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## Animal Farm of Indian Right Wing

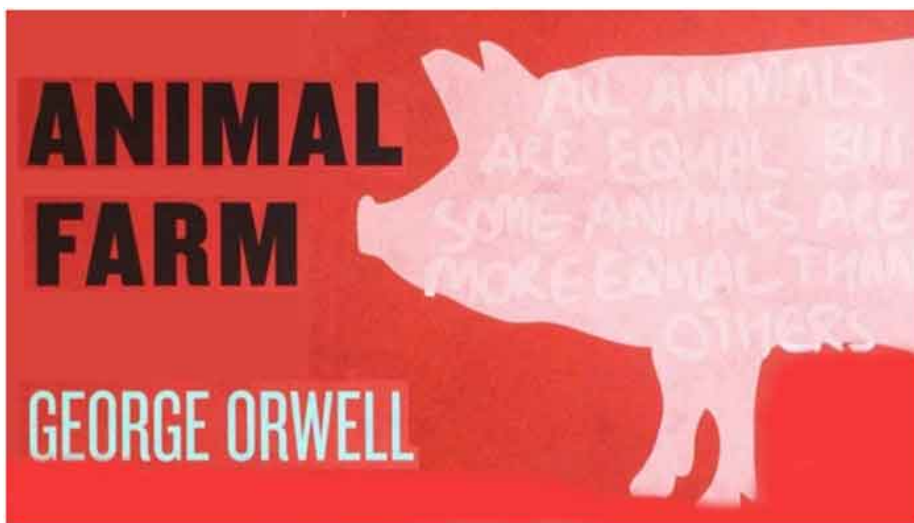
in Arts/Literature – by Pragya Ranjan – 16/08/2020

### 17 August: On the 75th anniversary of a classic work

Eric Arthur Blair (25 June 1903–21 January 1950), known to all of us by his pen name George Orwell, described the source of the idea of setting the book on a farm:

*“I saw a little boy, perhaps ten years old, driving a huge carthorse along a narrow path, whipping it whenever it tried to turn. It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat.”*

Animal Farm is an allegorical novella, first published in England on 17 August 1945. Five publishers refused to publish it, largely due to the fear that the book might upset the alliance between Britain, United States, and the Soviet Union. Eventually, Secker and Warburg published the first edition in 1945, which sold 4,500 copies within a few days, and by 1973 the book had sold around nine million. In a letter to Yvonne Davet, Orwell described Animal Farm as a satirical tale against Stalin. In his essay “Why I Write” (1946), he wrote that Animal Farm was the first book in which he tried, with full consciousness of what he was doing, “to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole.”



Seventy-five years have passed since the publication of the book but it is still widely read. Although the book is centered around the Russian Revolution but even those who are not very historically minded, find it impressive. Even when children and teenagers read Animal Farm like any other fictional book consisting of animals as characters, they get a gist of the way pigs betray other animals and establish their own hegemony. The Communist regime in the USSR, on which Orwell wrote the book, no longer exists nor does the Soviet Union. Does this mean that Orwell’s Animal Farm, which counts as




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one of the favorites of most adults, teenagers and children, too, has a greater implication than merely satirically referring to the USSR?

The story revolves around a farm named Manor Farm near Willingdon, England where animals, under the leadership of a boar called Old Major, plan a rebellion against the owner of the farm, Mr. Jones, who is an irresponsible and alcoholic farmer and mistreats the animals. After the rebellion, Mr. Jones tried to retake the farm but Snowball, a pig, along with other animals fought bravely and won the battle which was later named as 'Battle of Cowshed'. Every animal in the farm cherished this victory and boasted of being a part of the first farm in the world in which animals rule themselves.

The concept of Animalism was introduced with its seven commandments:

1. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.
2. Whatever goes upon four legs or has wings is a friend.
3. No Animal shall wear clothes.
4. No animal shall sleep in a bed.
5. No animal shall drink alcohol.
6. No animal shall kill any other animal.
7. All animals are equal.

Soon Napoleon, another pig, drove out Snowball and became the dictator. He assured other animals that he will work hard for their well being.

As time passed, animals started forgetting the Battle of Cowshed and the seven commandments. Rumours were spread by Napoleon's supporters that Snowball was a deceiver and soon people also forgot about his bravery. Generation after generation, animals became more forgetful of the dreams of Animalism, while pigs strengthened their monopoly.

Hens, horses, goats, sheeps, birds and other animals were repeatedly told by pigs that they were in much better condition compared to the time when Mr. Jones owned the farm, which animals believed easily, but the reality was different. One by one, the commandments started to break. Animals were killed, pigs started drinking alcohol, wearing clothes, sleeping in beds and one day pigs also started to walk on two legs and by their side there were sheeps bleating, *"four legs good, two legs better."*

Still, other animals were assured, even after the atrocities they were tolerating, that their condition was better than in any other farm which is owned by humans. They continued to work harder in the hope that one day they will have enough to eat and live a luxurious life but in reality their condition was more pathetic than in any other farm as nowhere did animals work so hard with hardly anything to eat. The Seven Commandments were abridged to just one phrase, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

At the end, animals from outside see pigs having a party with humans. The author says, *"The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which."*

Our Constitution states, *"Everyone is equal before law."* In George Orwell's Animal Farm this was the seventh commandment of Animalism, which was later transformed into *"All animals are equal but some are more equal than others."* There are many differences between a communist regime and a democratic system and both can't be compared directly. But what I see in today India has certain elements common with the Animal Farm i.e. totalitarianism and authoritarianism, which is possible in any system or country.

When viewed from a rigid political view, the comparison of bygone Communist Russia and India's current right wing regime can appear strange. But it will be revealing to see how both ideologies, based on absolute authority, behave quite similarly.

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George Orwell said, "Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed on July 27, 2020 that India "is in a better position than other countries". Vinod K. Paul, a member of the NITI Aayog, wrote in the *Indian Express*, "Modi compares India's lower infection and mortality rates with those regions where it is higher, conveniently ignoring the fact that many countries are doing better than India."

The government had announced to provide free ration to the poor during the lockdown. But the reality was that migrant labourers were stuck in the cities, without any wages and money to pay the rent. According to the survey conducted by the Stranded Workers Action Network (SWAN), published by The Hindu on April 27, 2020, 96% migrant workers did not get rations from the government and 90% did not receive wages during lockdown. The unemployment rate rose to as high as 23% in April and May. Is this what Modi calls being in a better position? Are the poor with no money in their pockets and no means of income in a better position?

When we go through history, we find that people easily forget the atrocities they face, which Orwell has also highlighted in his book.

The Communist ideology of Russia declared the bourgeoisie and untrammelled writers as their enemies. India's current right-wing regime has declared Muslims and so called left oriented Bahujan intellectuals its enemies. The communist regime had gained power in the name of proletariat and equality, whereas the existing regime in India has gained power in the name of creating harmony among the Hindus, especially Dalit-backward and upper-caste Hindus. In Animal Farm, the pigs were following the so-called principle of 'equality' whereas the right wing in India is following the principle of the so-called 'harmony' among its people. They have just made a slight change in the signboard and made "harmony" compulsory for Dalit, Backward, Adivasi and minority religious communities and exempted the socially dominant section from it!

Modi came to power with the slogan United India, Great India (*Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat*); by unity Modi actually meant Hindu solidarity (*Hindu Ekta*). In the same way, he had another slogan 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas, Sabka Vishwas' – meaning 'Together, for everyone's growth, with everyone's trust. But as said in *The Economist* that after his second Lok Sabha poll victory in May, 2019 Modi "has now taken his gloves off" to pursue a "*Hindutva social agenda*". On the one hand, non-Hindus, especially Muslims continue to face violence and atrocities. On the other hand, Modi even failed to fulfil his promise of Hindu Solidarity. Lower caste Hindus, along with Muslims, are suffering terribly in his regime.

On November 8, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced demonetisation of Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 notes with the aim to bring an end to black money. Financial experts highlighted time and again that black money hoarders do not hold the money in cash.

Hence at the end, it were the MSMEs (Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises) that were affected the worst by the decision. Dr. Pramod Ranjan in his [article](#) in *Tehelka* writes “*For those who study the profit and loss of the politics of caste, it will be interesting to know that those who committed mass suicides after the lockdown mostly belonged to lower vaishya family (In the Indian caste system, there are two categories of Vaishya community – Upper Vaishya, which are in the general category and Lower Vaishya who are under Other Backward Class). Prime Minister Modi himself belongs to OBC Lower Vaishya community.*”

“*Of the great democracies to fall to populism, India was the first*” said the opening sentence of the article in *Time*.

Government is engaged in repeatedly telling us how we are better off than others after imposing more stringent rules on us. It is doing a great job in manipulating our minds and we are also doing great in becoming forgetful of the fact that how our condition has worsened amidst the world’s harshest lockdown.

According to CMIE on April-June survey, of those earning up to Rs 48,000 annually-i.e Rs 4,000 per month, not a single one said that their incomes had gone up during the lockdown months. In April-June 2019, more than half the households earning more than Rs 5 lakh per year had witnessed an increase in their income while in the 2020 lockdown, that figure dropped to less than 15%. There is also a sharp drop in income rise in households earning more than Rs 10 lakh per annum. On the other side of the spectrum, data shows a different picture of the Indian elites, who are still living a luxurious life sitting in their homes, unlike most of the poor and lower middle class families. Half of the households that earned more than Rs 36 lakh per year reported income increase even during lockdown.

Our Constitution says that freedom is the basic right of every person. Now, it is we who are telling the government to restrict our freedom by locking us down and beating those who come out of their homes of their own will – the same way as the sheep started bleating “*four legs good, two legs better*”. We are doing all this in the name of social well-being in the midst of the pandemic but the Covid cases will continue to rise, even if we sit at our homes or not. With two million Covid-19 cases, India is at the third

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position in the world but in restricting individual freedom and treating underprivileged community and Muslims inhumanely, India is at the first position.

We need to understand that while we think of ourselves as the only nation where the government cares so much for its people; the past and the present show that the big companies are the actual beneficiaries and the government has become dictatorial by curbing our basic rights. They are the pigs and we are the hens, horses, goats and donkeys working in their farm thinking that we are better off than in any other farm in the world.

It is true that the ideology of extremely inhumanistic Brahminism(Manuvad) cannot be compared with an ideology like Communism. But after watching the current situation, doesn't it seem that India has become the Animal Farm of Hindutva? The answer depends on which way you choose to see yourself, what government wants you to see or what the data shows.

[1] By left oriented Bahujan, I mean the majoritarian exploited in the varna system of India who feel affinity with the ideology of the Left.

[2]http://tehelkahindi.com/%E0%A4%AD%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%A-%E0%A4%AE%E0%A5%87%E0%A4%82-%E0%A4%B2%E0%A5%89%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%A1%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%89%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%AA%E0%A4%A4%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%

[2] <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/india-lockdown-covid-1.5534551>

[4] Manuvad refers to the ideologies concerning the Hindu scripture, Manusmriti.

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Rishabh Sachdeva  
16/08/2020 at 9:25 PM

The least you can do is actually state the current unemployment rate as per CMIE..its at prelock down levels..the next thing you can do is when you quote that India is not doing great in controlling the epidemic – also say that in terms of /million infections and deaths – it is 89th and 85th in the world..thats not so bad..otherwise it just across as not just being counter current but counter factual too..

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