

Pedagogy as Politics and Politics as Pedagogy: Rosa Luxemburg and Paulo Freire¹

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Abstract

The pedagogical realm expands and goes beyond the four walls of a classroom. It becomes omnipresent. However, there are spheres where it displays overtly its political character such as in the functioning of political organisations. In these organisations the relationship of the leader and cadre or the institutional form of politics and the masses that it seeks to include is constituted through a prolonged pedagogical process. This process is defined through a relationship that revolves around exclusion, inclusion and framing of an institutional structure vis-à-vis the masses. Rosa Luxemburg and Paulo Freire in their own ways reflected on these relationships either directly or their writings can be read to understand the making of political pedagogy in South Asian context, more specifically India.

Keywords: *social movements, mobilisation, education, politics, struggle, socialism, revolution*

Social Movements/Mobilisations and Education

There are a lot studies that try to look at the agenda of education in context of social movements. Hye-Su Kuk and Rebecca Tarlau (2020, p.01) try to establish the relationship between social movements and education through the "medium of human interaction and agency". They argue that "interactions that lead to shared agendas necessitate participants learning from one another through both

informal (e.g., participating in rallies, reading leaflets) and nonformal processes (e.g., teach-ins, educational programmes)." (Hye-Su Kuk and Rebecca Tarlau, 2020, p.01). It is indeed the human relations with each other within the context of the movement/mobilisation as a well as how this relationship works through the medium of language and symbols, which become sources of pedagogy. Using the terminologies of movements generate a sense of organisation, a sustained activity towards attaining certain laid down goals whereas there are also instances of sporadic mobilisations with a short life-span. (Kumar, 2008) However, both employ pedagogical methods of differing kind.

There have been works on pedagogy in context of movements such as MST (Landless Workers Movement/Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra) from different aspects such how they bring in ecology and education together (Meek 2015) or how they developed their own communication mechanisms to further their political goals (Meek, 2011). Scholars also looked at how their schooling system become critical components in the process of social reproduction (Tarlau, 2013;). MST as a movement that began with the primary goal of land distribution also “realized that to achieve social transformation it is necessary not only to occupy land but also to develop a broad-based program of leadership, political training, and education for all participants in the movement”. (Mariano, et.al., 2016, p.212). They wanted to “cultivate” in each person the ability for leadership and autonomous action”. (Mariano, et.al., 2016, p.213) John Holst (2004) also demonstrates how pedagogy works in the context of two organisations in USA, namely Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO) and the League of Revolutionaries for a New America (LRNA). The documents produced by the organisations, the debates on different issues within the organisations as well as the way they try to bring in the context of their existence in framing all of this shows how they

“firmly place their educational work on the epistemological foundations of the long history of revolutionary theory and practice” (Holst, 2004, p. 38).

The relationship of social movements and education paved way for emergence of body of work called "Social movement learning (SML). Scholars contended that this body of work must locate even the actions and demands of the new social subjects within the prevailing capital/labour relations. By raising even simpler demands such as access to water and housing they basically challenge the existing order. It has been argued that “SML research has to consider that the new social subjects are forming social movements of a new nature.” (Holst, 2011, p.124) This argument emanates from

"there are new social subjects emerging whose simple demands for survival can no longer be met within prevailing capitalist relations; the social location of these subjects makes them revolutionary in an objective sense. Assuming this is an accurate assessment, pedagogy becomes an essential component of movements based on the basic demands of these social subjects." (Holst, 2011, p.125).

This would mean that the knowledge production by the social movements come under direct scrutiny regarding whether they mutually transact ideas that communicates this indispensable demolition of exploitative social relations. The days of working out ways within the capitalist social relations seem to have been over.

The literature on social movements and education also argues whether something called ‘popular education’ should be invoked as a category for understanding the relationship. Kane (2001) held that the idea of popular education, as a derivative of the Spanish/portuguese concept (educacion popular/educacao popular) can be traced to Freirian ideas. However, Kuk &

Tarlau (2020, p.03) differ with his and argue that popular education predates Paulo Freire because a rich history of "worker-led educational practises existed in Latin America prior to Freire". This argument can be seen as working in the revolutionary politics in Russia in the practices of study circles being organised in different kinds of workers by Lenin and Krupskaya as well (Read, 2005, p.22). However, if the linkage between the social movements/mobilisations and education are to be extended it moves beyond study circles, it encompasses the act of doing politics itself, which is the concern of this paper. It is here that this paper tries to locate political pedagogy from Marxian perspective in the context of making of the revolutionary politics. For that purpose it attempts to go beyond the narrow confines of 'adult education' into the larger, open arena of 'education'. Politics becomes an arena of education and contesting knowledge paradigms within the apparently similar political ideologies (because there have been historically debates within the Marxist/Left groups) as well as among different political ideologies. This is also a reason why the vast expanse of 'education' when tied to a category also limits it's horizon. What this paper does is to try to break free of those categories and seamlessly build a canvas of educational landscape where Luxemburg, Freire, Lenin, Mao, Gramsci, etc., traverse freely along with other frameworks of education contradicting the formal, institutional framework as binding, limiting and being hegemonic.

Mao, who led one of the largest mobilisations in human history conceptualised education and pedagogy in the context of his organising when he wrote that

"In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily "from the masses, to the masses". This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again

concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge." (Mao, 1967, p. 119)

He was building a Marxist theory of knowledge, where institutions are fluid and where ideas, created by the masses, are also constantly being put to test. There is an attempt at systematizing the scattered ideas but that systematic ideas has to be taken to the masses and see if they stand the test. This paper tries to locate how two scholars can become important resources for developing a political pedagogy and how pedagogy that we encounter is always grounded in a political framework.

The Context

The political formations, which claim/ed to represent working class politics influenced by Marxism have been on decline and there have been a lot of works trying to understand the decline. While there have been debates about the reasons into the decline of Left (Bhattacharya, 2011; Vanaik, 2012; Patnaik, 2011) there has not been much introspective work on how the ‘political’ as pedagogical plays an important role in the survival, expansion or stagnation and decline of politics. It has also been argued by scholars how there has been a decline of the left owing to its reliance on parliamentary politics and weakening of organisational politics (Vanaik, 2022) The vibrancy of the Indian Left—in terms of internal debates as well as engagements with the outside world—has changed forms and has been diminishing. Earlier, at least the internal debates were visible from the labelling of leaders and cadres as being followers of certain schools of thought. The effort of representing a different kind of politics – a working class politics counterposed the myriad forms of bourgeois politics –

has virtually become absent as. The Left tries hard to negotiate the struggles on the street with its intent to be part of state.

The paramount aim of left-wing politics is anti-capitalism, driven by its commitment to working-class politics. This article, through Rosa Luxemburg's understanding of the relations between intellectuals, a political party's leader and cadre, and the proletariat, argues that there is a serious need to discuss the organizational structure as well as the party-people relationship grounded in working-class politics. I would call this the "political pedagogy of revolution" in Luxemburg's thinking. On the other hand, Freire also argues how the relationship with people is extremely important. More importantly, his emphasis on dialogue as a way of learning obliterates the hierarchies and calls for framing of institutional structures afresh. It is important to mention here that Freire's insistence of dialogue and dialogic education is distinguishable with the notion of conversation (Freire, 1995). This distinction becomes important because it does not trivialise knowledge production through usage of a generic notion of conversation between people. As Luxemburg's insistence has been to break through the hegemony of leadership in party as all knowledgeable Freire is also talking about equipping masses with the instruments of power to think and analyse and intervene.

There might be the possibility of the replication of bourgeois forms of organization and hierarchies within the Left, which alienated it from the masses. A common theme in Luxemburg's thought was the "widening of the intellectual horizon of the proletariat", and the "sharpening of their way of thinking". (Luxemburg, 2004, p.171) She believed that the distinction between the intellectual or party leadership and the party cadre could be dangerous, as the "intellectual ... stemming from the bourgeoisie, is by origin alien to the proletariat". (Luxemburg, 2004, p.258) Has the Left institutionalized itself

through replications of bourgeois notions of hierarchy, which make it less and less discernible from the bourgeois formations? Is there a need to re-examine these relationships in the context of left-wing political formations? Luxemburg had an extremely sharp understanding of the political pedagogy of revolution that could have resolved these issues. However, there appears to be a virtual rejection of her ideas within the dominant Left. These are some of the questions that this article seeks to raise.

Pedagogy as Politics and Politics as Pedagogy

Pedagogy is always political—whether it is carried through the work of formal state institutions or through informal institutions that profess different kinds of ideologies. Pedagogy, conceptually, encompasses a vast spectrum due to the role played by each and every act and idea as a source of teaching-learning. Every act or idea of the state, of the party, or of grassroots movements bases itself on the aim to reach out to as many people as possible. This reaching out is, in fact, pedagogy. It is in this context that the work of someone like Rosa Luxemburg needs to be read. Socio-political movements are significant sources of pedagogy in themselves as carriers of ideas as well as through their actions aimed at mobilizing the masses through a process of consensualization. Quite tragically, not much attention is paid by the leadership of the Indian Left parties to this aspect of pedagogy as politics and politics as pedagogy. If it was considered important, there would have been much more time dedicated to self-scrutiny as well as to changes in the relationships between party and movement or between cadre and the masses. Rosa Luxemburg becomes significant in such a situation because, unlike many intellectuals who have influenced the Left, she dwells at length on the roles of theorization and intellect in relationship to the working-class movement.

Recent events in the context of the Left in India² have necessitated a look at the how left-wing parties function in terms of organizing. These workings are reflective of the relationship between the cadres and leaders, or between the party and the masses in the context of the idea of the teaching-learning of ideologies.

It was in the month of October 2020 that the members of the All India Students' Federation and the All India Youth Federation, who were also members of the Communist Party of India (CPI), conducted a indefinite hunger strike and sit-in protest during the meeting of the state executive committee of Bihar State unit of the party. Videos of the protest went viral on social media, and print media also reported on it. The student and youth demonstrators were protesting against the way the electoral alliance with a regional political formation was undertaken, and the way the youth were ignored while deciding on candidature in elections. Some of the youth leaders defied the party and decided to contest elections independently. They also filed nominations from a few constituencies to express their discontent.

Similar developments, albeit without a formal protest, happens when candidates for the State Legislative Council are decided. There have been instances wherein individuals from Party announce their candidature and then the leadership decides not to support them. Either of them are following a politics that is individuated and without any connection with the cadres and masses because they are not consulted. In these two instances it appeared that the hierarchy and the non-engaging structure of the party prevailed, as it never followed the dialogic process of interaction with cadres prior to taking decisions on elections. For instance, did the party go through the State Council and other necessary bodies and make a decision to field only a certain number of candidates, or did any bargaining with the bourgeois political formations take

place beforehand? Was there a debate within the party on which assembly seats to contest? Is it really impossible to think of an organisational process that tries to be as inclusive as possible?

Such debates did not take place prior to negotiations with the regional bourgeois formations. Leaders decided and cadres remained “followers”. The party cadres and leaders appeared as two separate non-dialogic categories distanced by “power” attributed to people and bodies within the party through their positions in the institutional hierarchy of the party. These developments happened in Bihar in 2020 and many cadres and leaders were issued show-cause notices as per the practice rather than there being time for deep ideological or theoretical contemplation and engagement to take place on the issues that were being raised.

If we rewind back to the 2011 West Bengal elections, when the Left Front lost power after a long rule of 34 years, we find the bourgeois press, as usual, portraying this loss as “the fall of communism”. Meanwhile, there was a sense of despair among the parliamentary Left. The Communist Party of India (Marxist), which had lost the elections, went through a process of self-reflection and admitted through its Central Committee Resolution of 11–12 June 2011 that:

“The organisational aspect is also an important factor. The image of the Party amongst the people has been dented by manifestations of highhandedness, bureaucratism and refusal to hear the views of the people (emphasis mine). The existence of corruption and wrong-doing among a small strata of Party leaders and cadres due to the corrosive influence of being a “ruling party” and running the government for a prolonged period was also resented by the people. All these have affected the Party in the elections.

The erosion of support amongst the working class and the rural and urban poor indicates the failing to consistently take up the class issues. The independent role of

the Party and the mass organisations was impaired due to the dependence on the administration.” (CPI(M), 2011, p.4)

The above realization indicates a trend not only towards an increasing substitution of party by the state (through dependence on the administration), but also that the workings of the CPI(M) had developed tendencies of an undemocratic nature when it came to its interaction with the masses. The Central Committee review is also a reflection of the same.

Built into the above understanding is a certain idea of the relationship between the party and the masses, the institutionalization of the party, and the relationships within different structural units of the party. It is not that questions about these relationships were not raised earlier. Whether democratic centralism was a suitable institutional form was raised by many. (Alam, 2009; Karat, 2010; Purkayastha, 2010) However, these debates did not develop as intraparty ideological struggles in a way that would supplement the larger revolutionary politics.

There is an understanding that remains entrenched within the liberal intellectual tradition that privileges the institutional form of knowledge production over non-institutional forms of knowledge. This gained ground over a period of time as a distinct category of intellectuals claiming expertise over different aspects of life emerged through institutions. In other words, this privileging not only creates, knowingly or unknowingly, a hierarchization of knowledge—classes afforded institutional accessibility in a commodified economy have a better understanding compared to the masses who toil and face the everyday realities. This hierarchization could not be dismantled despite all the rhetoric of the democratization of knowledge because it is, in fact, rooted in the very design of how capital creates and retains spaces that can be useful to it.

This can be understood as similar to a liberal avatar sounding off that capitalism is not necessarily bad because it has a friendly, dissenting, dialogic, liberal face as well. To exit from the rule of capitalism is hence gradually made to appear as unnecessary. This framework of knowledge production critiques the authoritarian/fascistic tendencies of capital but prefers to maintain a hierarchical order. Democratisation for them is within limits and with characteristics that does not displace the larger systemic framework. The hierarchization of knowledge has become apparent in recent times as well, as we can see for instance in the following explanation by:

In democracies, people take decisions. But they do not have the intellectual wherewithal to examine the claims of the “powers” which seek their consent to rule them. Academics with their long engagement with knowledge have the tools to test the political and policy promises offered to people. They must share it with the public to help them take informed decisions. (Apoorvanand, 2019)

Teaching-Learning as a Political Project in Freire

This understanding of “people” who lack the ability to comprehend society has permeated even organizations where the participation of people has been “passivized” through turning them into “masses” led by the “intellectual/leaders”. Freire is imagining a new kind of politics, of which pedagogy is an intrinsic part, which is to be practiced on the ground. As McLaren puts it that "Ultimately, Freire’s work is about establishing a critical relationship between pedagogy and politics, highlighting the political aspects of the pedagogical and drawing attention to the implicit and explicit domain of the pedagogical inscribed in the political." (McLaren, 2005, p.xxxvii). There is an aim of the educational process for Freire, which has teachers placed in a particular role. S/he is neither a parent nor an alienated autocrat delivering

sermons in the classroom. The teacher is seen as someone with the “necessary ability to protest in favour of their students by demanding better working conditions from school administrators and politicians”. (Freire, 2005b, p. 9) He would consider participation in protests as explaining meaning of struggle and concrete lessons in democracy to the students.

Having seen how politics was an intrinsic, and many a times concrete, part of the teaching-learning process in Freire one can see how he would place masses in the whole scheme of politics. Hierarchy has no place for him as he illustrates through example of how a peasant stops speaking because he thinks he knows less than others but Freire insisted in a gathering that they know things which he does not. Over a period of time, in political organisations of even Left this is what has happened. There is a decision taken in a higher body of the party³, which is then transmitted down to the lowest level as a circular for an activity. What this does is similar to what Paulo Freire called “banking education”. He writes that:

In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry (Freire, 2005a, p. 72).

The teacher (read “leader”) does not want to communicate (which is a dialogic process) but “issues communiqués”. Dialogue is about transforming the world. It happens between among humans grounded in the concrete material conditions. "Critical and liberating dialogue”, which presupposes action, must be carried on with the oppressed at whatever the stage of their struggle for liberation." (Freire, 2005a, p.67) There is an idea of continuous struggle here, which does not stop when a certain goal is achieved because the social,

economic and political processes do not cease to exist then. Dialogue as an instrument of struggle, along with other instruments, is a significant part of this process. The basic instrument of a dialogue is the word itself, to which Freire attributes multiple meanings:

Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world. (Freire, 2005a, p.87)

It is a critical process because “dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person’s ‘depositing’ ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be ‘consumed’ by the discussants”. (Freire, 2005a, p.89) There are elements limiting the ability of humans to be dialogical. Being dialogical also implies being critical, and it is within the “power of humans to create and transform”, but they “may be impaired” due to the “concrete situation of alienation” that individuals find themselves in. (Freire, 2005a, p. 91) The critical thinking that is essential for “true dialogue” believes in “an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people” and it looks at “reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity”. (Freire, 2005a, p. 92)

Dialogue is often misunderstood to be conversation. Freire distinguishes the two and provides a much deeper insight on how formation of knowledge is an act that happens not only within the material locations but is also historically constituted. While elaborating on this difference he is also very clear when he argues that “I never advocate either a theoretic elitism or a practice ungrounded in theory, but the unity between theory and practice. In order to achieve this one must have epistemological curiosity - a curiosity that is often missing in dialogue as conversation...” (Freire, 1995, p.382) Hence, conversation does not

necessarily have an epistemological curiosity which dialogue has. It takes off and progresses on the foundational basis of the existing body of knowledge acquired through different sources including experiential. This existing experiential knowledge channelled through the ‘readiness and eagerness of a conscious body’ engages with the ‘object of knowledge’ and produces a dialogic education. He says

“I would like to reiterate that human beings are, by nature, curious beings. They are ontologically curious. In order to be more rigorous, I would venture to say that curiosity is not a phenomenon exclusively human, but exclusively vital. That is, life is curious, without which life cannot survive... dialogue, as a process of learning and knowing, presupposes curiosity. It implies curiosity.

Teachers who engage in an educational practice without curiosity, allowing their students to avoid engagement with critical readings, are not involved in dialogue as a process of learning and knowing. They are involved, instead, in a conversation without the ability to turn the shared experiences and stories into knowledge. What I call epistemological curiosity is the readiness and eagerness of a conscious body that is open to the task of engaging an object of knowledge" (Freire, 1995, p.382)

In this process of understanding dialogue, Freire was concerned with the way “revolutionary leaders”, in order to widen their support base or bring people together, “fall for the banking line of planning program content from the top down”. (Freire, 2005a, p. 95) The effort is, then, to ensure that the views of the masses fall in line with that of the leaders. One may not be convinced by Freire here, because he does not look at the fact that a dialogue has the possibility to ensure that either of the views become the view of the movement. While he is right in saying that the whole process has the possibility of becoming a top-down approach, which is what appears from the two Indian examples above, there is nevertheless always the possibility of the masses following the

understanding of the leaders, and there should be the provision of leaders accepting the views of the masses.

Luxemburg and the Pedagogy of Revolution

The Left in India has not shown its orientation towards a dialogic politics—neither within the party nor between the party and the masses. This absence of orientation has led to an instance wherein (1) the cadres do not have the possibility to present their views to the party, (2) the party does not know what people are thinking (hence its political decimation in recent times), and (3) leftist parties are compelled to develop a framework and practice a politics which seeks to conscientize the masses in the ideology that the parties believe in. In recent times, we have not only seen a popular shift from the left to the right, but also inertia within the Left. This politics has its root in the inability to understand the relationship between the working class and the political apparatus.

If the task of the working class is the establishment of socialist order then it "requires a complete transformation of the state and a complete overthrow of the economic and social foundations of society". (Luxemburg, 1971, p.368) And this task cannot be undertaken through decrees issued by any "bureau, committee, or parliament" (Luxemburg, 1971, p.368). Freire, as mentioned above, was saying something similar when he was talking about communiques (Freire, 2005a). The critique of this way of working of the so-called revolutionary politics has huge implications for not only how struggles are carried out but also about the whole project of transforming the society into a socialist one. It does not only discard the agency of working class but also refuses to accept that the organising is a pedagogical project that leads to transformation of consciousness. In this sense, the project does not merely end with the change in the government but continues beyond that to transform the

way the new world order and its different aspects is imagined from the working-class perspective. This is what Luxemburg implies when she says that "The essence of socialist society consists in the fact that the great laboring mass ceases to be a dominated mass, but rather, makes the entire political and economic life its own life and gives that life a conscious, free, and autonomous direction." The bourgeois organs will have to be replaced with the new organs that fulfils the needs of the working class (Luxemburg, 1971, p.368). "It must occupy all the posts, supervise all functions, measure all official needs by the standard of its own class interests and the tasks of socialism." (Luxemburg, 1971, p.368) She imagined a constant relationship between "the people and their organs". (Luxemburg, 1971, p.368)

The challenge for the worker is huge because the whole production process will have to be directed by them. New institutions, new ways of working and newer thoughts defining them have to be created from the scratch. The workers must develop certain virtues and responsibilities because the new order has to be run by them.

"They have to develop industriousness without the capitalist whip, the highest productivity without slave drivers, discipline without the yoke, order without au-thority. The highest idealism in the interest of the collectivity, the strictest self-discipline, the truest public spirit of the masses are the moral foundations of socialist society, just as stupidity, egotism, and corruption are the moral foundations of capitalist society." (1971, p.369)

This imagination of Luxemburg needs to be read in consonance with her argument against a politics of decrees. This also provides new directions to rethink the notion of democracy and governance without the existence of a bureaucratised, hierarchical order. The success lies in the way proletariat grows intellectually in the process of struggle and this will happen only if the struggle

leaves sufficient space for the workers to grow into their own leaders, who are not persons on high pedestal, inaccessible to mass of workers. "The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself" (Luxemburg, 1971, p.369).

Rosa Luxemburg understood that theoretical knowledge was an important basis for the modern workers' movement, and that it "is doubly important for the workers" (Luxemburg, 2004, p.130) While dealing with the opportunism of Eduard Bernstein, she was clear that the working class needs to understand this aspect of politics, "the present theoretical controversy with opportunism". (Luxemburg, 2004, p.130) Yet it was not only in the context of countering Bernstein's opportunism that Luxemburg spoke about the theoretical knowledge of the working class. She emphasizes that:

as long as theoretical knowledge remains the privilege of a handful of "intellectuals" in the Party, it will face the danger of going astray. Only when the great mass of workers take in their own hands the keen and dependable weapons of scientific socialism will all the petty-bourgeois inclinations, all the opportunist currents, come to naught. (Luxemburg, 2004, p.130)

Gramsci becomes relevant here because he also challenges the disjunct of intellectuals and non-intellectuals and argues that the latter as a category does not exist (Gramsci, 1971, p.9). Gramsci argues that

"Each man, finally, outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a "philosopher", an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought." (Gramsci, 1971, p.9)

This argument can be extrapolated to establish that every human being as a conception of the world, there is a way s/he looks at it, there is an alternative that s/he imagines and there is a path that s/he forges to achieve it. The questions of whether that vision of the world is appropriate or is shaped by the dominant ideological apparatuses or whether the path is shaped by the individualised imagination of capital is important and to be resolved through active politics. But it in no way undermines the intellectuality of the individual.

Luxemburg, further, links the struggle for democracy with the struggle for the emancipation of the working class. Unless the two are linked, democracy cannot be attained. When one looks at the contemporary situation there seems a gradual disconnection between the two—wherein the struggle for the emancipation of the working class appears to have no connection with the struggle for democracy. Hence, a close look at the discourse on state repression and attacks on dissenting voices reveals a severed connection between the discourse and the working-class struggle. It is rather a discourse for saving bourgeois liberal democracy. Luxemburg believed that:

democracy acquires greater chances of survival as the socialist movement becomes sufficiently strong to struggle against the reactionary consequences of world politics and the bourgeois desertion of democracy. He who would strengthen democracy must also want to strengthen and not weaken the socialist movement; and with the renunciation of the struggle for socialism goes that of both the labor movement and democracy. (Luxemburg, 2004, p.155)

It is necessary to communicate the fact that the struggles of the working class, struggles within the university campuses, or in the streets are all struggles against the bourgeoisie, which acquires different forms in the course of history. This struggle is also about equipping the working class with the tools of dialectics, with an understanding that there is a relationship between the

different struggles that the workers wage, as all of them are battles against the rule of capital. It is with the “sword” of dialectics that:

the proletariat pierce the darkness of its historical future, the intellectual weapon with which the proletariat, though materially still in the yoke, triumphs over the bourgeoisie, proving to the bourgeoisie its transitory character, showing it the inevitability of the proletarian victory. (Luxemburg, 2004, p.162)

The insistence in the works of Luxemburg to intellectually engage the workers with the developments taking place around them, or with the questions that they are confronted with, is omnipresent. While talking of mass strikes, she observes that it is only through the discussions on the mass strike happening through the Russian Revolution and in Western Europe that “the widening of the intellectual horizon of the proletariat” and “the sharpening of their way of thinking, and to the steeling of their energy” would take place. (Luxemburg, 2004, p.171)

The understanding of political struggles emerges clearly in Luxemburg’s *The Junius Pamphlet*. She analyses how the bourgeois state thinks that if the individual leaders/agitators are thrown inside prison or repressed then the possibility of movement can be subdued. This also indicates of how historically the idea of leadership has evolved – becoming an individuated project where the ability to show the path is embodied in one person or may be a group of persons (a grouping of leaders). This historical imagination creates the disjunct between masses/cadre and the leadership and diminishes the strength of collective. The trade unions in many places, such as India imagined their struggle in a fragmented manner and probably due to their understanding of class in a myopic sense. The university had, to begin with, different layers of unions representing different strata in the university. Teachers being the most privileged ones were protective of their interests and not that of the librarians or

gardeners or office assistants. This historical flaw became useful for private capital when dismantling of whatever kind of public education exists. But the battle was lost in the conception of the struggle itself. Movement must be of masses, not of leaders. Hence, even if repression happens the movement gains due to the collective strength, which is cemented by the affinity of collective decision making. This becomes possible only if the relationship of the leader and organization is redefined.

Luxemburg indicates at the evolution of a politics that is organic in nature. Neither ‘revolutionary romanticists’ nor the diktat and direction of the party can result in an effective strike. For her the Russian Revolution (and the 1905 mass strike gives crucial lessons) taught that

“that the mass strike is not artificially "made," not "decided" at random, not "propagated," but that it is an historical phenomenon which, at a given moment, results from social conditions with historical inevitability. It is not therefore by abstract speculations on the possibility or impossibility, the utility or the injuriousness of the mass strike, but only by an examination of those factors and social conditions out of which the mass strike grows in the present phase of the class struggle—in other words, it is not by *subjective criticism* of the mass strike from the stand- point of what is desirable, but only by *objective investigation* of the sources of the mass strike from the standpoint of what is historically inevitable, that the problem can be grasped or even discussed.” (Luxemburg, 2004, pp.170-171)

Even if we try to understand the way mobilisations have happened in states like Sri Lanka which sunk deep into economic crisis one finds that there is hardly any analysis along lines that Luxemburg is suggesting here. The Indian situation for the organizational left has been going from bad to worse due to this. The historical inevitability of struggles needs to be understood in conjunction with the objective material conditions. This was demonstrated by the mass strike

which was “a new form of struggle” and was “the sure symptom of a thoroughgoing internal revolution in the relations of the classes and in the conditions of the class struggle. New forms of struggles at different historical conjunctures are also indicators of the reframing of class relations and class struggle.

The political pedagogy becomes important here because it needs to break through the established hierarchized, hitherto existing rigid organizational barriers by letting the working class reflect on the new conditions and new methods and ways of struggle. Most of the times non-dialogic framework limits this process.

The segmentation of the movement between intellectuals and the cadres—between “the intellectual branch” or the “central branch” of the party and those who are without any place in the party hierarchy—destroys the possibility of providing longevity to the movement. It takes away the life-source of the movement: conviction about what one struggles for. This building up of the life-source is purely pedagogical. It is a “precious” thing due to its “lasting” nature because it is “the intellectual, cultural growth of the proletariat, which proceeds by fits and starts, and which offers an inviolable guarantee of their further irresistible progress in the economic as in the political struggle”. (Luxemburg, 2004, p.186) It is a failure to recognize this dimension that leads to the formation of a party and its ascension to power, but that also simultaneously prepares a “temporary” base which switches sides based on the shifting results of the bourgeois democratic instruments of electoral battles, at which the bourgeoisie is itself more adept.

The views of the “intellectuals” of revolution, the all-enlightened creatures, have ensured a strong disconnect between the experiences of the intellectuals

and the masses, outside of the walled-off intellectual realm. Hence, despite so much state repression of any form of dissent, vocalized by a select crowd which have virtually no access to the masses owing to their language, discursive content, and approach to the manifestations of contemporary capitalism, there is an absence of mass resistance. It is these moments which throw up incomprehensible situations such as protests by farmers (outside of a party framework), and people resisting the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizenship (again outside of a party framework). They may not be working-class struggles—and miss the larger point of their oppressor being capital—but they are also an expression that they will not “allow anyone to play the schoolmaster with them”. (Luxemburg, 2004, p.198)

Pedagogical Politics and the Struggle for Liberation

Pedagogies are not restricted to the four walls of a classroom as many would like us to believe. It forces itself out of the restrictions transcends beyond the formalised educational structures into people’s lives. Ways of looking, seeing and thinking become pertinent because they determine how we as humans would like this world to be. The dreams of egalitarianism and democracy without semblances of any exploitation are woven by the pedagogical machinations that try hard to transform consciousness and shape it for capital to survive. It has done its job well as indicated by the persistent crisis of capitalism but its continued dominance as a system. The counter-pedagogical project of transformation that could think and act has fallen weak, co-opted and sucked into the whirlpool of capitalist illusion. This is also indicative of the victory of the hegemonic pedagogical practice. If the counter-act is to become effective the anti-capitalist politics must introspect, look within and redefine its relationships.

The pedagogical aspect finds itself concretely in a movement or a politics wherein the question of theory and practice is addressed through the shaping of revolutionary politics. It manifests itself in the way political organizations or parties are designed and in the way relationships within the organization as well as between the organization and the masses are forged. This relationship needs to be a relationship of dialogue, a relationship which rejects the hierarchization of the leader and cadres, a relationship that grounds itself in the active engagement of ideas and politics among them. The politics of liberation must ensure that the “critical and liberating dialogue, which presupposes action, must be carried on with the oppressed at whatever the stage of their struggle for liberation” (Freire, 2005, p.p.65).

The contemporary political situation believes in “communiqués”. It fears dissent within the organization because it fears dismantling the organization, but as Luxemburg delineates, the longevity of revolutionary politics lies in the theoretical intellectual growth of the working class, which does not seem to have happened. There is a process of learning which happens within movements on account of experience, but this experiential learning must find a place in the everyday workings of revolutionary politics in the “central” and “intellectual” branches. Such distinctions between “intellectuals” and “non-intellectuals” are indicators of a revolutionary politics wherein the leadership is the depositor of ideas, and the cadres and the masses are passive recipients. Rosa Luxemburg’s emphasis on doing away with these distinctions are significant if we are to imagine any kind of revival of anti-capitalist politics.

Notes

¹ I am thankful to reviewers for their comments.

² The author is here taking the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) as examples only to illustrate the larger point. Other left-wing organizations may also be included in this analysis.

³ The reason I am emphasizing the political party as an institution is because “institutionalization” begins by replicating the bourgeois socio-political and pedagogical order and therefore fails to create an alternative to the dominant, hegemonic bourgeois political order.

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