i.e. secular democracy and humanism from the very beginning. Years have gone by; Kabir Chowdhury's education policy has not been implemented because of Jamat-e-Islami and Hefazate Islam's intimidation. Every year more than one hundred thousand students are coming out from Madrasahs with 'Wahhabi' indoctrination.

The USA-led 'War on Terror' should be combated politically and ideologically for it to be able to deliver any positive result. There should be a de-radicalization strategy in order to counter the narratives of radicalization. The US State Department, as well as Western policymakers, consider JEI and 'Muslim Brotherhood' as 'moderate Islamic democratic parties', but there are hundreds of evidences on these parties' link with global Islamic terrorist network. No government can fight terrorism alone, terrorism that is generated in the name of a global religion. In order to protect human civilization civil society should come forward to prepare a de-radicalization strategy for respective governments, which will promote secular humanism across the world.

**Shariar Kabir, is a Bangladeshi Journalist, author and prominent Human Rights activist.**

## **Sri Lanka at a Crossroads: A Tamil Perspective**

**Suren Surendiran**

January 2015 saw one of the worst tyrannies in the history of Sri Lanka come to an abrupt end. The unexpected was realised through the ballot and not through the bullet. President Maithripala Sirisena swept to power with 51.2% of the vote, his rival mustered 47.6%. Although there were pockets in the South where Maithripala managed to edge over Rajapaksa, the minorities, particularly the Tamils, in their areas of domination overwhelmingly rejected Rajapaksa.

Military governors were removed and civilian governors were appointed to the predominantly Tamil Northern and Eastern Provinces. At the Independence Day celebrations on 4 February 2015, a declaration for peace was read out in all three languages and the President and Prime Minister presided over paying respect to all who perished during the war. The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution, which by and large politicised all independent democratic institutions, was reversed by passing the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment.

Democratic space was created for freedom of expression without fear of reprisals. Unlike during the Rajapaksa reign, not a single journalist was killed or abducted during 2015. No serious threats to religious freedom were realised, unlike the preceding years. Some private lands were released with the President publically promising to release all the private lands occupied by the military within six months. There was an initial release of small number of political prisoners with a commitment to the Tamil party, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) that the remainder will be released soon after.

The government of Sri Lanka co-sponsored the UNHRC resolution A/HRC/30/L.29 in Oct 2015, which acknowledged that terrible crimes were committed by both parties during the armed conflict and wanted an independent credible accountability mechanism with international participation to be set up by the Government. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mangala Samaraweera, in his speech said "Don't judge us by the broken promises, experiences and U-turns of the past.... My plea to you Ladies and Gentlemen, is trust us and join us to work together and create the momentum required to move forward and take progressive, meaningful and transformative steps to create a new Sri Lanka." Foreign Minister stated that the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) will be repealed and more appropriate legislation will be introduced conforming to international standards. 2015 also saw some of the Tamil diaspora organisations and individuals being de-proscribed by the present government. Further, the scene was set to pass a resolution to convert parliament into a constitutional assembly. Therefore, by end of 2015 although things were not progressing and/or progressing fast enough as promised in the 100 point plan of the newly elected President or in the manifesto commitments made by the new government, the general trajectory of

democratisation, social justice and economy were trending marginally upward compared to the previous years of Rajapaksa reign. The expectations of the Tamil people too were on the same trajectory.

As we reach the end of 2016, a critical analysis of the past 12 months in Sri Lanka paints a more subdued and relatively disappointing picture, although all is not lost. As they say, old habits die hard. Dilly dalling on some of the commitments made by the government and the President has become a more frequent feature during 2016. Most Sri Lankans feel generally let down by this government as manifesto commitments haven't been implemented.

This government came to power claiming to clean up the corruption and mismanagement that prevailed during the previous regime and bring to justice those who abused their authority in various ways. Unfortunately, neither have they been able to prosecute anyone successfully nor have they been able to run a government without various major corruption charges being levelled against them. In a recent incident, a senior cabinet minister was caught on camera allegedly interfering and perverting the course of justice through the most senior policeman in the land.

Although thousands of combatants and civilians surrendered or were captured at the end of the war, only 296 were publically accepted as prisoners detained either under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) or held without charges being brought at a court of law, by this new government. The current information is that, of these 296 detainees, 96 are still under detention. 23 of these 96 were granted bail. There is no public acknowledgement as to how many of the 23 accepted the bail. Releasing the entire 296 immediately or soon after coming to power by the executive President, would have been seen by the Tamil people as a great reconciliatory step. This would have helped in a small way to bridge the trust deficiency that remains between the Sinhala and Tamil communities. The inability to accomplish even that in the past several months after promising at the end of 2015, possibly demonstrates the lack of will and courage. This in turn creates genuine doubts in the minds of even the moderates who helped this President and the government to succeed in respective elections last year, the possibility of any deeper reforms. President Maithripala Sirisena publicly states that there won't be any international judges in the judicial mechanism to address accountability for the alleged crimes committed during the war. Recently in a speech in Maharagama, the President said that in his speech at the UN General Assembly he has stated this very clearly and the international community has now accepted that there won't be any international judges. Since 8 November, the President has also suggested that he will write to the President Elect Donald Trump to seek help to relieve Sri Lanka from having to fully comply with the UNHRC resolution, which was co-sponsored by his government. The Prime Minister also said in an interview to an Indian media outlet recently, that there won't be any international judges.

To remind readers, the High Commissioner of the UNHRC said in September 2015, "The levels of mistrust in State authorities and institutions by broad segments of Sri Lankan society should not be underestimated. It is for this reason that the establishment of a hybrid special court, integrating international judges, prosecutors, lawyers and investigators, is so essential. A purely domestic court procedure will have no chance of overcoming widespread and justifiable suspicions fuelled by decades of violations, malpractice and broken promises."

Although the President made a public pronouncement of zero tolerance of sexual violence and torture, the police and military intelligence are constantly being accused by victims of abuse and torture. Although primarily contained within their barracks, the levels of military presence in the North and East are not even in any serious discussions as yet. PTA is yet to be repealed. Government funded Buddhisation of North and East where the majority are Hindus, Muslims and Christians, continues. There is significant rise in religious and race hatred being preached by some Buddhist monks with impunity.

Although the record over the past several months is reflected in the disappointment and despair that communities feel at present, nevertheless there has been some significant progress too. Several thousands of acres of land have been handed over to the rightful owners. However, the President's commitment to release all such lands within the six months, which expired by end of June 2016, is yet to be realised.

As committed in respective manifestos of parties in government and by the President of their will to resolve the long standing Tamil national question, in May, a resolution was passed unanimously to set up a Constitutional Assembly. After several deliberations six sub-committee reports on the elements of the new constitution was presented to the parliament during November. 10 December will likely to see the interim report on the new constitution being presented to parliament. 'Office of the Missing Persons' was set up by legislation. There is much improved cooperation with UN Agencies on human rights mechanisms. There was a less triumphalist approach adopted during the end of war anniversary on May 18th. As part of reconciliation efforts, the Tamil Remembrance Day events on 27 November were allowed to be held all-over the Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka for families and friends to mourn their dead. These were unimaginable, during the Rajapaksa reign. A further list of diaspora individuals have been removed from the proscription list.

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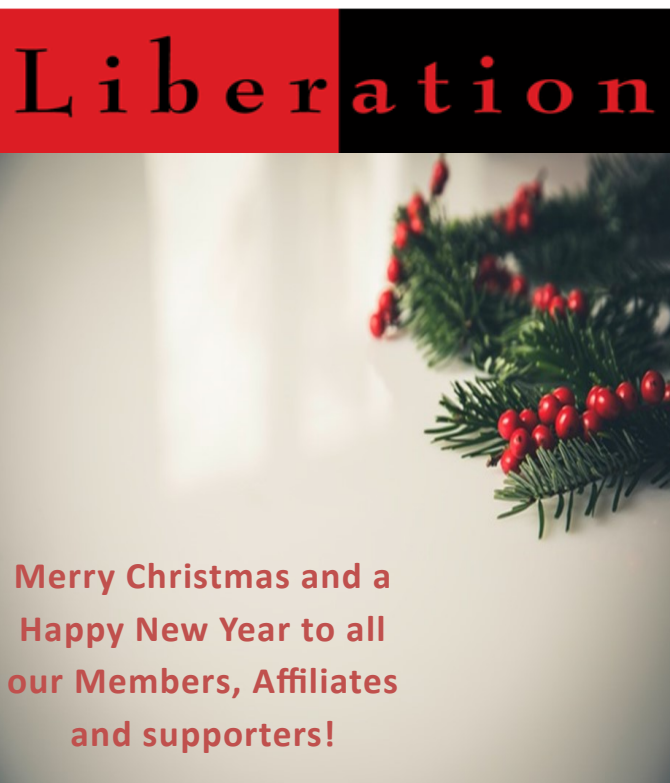


However, there has been very little visible progress made on the accountability mechanism. A wide range of institutional reforms including the much needed 'security sector reform', strengthening of the witness protection legislation which at present falls far short of what is required, and genuine consultations with victims and their families in every step of the process to get to truth and justice are vitally important measures and are yet to be undertaken by the government. Several of the crimes alleged to have been committed by both sides amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. These are not recognised as crimes in the current judicial system. Legislation has to be passed by parliament to recognise these as crimes. These haven't even begun.

The lack of political will and courage demonstrated by the Sinhala leaders including the President and the Prime Minister to engage in discourse among the Sinhala people of the need to establish the truth of what happened and the importance of accountability for the wrongs that were done against another community of their own citizens, is a serious impediment, to deliver justice to the victims. The mixed messages relayed to key stakeholders including the victims, military, other citizens of Sri Lanka and the international community by senior state officials including the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister reflect that there is no cohesive and coordinated government policy on this important international commitment.

Until there are concerted efforts made to understand and accept by; Sinhala civil society, Sinhala media and Buddhist clergy that there were gross violations of local and international human rights and humanitarian laws by parts of the military during and after the end of war, there can only be marginal perceived successes, in the government implementation of the transitional justice program. It is now obvious that Sri Lanka will not have made any significant progress by March 2017 in implementing the UNHRC resolution that it co-sponsored, it is inevitable that Sri Lanka will request an extension to the timeline.

**Suren Surendiran — Spokesperson and Director of Strategic Initiatives, Global Tamil Forum. He writes occasionally for Liberation on Sri Lankan issues.**



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# Iran Nuclear Deal on the brink

Jane Green

The election of Donald Trump to the United States Presidency has sent shock waves across the world. The future of the Middle East was uncertain before the election. It is even more uncertain now. In relation to Iran, in particular, Trump has spoken in belligerent terms. Jane Green assesses the implications for Iran of a Trump presidency and its likely impact on the Iranian presidential elections in May 2017.

During the course of the US presidential campaign Donald Trump regularly criticised the deal arrived at by the United States and other world powers with Iran, over the de-escalation of Iran's nuclear programme. In one speech in July this year Trump stated,

"They are laughing at the stupidity of the deal we're making on nuclear. We should double up and triple up the sanctions and have them come to us. They are making an amazing deal."

This was followed by a statement by Trump in August which claimed that as a result of the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran would

"..take over parts of the world that you wouldn't believe. I think it's going to lead to nuclear holocaust."

Ironically this was Trump modifying his position to "police" the deal, rather than "rip it up"; his earlier stance.

Trump's position is based on his assessment of US negotiators, primarily Secretary of State John Kerry, as incompetent and on his stated belief that "Persians are great negotiators". While this is ostensibly a flattering statement it is based upon an age old Western stereotype of the 'not to be trusted' Persian swindler. Such an approach to international relations is consistent with the campaign trail rhetoric of Trump, on a wide range of national and international issues, but is hardly a serious assessment of how to tackle deep seated international enmities.

Knowing Trump's advisers and the fact that his first phone calls were to the Saudi King, the Israeli Premier, the Turkish President and the military President of Egypt, in the first days after his election, does not bode well for the prospects of peace in the Middle East and detente with Iran.

The JCPOA reduces Iran's centrifuges, the devices used to enrich uranium gas, by two-thirds. This extends to over a year the so called "breakout time", that is the time it would take Iran to produce the fissile material needed to build a nuclear weapon, if it wanted to. The sanctions relief built into the deal was key to the wider strategy of the United States to re-build influence in the region in order to incorporate Iran into the US New Middle East Plan.

After the imposition of sanctions, Iran was in effect brought to its knees and its economy completely paralysed. Iran agreed to negotiations in order to get the sanctions removed. From this perspective, Iran's position in respect of the US changed fundamentally. Iran was willing to play the role that the US desired. For example, Iran was invited to join the negotiations on the

future of Syria despite Saudi disagreement.

While there has been some suggestion that hardline conservative elements within the Iranian regime are not happy with the deal with the US, in reality they have been instrumental in bringing it about. The negotiations with the US were planned and initiated by the hardliners, two years before Rouhani was elected, during the Ahmadinejad Presidency. The regime was most concerned about a possible social explosion by the poor and the disenfranchised, following the wave of protests, which swept the country after Ahmadinejad's election in 2009. The fact that no deal in Iran could be signed off without the agreement of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as Supreme Leader, further indicates that Rouhani had the green light to make the deal.

The first sign of Western investment came in November, with a preliminary \$4.8 billion agreement with a consortium led by French company Total, to develop Iran's giant South Pars natural gas field. At a ceremony to open three new oil fields in November, Rouhani made clear his assessment of the importance of the sanctions relief stating:

"This means that trapdoors have been opened and fresh air has entered. Now people will benefit from the new opportunities. The oil industry has used these opportunities in the best way it could."

Rouhani added, "After the nuclear agreement, some said it would take ages to reach the goal of 2 million barrels of daily exports. They also said we cannot return to the pre-sanctions situation. But [the progress of] our oil industry in just a few months has surprised the world."



**Workers protesting outside the parliament on 15 November 2016 against attack on labour law**

It is estimated however that Iran requires investment in the region of \$200 billion over the next five years in order to bring oil and gas production up to pre-sanctions levels. It will not be possible to achieve such levels without foreign investment. It is unlikely that the West will want such investment to come from Russia, already seen by the West as making a play for Middle Eastern influence by supporting President Assad in Syria.

The uncertainties being played out across the European Union at the moment also raise questions about where European companies may seek to invest, despite the recent Total commitment. In this context the Trump election adds to the volatility surrounding the economy in Iran and underlines the extent to which the regime is at the mercy of external factors.

At present the ability of the Iranians to trade in US dollars, vital on international energy markets, is limited. Some restrictions have been lifted following protests by the Iranian government that the constraints were not in the spirit of the JCPOA, following discussions in April this year. However, even more significant now than it was at the time, is the stated opposition of US House Speaker, Paul Ryan, who opposed any moves to give Iran access to the US dollar, citing concerns about what Tehran would do with any financial access gained in the wake of the Iran nuclear deal.

This opposition has added weight following the US election outcome. While Trump and Ryan crossed swords during the campaign itself there can be little doubt that, faced with the prospect of power, they will find that there is more to unite than divide them.

Future relations between the US and Iran may depend upon the extent to which Trump thinks he has boxed himself in with his position on the anti-nuclear deal. There is certainly every chance that Trump will attempt to pressurise Iran into more concessions and even more direct cooperation in the Middle East.

Whether Trump will risk both policy incoherence and a major foreign policy setback, if he does not shrink from his campaign promises to trash the nuclear deal, remains to be seen. How Trump acts on Obama's executive orders, allowing economic transactions with Iran, will disclose a great deal about the course of Trump's Iran policy.

However the politics of the Trump presidency begin to unfold, there remains the issue of presidential election in Iran, scheduled for May 2017. While the JCPOA has been welcomed by the self styled reformist camp around President Rouhani, the deal is not universally applauded. However, with the main power centres in Iran behind the deal, not least Khamenei himself, the extent of opposition is not significant.

The impact of sanctions has already resulted in the closing down of 14,800 manufacturing or production units. The administration has even shut down many research projects. According to Hamid Haaj Esmaili, an Iranian expert on the country's labour market, "65 percent of workshops or production units in industrial parks have gone out of business".

At present there is debate in hardline conservative ranks about the benefit of fielding a strong candidate against Rouhani in the May elections. There appears to be little advantage to opposing someone the West is prepared to accept as 'reformist' by installing a more conservative candidate, who may serve as an excuse to re-introduce sanctions.



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The sanctions regime undoubtedly weakened the Iranian economy, resulting in economic uncertainty and depressed wages for many. It is clear that the lifting of sanctions will not, in itself, be sufficient to relieve the suffering of many of Iran's workers. Exploitation by domestic capital feels no different to exploitation by international capital, for those at the sharp end of the economic changes in Iran.

While the human rights record of the Iranian regime has not figured in any of the negotiations leading to the JCPOA it is nevertheless a factor inhibiting Iran's development. The continued imprisonment, torture and execution of political opponents creates a climate of fear and volatility within the country which, if it becomes manifest in the form of street protests as it has in recent years, may deter investment.

Whatever the outcome of the election in Iran, combined with the recent US election outcome, the fate of the Middle East continues to be uncertain. Until the progressive voices of Iran and the wider region are able to make themselves heard, it will continue to be the case.



***Workers protesting outside the parliament on 15 November 2016 against attack on labour law***



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