

Colonialism(s) and the global policing of dissent

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SPEAKERS

S'bu Zikode, Kerem Nisancioglu, Shalini Gera, Brian Hioe, Radha D'Souza, Tanya, Gacheke Gachihi

Tanya 01:27

Hi, everyone. Welcome to today's session of The World Transformed, which is on colonialisms and the global policing of dissent. I'm Tanya and I put this session together in collaboration with some incredible organisers from the detention solidarity network, which is an unlikely place to critically engage with the structures and experiences of detention that constitute the incarceration state in India. We're honoured and excited to have an array of inspiring speakers with us today joining us from India, Kenya, South Africa, Taiwan and the UK. Before I introduce our speakers, I just need to read out a few announcements. So first of all, we want everyone to feel welcome in the space and for everyone's voices to be heard. So please bear this in mind when engaging with the chat or comment boxes during the session. In this session, we will be using a live transcription service called otter. Attendees who are using otter will have to follow a link and open the transcript in a separate window. This link will be shared in the chat box now. If you're having any difficulties, just message the tech volunteer on the chat. Finally, TWT is free for all but it's only made possible by the contributions of our supporters. So if you're able to please consider supporting the festival, the link will be in the chat as well to help TWT sustain their work. So our amazing speakers. First of all, I'd like to introduce Kerem Nisancioglu who has kindly agreed to chair the session today. Kerem is a lecturer in International Relations at SOAS and an organiser with the preventing prevent campaign. He is co author of How the West came to rule: the geopolitical origins of capitalism and co editor of decolonizing the university, both of which are published by Pluto Press. We also have Shalini Gera is a lawyer practicing in the Chhattisgarh High Court, and works mainly in the field of safeguarding the rights of indigenous communities in Central India. We have Gacheke Gachihi who is the Coordinator of Mathare Social Justice Centre and a member of the Social Justice Centres Working Group Steering Committee in Nairobi, Kenya. We have S'bu Zikode who is the founding president of Abahlali baseMjondolo - a grassroots democratic social movement of shack-dwellers in South Africa, campaigning both against evictions and for public housing. We have Radha D'Souza who is a lawyer, social activist, and author of "what's wrong with rights?" also published by Pluto Press. She also works with the campaign against criminalising communities in the UK. And last but not least, we have Brian Hioe who is a writer, translator, activist, and DJ, based in Taipei, Taiwan. He is a founding

editor of New Bloom Magazine, which was formed in the wake of the 2014 Sunflower Movement in Taiwan, and a member of the Lausan Collective, which was formed last year in the course of the ongoing protests in Hong Kong. So I'm gonna hand over to you now, Karen.

Kerem Nisancioglu 04:24

Thank you, Tanya, for the introduction. And thanks, all of you for attending this session. And as mentioned, I'll be chairing this discussion, but I'm also going to just give a brief introduction into thematic emphasis on counter terrorism in reference to the UK context specifically. So some of you may have seen this week in the news that various Tory politicians have been using the term extremist or extremism to describe the extinction rebellion protesters in London. Now I don't think there's anything especially new with the state trying to criminalise protests and dissent. I think maybe what's notable about our current moment is how much that criminalization is couched in the language of counterterrorism. The campaign group netpol have been fighting against this for years and fighting against the use of the term extremism or domestic extremism to refer to protest, to delegitimise protest, also to criminalise protest, and we saw how this criminalization played out in seemingly unprecedented ways a couple of years ago. So in 2017, a group of activists who would later become the Stansted 15 successfully blocked a mass deportation charter flight at Stansted Airport preventing the deportation of around 60 migrants. They were charged and in 2018, convicted with a terrorist offence, specifically, the disruption of services at an aerodrome. And the maximum sentence for this offence is life imprisonment. And thankfully, the Stansted 15 avoided that sentence and were instead given fines and community service. But what this case demonstrates is a worrying precedent. The Stansted 15 were not treated as civilian protesters exercising their right to protest or exercising their right to free speech or dissent. Nor are they treated as mere criminals, they are treated as terrorists. That is to say they were treated as enemies of the state and enemies of the nation. Now, it might be tempting to see this case, and also the case of XR as exceptional, or perhaps even absurd, some sort of misuse of the law. And there is some truth to this. In some respects, it is absurd that these people are charged as terrorists and is, in some cases, in some respects exceptional. But treating it as such might lead us to misunderstanding how counterterrorism operates as something considerably more mundane and every day. Take, for example the UK government's prevent strategy. In 2015, this became a statutory duty that must be complied with in a variety of public institutions such as schools, universities, and health services, local authorities and so on. So today, what we find is teachers, lecturers, certain health professionals, social workers, housing offices and so on, are tasked with the work of counterterrorism. What's more, prevent is not even strictly speaking, concerned with acts of terror, nor is it concerned with criminal acts, that's not the target of prevent. Instead, prevent is supposed to identify individuals at risk of becoming extremist and then intervening with deradicalization measures to prevent them becoming more extreme or prevent them eventually committing violent acts. So with the prevent strategy, what we see is how counterterrorism is becoming increasingly concerned with surveilling and policing, non criminal or pre criminal spaces, acts and behaviours, and encouraging moreover civilians to do that policing and surveillance. And just a couple of examples of behaviours or acts that at various moments has been indicated by the prevent strategy as being at risk of extremism, opposition to 2003 British invasion of Iraq, support for Palestine, support for certain socialist parties or environmentalist campaigns. In terms of behaviours becoming, say, for example, in a classroom increasingly withdrawn, becoming, for example, increasingly animated, entering into new friendship groups or social groups. All of these have been at various points suggested by the prevent strategy to demonstrate behaviours that

might indicate you're at risk of becoming radicalised or extreme. Today we're witnessing the proliferation of counter terrorism into not only spaces of dissent, but also into the everyday into the very fabric of our lives. And so this demonstrates that counter Terrorism is not just concerned with exceptional or isolated moments of violence. Instead, it forms a much more mundane and prevalent articulation and reproduction of state power control and authority. And so when we see it like this, counterterrorism becomes something maybe a bit more familiar to all of us and something that might be a shared or common concern, something that we might not necessarily be able to turn away from or opt out of. All of this has a much longer history that connects our present to Britain's colonial past. And it also has a much wider international set of connections in government counterinsurgency policing. And the speakers on this panel will help us get a better understanding of these geographical and historical connections. And so it's to these three panellists that we now turn and First up is Shalini who is calling in from India. So over to Charlie

Shalini Gera 10:01

Hi, thanks. Am I audible? Can you hear me? I hope I am. I think one of the most, repeated phrases about the times we're living in India today is that we live in a state of emergency. It's a very banal statement, but they're can't be truer statement than this right now. What do we mean by the statement that we're in a state of emergency, basically, that the executive is all powerful, and the other arms of the government seem to have collapsed. So you're seeing a complete coupling of institutions, whether it is the judiciary, whether it is the media, whether it is investigative agencies, the central investigation agencies, which were supposed to be autonomous, the various autonomous universities. They have all really collapsed and we have an all powerful executive. Combined with that a very vindictive executive and a very vengeful executive. We are seeing the imposition of a large number of anti terror laws, preventive detention laws used against all kinds of dissenters. However, commonplace they might be. So even the status of fear in the population is very high. People are generally scared to criticise the government in any form. And even very, very common activities like signing a petition is something that it now requires political courage to do. And I'm going to just give some examples about what kind of dissent activities or I wouldn't even call them dissent activities. This is just a regular simple expression of political opinion. And these kinds of expressions of political opinions are now being criminalised. And not only just criminalised in ordinary criminal laws but really draconian laws like sedition law being applied. Preventive detention laws are being applied and yesthe agitated laws are being imposed on people. So for instance, we have an example. Some of you might know that last year, the citizenship law was being amended and there was widespread opposition to that amendment. A 19 year old college student Amolia. She goes on a stage and wants to say that the citizenship law should not be on the basis of religion and just say something as banal as 'Long Live Pakistan'. Pakistan is a neighbouring country. We are not at war with it. It's a friendly country. And just the statement gets the sedition law imposed on her and she spends six months in jail and the National investigation agency wants to investigate her case. The Friday's for future a group that is supported by Greta Thunburg. It's a group that engages with students. And recently we've had an amendment to an environmental law, the environmental impact analysis low which dilutes many environmental legal processes. So there was again some opposition to it from most environmental circles. Friday's for future, this group starts an online petition, people can go there and to click on a button to send an email to this environment ministry. This group and the website and the website host of this group gets an anti terror law dumped against them because the act of sending a petition to the environment minister has to be a terrorist

activity. And then of course, we have the case of Kashmir, a state where it just recently lost its statehood last year. And on the back of that the entire state was clamped down and normal activity was stopped. The lockdown we're experiencing now was actually happening there much, much before this. And even now after a year, we have people still in house detention. And not just people we have the ex CM, the ex Chief Minister of the State who has spent more than a year in house detention because again, it is too dangerous to let her out because she might stoke a public opinion against the act that the centre has done. What is the act that the centre are doing, what was the political project that is happening? It is what we call the Hindupur project, which is the project of posing a hegemony of Hindu ideas, certain kind of Hindu ideas a majoritarianism, a majority form of Hinduism on the rest of the population. And again, the natural foes of this kind of project would be the Muslims or you know, the largest religious minority that we have in India, or people within Hinduism who have been who have been oppressed: the dalits. And yet, when we have seen those constituencies rise, which they have in large numbers, we're seeing oppression of them as well. We have two large cases happening now. And we have large number of dissenters one who participated in a dalit. commemoration where 15 well known human rights activist are detained After the citizenship Amendment rights, the law was amended the widespread opposition to that violence that came as a result of hindupur sponsored terrorism is now being blamed on university students, lecturers, human rights activists. That is the kind of terror that we're seeing in India right now. I think I'm out of time so I'm going to stop right here. But I just want to say that what separates this terrorism at this state of emergency from early states of emergencies, just the pervasiveness and not just certain areas, and also the widespread popular participation in this kind of emergency. And with that, I end

Kerem Nisancioglu 17:05

Thank you so much Shalini up for for that really interesting and important report. Our next speaker is S'bu who I think has been having some slight technical difficulties with the connection. So please bear with us if and there were issues with the connection but Fingers crossed, everything should be fine. But yeah, S'bu joining us from South Africa. And over to you. Okay, I think we may have lost S'bu. And in that case, we can move on to another speaker and see if hopefully we can fix the technical issue and then we can bring S'bu back into the into the conversation. So, next up, we'll invite Brian to speak who's calling in from Taiwan. So can we go with Brian, please?

Brian Hioe 18:51

Hi, everybody. So yeah, primarily I will discuss China and Hong Kong today and national security in these two countries. So what national security has come up frequently in the past few years actually just kind of longer is a way to crack down on the dissent and the fear of so quote unquote separatism in hong kong. This is the claim that activists are interested in breaking away from China, they are working in collusion with foreign forces to undermine the integrity of the nation as a whole. And this often takes the form of quote unquote counter revolutions attempting to subvert the state and so on. This has also taken the form particularly in western China in the region Xingjiang, of interning what's thought to be over 1 million Uighur's in detention camps and these camps are officially for the purposes of re-education quote unquote but this is also claimed to be in the name of national security. And so in this case, again, the cause returns to these claim fears of separatism and Islam is an ideology that needs to be stamped out. So what form does it take? This has taken place in different forms so for example, in Hong Kong one has seen the criminalisation of very mundane acts for example carrying paint, you can

be accused of participating in demonstrations, if you're just buying paint. This happened to a 12 year old girl recently. Or there's a bus driver, for example, that was accused of also perhaps hoping to participate in demonstrations and endangering the state and endangering national security in that way just by carrying a spanner which he was using to adjust the windows on his bus. And so this returns to the passage of a national security law a few months ago, which was aimed at criminalising sedition, basically, undermining Chinese state will lead to charges of five years in jail, 10 years in jail more, and so forth. So what one hasn't said is that this has obviously justified on the basis of maintaining the rule of law. This is just much more the case in Hong Kong. It is do what the police say, I think it really fundamentally returns to the relation of the state and Society, that the police are the sole force in society that has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence and structural issues such as those. But then this justification of national security is very interesting. So, I think because a lot of this kind of was focused on the legacy of colonialism in Hong Kong. So in Hong Kong this has taken the form of reviving colonial institutions, such as the Special Force that existed in British colonial times, which was used to target threats that were supposed to be endangering the integrity of the colony. And then to turn our attention to Xinjiang in this in this context. What one has seen is the use of anti terrorism discourse that seems primarily drawn from the war on terror that has been led by America. This is basically the case because China is a rising power and seeking to assert its wingspan internationally in terms of politics, economics and so forth. And China has a desire to pose as a responsible international actor, for example, with the Trump administration withdrawing from free trade agreements and agreements and military alliances, China is trying to step into that gap. Yeah and in this case, this is actually again another another example about using this discourse of anti terrorism particularly targeting Muslim majority countries that the US has spread since the war on terror and uses to justify what it claims to be internal security threats regarding Uighurs. And this then becomes a tool in this way for Han supremacy, Uighurs in Xinjiang are muslim majority and now they're attempts to move vast populations of han migrants to Xinjiang to displace the the original residents. It actually is also recorded just based on statistics from the Chinese state but the population seems is declining. And one last reason behind this is actually forced sterilisation. And so this is one case in which national security is used to justify what someone sees as a colonial conquest. And then returning to I think the fact that this was coming from the US from global American Empire. Now this has many different shades and one can see how China's is in this way kind of mimicking actions in the US. And so I think that one can draw a lot of connections in terms of the effects of national security laws. What happens is one sees across the board is that just very mundane acts are criminalised. Everyday life become surveilled. And in Hong Kong one sees this for example that if you wear black, for example, you could be arrested. You can be targeted for participating in demonstrations. And in Xinjiang now it's just it's present in everyday life, for example, your fingerprint will be taken if you're travelling. It's very unclear criteria that leads to you being imprisoned in a reeducation camp, and so forth. And unfortunately, I think that particularly, this has been leveraged on by Western countries to criticise China. But there's kind of a blindness to how these practices are seen in western countries. One observes a set of convergent behaviour between China and surveillance states that are mostly already existed in Western countries. In many cases, I think China is actually mimicking what Western countries did before. And so this is plays out particularly with the legacy of American imperialism, also British colonialism that what seem in Hong Kong and so forth. But then also what's been an interesting development, which I think we could maybe draw connections here is the use of COVID-19 as a pretext to clamp down on freedoms. In Hong Kong for example, elections have been suspended for one year with the claim that this is because of covid 19. I

mean, this is not a national security issue in per se but it's still claimed that this is for the welfare of the people. This is an attempt to spread the virus from spreading and hurting people in that sense. And I think that one will see increasing measures regarding covid 19. Again, just looking an international trends, and I think that across the board one has seen COVID-19 usde as a way to justify a state of emergency, and it's something that's particularly visible in Hong Kong and elsewhere. And this has also been used, for example, to justify Chinese military aggression, for example connecting with frequent military drills in the South China Seas or sending military planes to harrass Taiwan, where I'm located, just during this this time I think as a way to distract because you know, this is also claimed that during the COVID-19 crisis you have to maintain your borders you have to watch out for external threats. And so I think that occurs on a number of levels. So I'll just end it there and I'm looking forward to discussing further.

Kerem Nisancioglu 25:28

Brilliant. Thank you Brian for that. Next up We have Gacheke who's joining us from Kenya. Can we go over to him?

Gacheke Gachihi 25:41

Yes, thank you very to Tanya and comrades who have organised this meeting. This meeting is very inspiring, especially connecting us especially during this covid 19 crisis. The challenge that we're facing here in Kenya, and especially you know the history of Kenya is a former British colony Kenya was colonised by the British and as you know as India and as Kareem has said our historical connection with the police violence or terror, or how the state are using terrorism to contain and criminalise legitimate protest. So as you know, Kenya has a deep history with British imperialism and from the colonial sentiment here in Kenya a neocolonial state was created. And for many years we have never moved away from that. In 1963 you know, it was our independence, then we had a dicatatorship of Jomo Kenyatta and after that a dictatorship of Daniel arap Moi where there was a lot of torture, police state, criminalization of the political movement. So that is the history of where we are coming from. It roots from the British imperialism and colonial sentiment in Kenya. And you know how the British did with the Mau Mau in the 1950s that destroyed that movement through military and torture. And so that is our history where we locate the history of police violence in Kenya, and recently you know Kenya is borderin Somalia. Somalia has been a big problem, where the issue of terrorism, and a US government and the UK they have been involved a lot in training Kenyan soldiers and security forces on the issue of terrorism. Recently there was a repoer in the mirror newspaper about this training with the security agencies. These secuirty forces, in the last 10 years since they started training, they have been involved in cases of enforced dissappearance, torture, police killing, extra juridicial killing. This has been documented for many years. It has been very difficult in Kenya since the nature of the state is very violent and it's borrowed from the history of the colonial past. So we are trying to organise through a social justice movement like they have in South Africa or India. We are struggling here to build a democratic state but it has been very difficult because of the complacent relationship with these big powers especially the US and the UK in terms of security training and some of these officesr they are used to to commit criminal acts against ordinary people. And that's what are we documenting at Mathare social justice centre and many other social justice centres have been documenting in the last few years, and we have been protesting and marching against this as a way of building a mass movement against neo colonial state violence. So our challenge has been a it has been very difficult to

organise, especially when you've been criminalised by the state. Many protests are broken up militarily, people are arrested, detained

Kerem Nisancioglu 30:15

You can if you can carry on because they can hear you okay? Maybe not, I think it just disconnected It looks like it may have disconnected just now. We can give it a couple of seconds.

Gacheke Gachihi 30:30

I'm here. So we had a bunch of new liberal policies implemented by the IMF and world bank in Kenya. Millions of young people came from rural areas to the city, so there was no jobs, so we had informal settlements. 70 percent of the population in Nairobi city lived in shacks, no water, no health care, no housing, these informal settlements they have systematic police brutality and forced disappearance. Recently we had a lot of cases of illegal detention, many people detained illegally. So since the state was unable to provide jobs or employment what the state to criminalise them. So anytime people are organising they are criminalised, there have been extrajudicial killing and we organising social justice centres and we are organising around these extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearance and what I can say is I'm happy that we are connecting our struggles and that during this covid 19 movement, it is a struggle for democrat, socially just state that can provide people with housing, water. We can amplify each others voices.

Kerem Nisancioglu 32:57

Thank you for that. And you absolutely do not have to apologise for internet connections. As much as it's sort of like I guess like one of the one of the good things about the current situation is that we're able to connect online in this way. But at the same time, that's all I can even this in connection might also be a reflection of some of the global unevenness in hierarchies in terms of distribution of material and infrastructures and so on as well. So, yeah, no need to apologise It was great hearing from you. Next up, we've got some S'bu just want to note again, there may be technical issues. Hopefully we can hear you. I think you're muted.

S'bu Zikode 33:46

Thank you so much Karem. I just want to thank the organisers of this conversation because it's important for us to engage. I just what to thank friends and partners and supporters of our progressive efforts to bring about social justice in our countries. Well, I just want to say that the south african situation is much more different from what we have had Because we do not necessarily have the anti terrorism laws, however, I do want to say the following statements. We have been accused of being funded by foreign agencies who want to destabilise our hard won democracy. These words are often said by state agencies and the ruling party in order to justify violence against communities and social movement in South Africa. These are words that are often used to conduct and justify violence that they continue to hand and penalise activists, activists, the abahlali has faced a serious state repression including violence and local elections. Assaults, arrests. torture and murder we've lost almost 18 activists in South Africa just in our own movement in the last past 10 years, we haven't had any justice. These repression takes two forms. One form is directed through the state via the police, which is the south african police services. The Metro Police and the anti land invasion unit also known as the rogue units in South Africa, The other form is informal one where the the ruling party thugs, that is assassins or

hitmen are using violence all forms of violence in order to kill our congress during because of our struggles in South Africa, we are not just repressed through the anti terrorism laws, as I said, in fact, the repression that is unlawfully in South Africa. Whenever we approach the court to seek relief and win, we are often asked "Who the hell are you to take government to court?", as if government is some kind of a holy institution. For this reason our movement and all other struggles use the court to protect ourselves from the repression carried out by the state mainly by the ruling party. Below there is much more progressive here then the government and the ruling party. So we often use the law against the government and the ruling party, and oftentimes we win. Of course we know that our power is in the communities and in the streets and of course not in court. We do not expect the law to win many victories in terms of access to land and housing or more radical goals because we believe that it is through organising that the power, you know of the impoverished, of the oppressed people can actually change the systems of our society. However, we do use the law to protect ourselves in our rights to organise and mobilise for us it is organising that we can build the power of our communities from below. This organising outside the state and outside the ruling party has won us important victories. As the state has resorted to criminalization of activists in various forms. The way that poor black people are treated in south africa is a continuation of colonialism and apartheid. We are treated as people who don't count at all in our society. As people who can live and think for ourselves. When we organise it is always said that there is someone or this influence or rather that force behind our organisation because Who the hell are we that we can really do major changes in terms of our own destinies and political landscapes in our respective country. We are treated as criminals whole communities are treated as criminals. All of this is a continuation of apartheid and colonialism that continue to dominate our strategies for a better South Africa, the black middle class and the elites no longer face the repression but for poor black people nothing has changed. The state is no longer working for the people, but against the poor people in order to align itself with the global capital that puts money before human needs. So with those words, comments. I do want to make a call that we do need a strong international solidarity in order for us to counter colonialism and global policing of dissent that tends to undermine all the effort that has been made through struggles in the whole global committee communities. So I want to invite comrade that there is a need to engage in an international solidarity. It is key for us to actually change the situation that we are facing. I want to thank you.

Kerem Nisancioglu 40:09

Brilliant. Thank you so much for that. Most definitely worth it. Next up, we have Radha who, if I'm not mistaken is calling from the UK. And over to you Radha. Radha is going to have a bit more time to speak. And just to cover, like maybe I guess a couple of different parts for the purpose of this panel in terms of contextualising some of the discussion and so over to you.

Radha D'Souza 40:38

Oh, thank you. I want to first thank The World Transformed for putting this panel together and for inviting me to be on this panel. I think we are living through times when the spaces for critical and socially engaged thinking is shrinking everywhere. So I really value platforms like this where we can think through some of the issues that matter to us than I also want to commend the organisers for giving time to consider the big picture because I think most of the time we have become very accustomed to or trained to just look at the trees and not look at the forest. While trees are important. The forest standards ecosystems are equally important if we wish to navigate difficult terrain, which is

what we are being challenged to do these days. So within that time that I have, what I have, what I think I might do is just to flag up some basic propositions or make some basic statements that gives a historical overview of anti terrorism laws and policing of dissent from colonial perspectives and I won't have time to expand on these things or explain it but perhaps some of those things can be picked up in the q&a that will follow. So I want to just begin by first flagging up that criminalization of dissent and marginalised communities is not something new. This has happened throughout history. And throughout history people who have rebelled against injustices, people who have challenged wealth and power and marginalisation have always been, you know, punished tortured, hanged. This is this is part of our human history. This and sometimes when we forget this, we tend to start believing in some of the promises systems of power hold out for us. And I think it's important to put our activities in perspective in that sense. The second issue I want to flag is that techniques of repression have always changed throughout history and different periods of history, under slavery and feudalism. These techniques have changed. And so under capitalism capitalist modernity introduces some new techniques of policing, every time there have been changes in the character of capitalism, the character of policing and dissent have also changed to match that. So any changes in the way in which policing happens is also a signal that there is something else changing in the wider society, in the economy in the political economy or the global order. Now one of the most important and central changes that comes with the modern state, which was established with the rise of capitalism in European countries is the establishment of a new kind of state A new kind of state that has to build institutions. that are the backbone of the state. One is a professional policing organisation and that includes Armed Forces, so professional policing and professional bureaucracies. So these two institutions, their full time job is to police and to manage societies, this has never happened before. And it's important to flag up that and without the police and without bureaucracy there is no modern state as we know it. Now why this is important for our purposes today is that national security then becomes an invisible arm of the state because it's part of the state apparatus, but we don't see it. Nowadays of course we talk about the deep state because we all understand you know much more now, about the ways in which the state operates. So, in some ways, national security is the other side of Democracy. So the state has two faces. The other side of the coin of the state is national security. So if one side is democracy, the other side is national security. And this is how the modern state was established. The third point that I want to go on to make, a general comment is that the capitalist state are very different from the colonial states because the historical processes that established the capitalist states are very different from the colonial state? So, states established through colonialism have very different kinds of architecture of the state. And I think that is important to understand because very often we conflate the two types of states constitution India has a constitution. Therefore, our states are all similar. No, they are not. Because they were constituted through completely different historical processes and we can begin to understand. We can understand that when we, start looking into the fine print of the constitution, into the fine print of the institutions that are constituted with this. Now having said that, I will just go on to talk about a little bit about India because only to emphasise the historical only to emphasise the historical importance of India for colonialism and for architecture of repression. John Stuart Mill, who many of you may have heard of was a big, liberal English thinker. He used to say that India was an experimental laboratory for the world. And what he meant by that was that practices that were trialed in India were then carried around the Empire. So they were taken to Kenya, to Hong Kong to wherever and tried and adapted in other countries. And in India 1857 was a very important moment. And I think this is not only for India but for all colonised nations. Why was it important because in 1857, we had a

big rebellion. And for the first time, British was challenged on a sub continental plane. It goes across different Indian states, different Indian territories. People came up and rose against British colonialism and following 1857 in India there was a spate of rebellions across the colonies. So the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica, the Maori land wars in New Zealand, the expansion of the Fenian Brotherhood in Ireland and the 1867 rebellion of the Fenians. So after 1857 you find in colony after colony rebellions and what this does is it makes colonial governance and colonial administration a central issue for the British Empire which was the leading empire at that time. So the British start establishing, and that's why it's so important, techniques of colonial governance and start establishing another kind of state a colonial state, where it has a professional bureaucracy and at some levels with a lot of neat and so called involved in it, but it also begins to establish a state based on securitization. So in a way the securitized state of the colonies begins with the first attempt to suppress anti colonial movements. And that history is important. And the way kind of states that are established are very different from the states established in Europe, the principal difference being that the institutions of the state in the colonies are very racialized and tribal, so some tribes that are called martial tribes for example, they may come to be, assigned to military and Defence forces. There are some tribes or some communities or some religions that are seen as bureaucratic or more suitable for bureaucratic jobs, and they get assigned. So this kind of a state. Incorporates, institutionalised contradictions among people in the colonies at the very heart of the state and we find this everywhere the legacies of this And the follow up of this everywhere whether it is Rwanda Hutu and Tutsi, or India, Hindus and Muslims or various other countries. You can find these examples too, Tamil's and Singhas. So these kind of division are institutionalised in the state. And that's important part of the policing that happens. The other thing is independence was granted to us, but it was granted on the condition that the institutions that were established by colonial powers will continue to remain as they were. Coming now to anti terror laws. Most of the anti terror laws that we see now have the genealogy in the First World War because the First World War unleashed rebellions anti colonial rebellions around the world because people, most of the world wars are fought by soldiers from Africa from India from New Zealand, wherever and these people began to question like, why are we fighting for this empire which is treating us like rubbish, basically. So, the rebellions that came out of that, and the policing systems that were introduced that are still the template, if you like for our anti colonial laws today. I would just go on to the 911 moment because after the first World Wars ended, we have modification in the institution of the state and the emergence of what we now recognize as the military industrial media complex. So Wall Street and CIA and all these people are established within the American state, Wall Street becomes part of the American state during this time and then from there we have a new kind of policing which is highly technologized highly centralised and highly globalised. 911 of course exposed this thing because 911 made it clear that you know, that was only one imperial power, how coups happen, how CIA operates etc. and 911 also made it clear, one of the things that happen everywhere was signing off new defence treaties intelligence sharing treaties. Sharing a new space for basis military bases across Africa, many parts of Asia, and we find a renewal of some of those treaties and agreements, which we don't pay enough attention to when we talk about domestic laws and after 911 of course in the name of war on terror, this becomes incorporated into the UN system, the international law and international framework. So the war on terror, now becomes a global war against all people around the world who are fighting for justice. Just stop there with just one word or what should we do now? We need to seriously rethink a new kind of internationalism that focuses on the international order and for what it stands and what it

does besides of course doing our own national level struggles. I just stopped there and maybe we come back

Kerem Nisancioglu 54:35

Thank you, Radha. That was a great intervention. We're going to move on to the q&a. But before we do that, we're going to have a short Five Minute screen break. So we're going to break five minutes. That will hopefully give us some time to like Get a short break also gather our thoughts and also hopefully give you some time. To post some questions that we can then return to and ask the participants and panellists to respond to in the q&a. So we will have a five minute break and then we'll come back. But thanks to all of the speakers so far, and thanks everyone for listening so far and we'll see each other soon. Hi everyone, we're back for the second part of the session. And we're going to have a discussion based on some of the themes and issues that were discussed in the talks. We'll start with a few direct questions to the panellists. And as I do that, please do continue to post questions in the comment section. And once I've had a couple of rounds of questions with the panellists we'll bring in your discussion points, as well. So I was just going to start with maybe thinking about ways in which we might be able to connect these related but also, I guess, uneven experiences, around questions about the policing of dissent and its relation to counterterrorism practices. The first question I actually want to ask is maybe something that everyone's sort of trying to deal with at the moment. Which is how organising against or through these processes and these forms of policing, how that's being conducted in our current context, in these exceptional difficult circumstances. So that includes, I guess, our current moment in time in terms of COVID. But also like, I guess, more broadly speaking, the very difficult circumstances and organising in the context of such repression, surveillance, and state violence and so on. One thing in particular that we might want to interrogate is how activists not only maintain their organisational capacity, but also their, I guess emotional and physical capacity to organise against police brutality, and counter terrorism and so on. So that's the question that I want to first invite S'bu to respond to. How's your organisation been organising in these difficult circumstances of repression? But also exceptional circumstances? To the exceptional circumstances?

S'bu Zikode 1:02:58

Not an easy question I must say, but to answer you In short, I would say we have learned so much from a quote from Franz Fanon who once said "Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it". If the movements, grassroot activists have not discovered there mission it is highly unlikely that one can begin to engage on that question. So we need to commit ourselves to social change. By commitment, I really mean it, because there's a heavy price that we have paid in order to engage on that question. So we have been organising. And we are organising, because we have a very clear vision and mission. And part of that is to say, I mean, we, there was a point where we reached out to the stage, where we said it's a do or die. Because it's not just about us as the current generation, it is about our children, it is about our future. And therefore, we ought to be doing something without fear. So that's we have been doing but to get it right, we have to organise on the ground, where we are, with what we have, with what we can, within our reach. Before we can actually talk about the international solidarity and connection. We need to build a strong foundation on our neighbourhood, beginning with our families and neighbourhoods, and once we build that strong foundation, then we can actually expand in terms of organising.

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:04:55

Thank you. I think maybe that's one thing that's interesting about the covid moment where depending on the national context you're in and the nature of any kind of lockdown is that for some of us, it's thrown us in to greater proximity with our immediate communities and neighbours, and offers new opportunities for organising. I also wanted to bring in Shalini on this question on the challenges of organising in repressive contexts, but also in the current situation, and how have you been tackling those those challenges?

Shalini Gera 1:05:42

Yeah I think the biggest problem of these repressive regime is really organising. Everytime you get somewhere with your organising you get swatted down like a fly. This is something I was referring to, I was at a scene two times in the past where there's been really wide upsurges against a repressive regime and it's come from marginalised communities and they've been very succesful. Two years ago it was the dalits, people in lower castes, they had a very succesful moment on the first of January first 2018, about two ago. They had 35000 people congregate at a spot take a pledge against a repressive regime, saying we're not going to support this, we're going to overthrow this. Immediately a private group of militaries supported by the state attacked them. There was violence and in the violence that followed. The people who were held responsible were in fact the victims of the violence these oppressed communities that were held up responsible for it. And we're still continuing to see human rights activists arrested on the charges of this conspiracy. And then again, we had last year, the religious minorities, they came together and again was a very successful movement, very successful organising by lots and lots of people around the country. And the same thing happened, that they were again, beaten back by people supported by the regime. Violence ensued. And again, it was religious minorities who are held responsible for them. And again now we have like 20 academics, lecturers, university professors, university students in jail as culprits for this violence. So it is a big deal. It's imperative that we keep organising against these regimes. But each successive wave of this organising is met back by a very, very forceful you know, counter. And I think the only way out of it is really international solidarity because unless we all stand up for each other across these boundaries, we are going to just kind of crumble in the eye in isolation. So for me, you know, education, alerting awareness of what's happening in every other country is really important. And coming up with strategies collectively is going to be very key for what's going on.

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:08:43

Shalini can we stay with you because I had a follow up question on that, which is, so on the one hand there is so very direct and I guess almost sort of like naked forms of repression being mobilised against people trying to dissent against some of these things. And I was wondering about some of the, I guess, maybe more covert and infrastructural forms of suppression so I've got in mind in particular surveillance and surveillance technologies and how this is being mobilised to suppress dissent. And that might include, you know, state surveillance, but also could include more private forms of surveillance as well such as private contractors and, and social media. Do you have anything to say on that?

Shalini Gera 1:09:35

Well I'm not sure if this is what you're referring to, but in India, at least we have troll armies. I don't know if they are a part of the world everywhere. But yes, social media has become an important battle field.

Social media talk, television talk shows, this become a battlefield. They're the ones that are really leading the lynch mobs and really targeting you. And I'd say that India's, you know, what I wanted to say also was that India's been through has a history of a formal declaration of emergency, where also dissent was outlawed. That was in 75 under Indira Gandhi. And now what we are seeing is that dissent is really being criminalised. But there was a big difference there we had a bad time there we had only the state to fear. Now we have your neighbours to fear, now if you say something you're not really bothered about the state, the police is going to come they're going to stand back and watch while your neighbours corner you and the neighbours, the private Lynch mobs come and they tear you down. And that's the situation where we are now it's no longer just a state. It is a populist part of the state that is terrorising you. So if you say something out of it, so this is a big part of it. In fact, as you probably know, you know, we have a lot of data tapping, phone tapping, and I myself have been a victim of the Pegasus scam where we realised that through WhatsApp, our phones were being monitored. So that's something that one lives with on an everyday basis. There are private means of surveillance, and there are large scale surveillance, in terms of, you know, your ID cards, the biometric ID card that we all have now the Aadhaar card, and even the scheme to the government is putting out whether the databases where the databases all coalescing, and they need all your private information and there are no data privacy laws, there is no data security. So what is going on with our data and how it has been used? The big questions we've grappled with actually.

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:12:00

Same question to Brian about surveillance technologies, and the way in which that's been mobilised to suppress dissent.

Brian Hioe 1:12:15

Yeah, that's right. So I think particularly for the advancement of surveillance technologies that are tactics as activists just need to become more sophisticated, and that can be a complex, part of a steep learning curve sometimes. For example, you know, algorithms are much more advanced now in terms of identifying people. So we just need to get used to it, for example, covering up identification marks such as tattoos and that kind of thing. And I think what's been particularly salient to unshackled changes between activists and organisers is not the same technology is circulate between countries, major companies in the USA and China are exporters of technologies of surveillance technology. You see the proliferation of the same apps globally. And so the dangers faced by people in one context can be applied to another and the tactics adopted by one people in one context, it can be also used for other causes. And so for example, now, with activists in Hong Kong and elsewhere, there's the need to use telegram and things like that, to develop strategies for what happens when let's say someone in the group gets arrested and then that that group is compromised and then this can be applied to other contexts that you know other places in the world also are using telegram as a way for secure communications and in that respect. I think the danger is that it's almost like an arms race, I think between us and the state. They learn from each other and we need each other. They develop new technologies, we use new technologies in different ways. And we also need to come up with with that. Particularly in Hong Kong. I mean, it's gonna be interesting because this is a closed city in which there are young people participating in demonstrations, in which there are surveillance in many places, but then the tactics that are developed in this location they can be used elsewhere. For example, if you can't actually go protest because of COVID-19. You protest at home, you shout slogans from high rises

and then other contexts or other places on an urban centres or high rises, you can shout slogans that's a way of demonstrating dissent.

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:14:08

Great, thank you. Another thing that we heard a couple of times during the talks was situating, some of the contemporary policing practices and counterinsurgency or counter terror practices in various different contexts in situating, that in the colonial history, so I wanted to go to Gacheke. Because this was mentioned in your talk, I was wondering if you could maybe elaborate and explain a bit in a bit more detail, to what extent contemporary policing practices that we see today in Kenya and some of the things you mentioned, police brutality and extrajudicial killings, perhaps the use of torture, to what extent that they come from a colonial legacy. And whether or not this is something that actually informs our present, which is to say is, is the colonial not really even just the legacy or even just the past, but something that continues today so for example, relationships between UK military and Kenya security forces. So, so yeah, what do you what what kind of connections are there between contemporary practices and colonial practices? I think we may have lost Gacheke. And I think this question is not just applicable in the Kenyan context. So I was wondering, maybe we can go to Radha because I think this is something that you mentioned as well, when you were talking about the formation of the colonial state.

Radha D'Souza 1:15:47

Yes, I mean, I think that I was extremely brief. But my point was that many of these anti terrorism laws or, you know, most of these anti terrorism laws, were trialed, first in the colonies to suppress colonial descent. And that template that was used around the world so that it became, you know, in at that time within the Empire, and it became a kind of template. And my point was also that, you know, for example, I was going to, you know, after World War One, when there was a big massive wave of colonial, anti colonial movements around the world, that is when the defence of India, for the first time introduced active terrorism laws as we understand it today in India, which was then exported around the world. If you compare the anti terrorism laws that were used in Ireland, in India, in Kenya, you know, you find that there is a similarity. Subsequent states have just continued that and have improvised ad changed. And I guess the point to understand is that the template is still provided not by our states, but by the imperial powers. Now, of course, it comes in the name of international law, but the template still comes from somewhere else. And that is important to understand. The UN for example, adopted, you know, the anti terrorism laws which were then signed up by all the countries without questions in the same way and now we are supposed to be independent. Earlier we could say we were colonised etc. But we are doing exactly the same things. I would want to look at the template writers rather than, you know, the people who just adopted it.

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:17:54

Yeah, which is, which is a really important point because we often imagine that these templates are sort of drafted up here in the Imperial centre. And then diffused to the Imperial periphery. But often, the direction of travel is the other way is the other way around. And that often it's the Imperial centre that's last to experience the most repressive forms. And so I just want to bring in Gacheke again, so the question was about, on the one hand, colonial legacies and how colonial colonial past and practices of the colonial past are, to borrow Radha's helpful words a template for contemporary policing practices.

All sort of practices that originated in the colonial context have continued to be practiced today. Also, some interrogation of the ongoing relationships of coloniality. Between for example, Kenya and the UK and the contemporary relationships between the UK military and Kenyan security forces? You said a bit about that. Can you hear us? I'm not sure if we have a connection. In which case while we try to see if we can reconnect with Gacheke. We can move on maybe to a different question. This may be an opportunity to bring in questions from the audience if we have them. Okay. So we have a question here, which is for Brian. And so Brian, there was a point made about China mirroring American imperialism and using British colonial institutions. Can you speak more about exactly what techniques are being used?

Brian Hioe 1:20:35

Absolutely. So this occurs on a number of levels. For example, now, in Hong Kong. During the past year or so, instances of tear gas canisters are being imported from the UK, which of course use to own Hong Kong as a colony. You also have cases for example, British police officers are a part of the current police force despite the fact that Hong Kong was handed over to China and are responsible for carrying out violent acts against protestors. They're often commanding officers. But then for example, or structurally speaking, with the passage of the security law earlier this year, the revival of something resembling the British special force, which is more or less an intelligence agency, under counterinsurgency auspices, to back down dissent, to investigate and with special powers to do so. So these kind of policing practices, dating back from British colonial times, found a revival then in the present. Before the start of COVID, for example, they're also an attempt to ban the wearing of masks, because again, protestors were wearing masks meant to be identified by surveillance technologies. And this was a revival of a British era law, a law stolen from the books in that period. And the kind of legal structure of the Hong Kong government is still shaped very much by various institutions. And this has been used as a means to prevent electoral attempts of resistance attempts. Regarding American imperialism, and institutions, Chinese institutions, for example, as I mentioned, with the Trump administration withdrawing from international agreements and military alliances and that kind of thing, China has attempted to put itself as an alternative as being a responsible partner that is defending free trade in a way that America is not and, and just in that way, trying to fill in the role that America occupy as the current dominant power. And this is also involved trying to create alternative institutions to American dominated ones, to the world bank, to the IMF and that sort of thing. For example, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, through One Belt, One Road, and so forth. And so in trying to in trying to build alternatives and creating, almost like a attempt to mimic successful tactics of America after the post war period. How successful this will be remains to be seen, and I think isn't particularly a point of inter Imperial conflict now. But I think even going back to the previous point about how kind of techniques go from the centres to the peripheries in that sense, one can even see this as China learning from America the previously dominant imperial power as it attempts to kind of take that position..

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:23:22

Thank you. I didn't acknowledge who the question came from that was from Saumya Dadoo, I hope I pronounced that correctly. And thanks for that really important. Interesting question. So, we've got Gacheke back, so I'm not sure did you? Did you hear the question that I posed, which I posrd? No? I mean, what we're discussing at the moment is, I guess, colonial legacies and colonial relationships and

understanding contemporary policing practices. So there's, I guess two parts of the question. One is, what kind of colonial history or colonial past has sort of or forms the basis or the foundation for contemporary policing practices? Say, for example, extrajudicial killings, the use of torture, and so on. And so that's one what's what's being transferred from the colonial past to the contemporary policing? And then thinking about the colonial present, are there any kinds of relationships international relationships between, say, for example, UK military and Kenyan security forces that continues to inform contemporary policing practices in Kenya?

Gacheke Gachihi 1:24:35

Ah, thank you very much Kerem this is a very fundamental question about the history of the colonial policing and what has kept us in this situation for a long time. And Professor Radha has already shared how the security structure was constructed. Yeah. About the securitization, tribalisation, racialisation is visualised in a hierarchy. That's so powerful because they asked what was born from the colonial structure. Look what happened to the mau mau. They were oppressed by the British colonial army they were tortured and the same torture techniques were transferred to the Kenyan state. The dictatorship of Daniel arap Moi built a big house in the city centre and underground there were chambers used to torture people. This happened during colonial times and then later too. University lectures were tortured because they had a different opinion than the government of the time. So these colonial techniques were used by later government. Professor Radha spoke really powerful and taught me a lot. I don't have to explain. Beyond that, how the state was constructed. The same instrument of violence remain the same. Looking at people as criminal. Destroying trade unions. I would like the professor to explain the difference between a capitalist state and a neo-colonial state, I didn't understand very clearly. But the challenges we are facing now is that the tools of oppression or the tools of torture, that has been used by the US government in a fight against terrorism. Our security agencies are using. Recently the The Kenyan security agencies are being trained in the US in a clandestine way where nobody knows where there is no accountability. They moved away from the question of rule of law, using democratic institution or using the security agencies who are accountable by a judiciary or a check and balance of the security agencies. Everyone is guilty until they're proven innocent. There is a big problem that is the terrorism question that has to be made public again and again, again, a majority of the people from Somalia origin have been great criminalised and everytime they are told they are terrorist. So, you see these problems with us. And the same thing we have a problem with ethnic questions as the professor talked about, the state was structured in a way that tension was created as was happening in the Rwanda. The same in Kenya, we have huge tension. We need an international struggle so we can amplify one another, support one another. Our histories are connected, the history of violence, the history of struggle and the history of repression.

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:30:11

Thank you Gacheke. We've got a question here from Sam Ivey for S'bu. And the question is in South Africa, the state has used restrictions on gatherings of people in order to repress and heavily policed protests do we think that the police will ever relinquish their newly sanctioned force?

S'bu Zikode 1:30:41

Thank you for the question. It is very important to acknowledge that the police are acting on the instructions, not only of its managers, the states, but also, you know, forces of imperialism. And you

know that there are imposing the imperialist powers over you know, different nations. So, therefore, this is unlikely to stop and the marikana moments, the marikana massacre is one typical example of how this state could not be, could not account, attacked with impunity, and up until today, justice has not been served to the widows and, you know, the people of marikana, who, you know, suffered in the hands of the state. So, violence that we have experienced also under these current lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic, is a clear indication that the state and its police could act with impunity. So I am afraid that we still have a long way to go in order to hold them accountable despite having these regulation of gatherings acts that favours, you know, the freedom of, you know, association, you know, freedom of expression, you know, but still it's a difficult situation when we have a good law that is supposed to be protecting you, but at the same time, because somehow the state acts as if they are above the law. And we've seen this a number of times, in a manner that indicates demonstrated that they are actually a law unto themselves so you find them becoming this monster that cannot be held accountable for its action, which is why we need to organise across societies across borders, and so that we can actually reach out to the system itself that has created, that has allowed, you know, these actions of the state to be seen as if they are above our democracies and all the efforts that you know different nations are putting into place in order to find a peaceful and humanised the world. So, I guess we still have a long way to go as a society we need to organise because we know that these are just systems of created by the minority. So these guys are smart enough to fool the whole word, that they can be a law unto themselves, so we need international solidarity

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:33:58

The term international solidarity has been mentioned a few times in the discussion or a suggestion for new innationalism in resisting these things. That's a question I want to come back to eventually, but maybe in a bit because I want to ask a bit more and press on a bit more about draw some of the connections that some of the speakers have already identified. I think Gacheke at one point you asked a question and pose a question to, to rather about understanding the specificity of the colonial state. And I wonder if there's maybe the possibility of interrogating that a bit more for understanding, maybe colonialism or the use of coloniality as a frame, to understand internal forms of repression? Not simply international connections. So, we've already heard, raised and discussed and something that many people are aware of, which is the Indian states repression and occupation of Kashmir. But other Indian regions have also been subject to various brutal counter insurgency campaigns such as, say, Punjab which borders with Pakistan and Assam, which borders with China. How have these border regions being laboratories or being sites for the making these sorts of templates rather, that you mentioned, for anti terror laws and state violence, including things that we've been discussing such as torture, disappearances, extrajudicial killings is 'internal colonialism' a useful framework for understanding this and this so yeah, so question to Radha about border regions as sites or laboratories for making these sorts of templates and is this internal colonialism?

Radha D'Souza 1:35:54

Well as what is internal and external, I mean internal and external starts to make sense if you take the state as an institution to be an autonomous and independent institution, then the internal becomes what is happening within India, within Kenya, wherever, and the external is, whatever, whatever is happening outside of that state. But that kind of state centeredness is something that is not working for a number of reasons, partly because of globalisation, post war era, the integration of economies and so on and so

forth. And it had stopped working even during the Empire. Now, you mentioned about India, India is a very, very interesting case. Because under the British Empire, there were six categories of administrative categories. Yeah, there was the settler colonies there was the, you know, Mother states, protectorates etc. and India was a separate administrative category, because India's role was always seen as a sub Empire of the British Empire. So India was the base from where world war's were fought, the Middle East wars were fought, the African wars wars were thought. So the Indian soldiers were the ones that were sent all around the world to fight these wars. India has always played that role. So on independence, it didn't really do away with the internal structures of disempowerment of regions of communities that had been established during the Empire. So Assam was always a problem.. These things have continued from colonial times and they the Indian central Government I should say, because again there are huge issues between the centre and the state, because the central government and its constitution is very much modelled on the 1935 Act, which was a colonial act. Sedition laws were very much came down from the colonial times, you know, what was offences against the state, a whole chapter was introduced into the criminal legal system by the colonial state it continues. So, the structures have not changed much. And because the under the British Empire, India was always, not India, the central government in India was always the pivot for oppressing other nationalities around that has continued. So, fights go back to before independence/ I don't know if that makes sense. But you know, what? I'm saying is that India's, you should see India's place in the empire in order to be able to understand how what is happening so called within India now is a colonial era, you know, continuation of the same patterns. And it's the federal government that is being protected by international, you know, system. So what happens in the state, nobody's bothered what happens in Kashmir? Forget about Kashmir, look at the labour laws now, we have introduced., 72 hour week working week, nobody in the world is interested in that, because the state governments are doing it, not the federal government. So that tension needs to be understood in order to be able to understand how these legacies continue.

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:39:33

That's, that's really helpful. I think there's a prompt to maybe bring everyone into the discussion so we can have a sort of more collective discussion around I guess some of the, the, my diving into some of the more detail in terms of organising against these forms of repression and organising against these various forms of policing counterinsurgency. I think we've got enough time to do this. I wanted to invite contributions to discuss this question of internationalism, and maybe go into some more detail of what kinds of work we could do to build these international connections international coalition's of resistance against both domestic forms of policing and repression, but also the more globalised forms and Global Connections in terms of policing and counterinsurgency, and counterterrorism. So how can in very practical terms or as practical as possible, how do you think we can that we can support each other. How do you think we can build these international Coalition's of resistance? And indeed, like, directed towards our audience? How can our audience and our listeners support your movements?

Shalini Gera 1:41:11

Um, I don't have a very good blueprint to this. I don't think anybody does. Definitely, I think coming from India next time, where nationalism is at it's peak. I think even people who are working in India and directing at us only. We get very defensive about international friends, we are always accused of being anti national and having foreign influences and many times we see our movements, our organisations

actually tend to shy away from internationalism. And I think that time has passed and we really have to embrace internationalism and go there is international Coalition's. And we are in a time when organisations like Greenpeace, if it comes and says something about environmental concerns in India, it's kind of said that well, you are being funded by the west, they don't want to see India's growth and prosperity. And that is why you are going and saying all these. making all these things about environment. And many organisations don't have the wherewithal to deal with this kind of attacks. And we've really, I've seen that happening, but we tend to say we don't have any international support. We are what we are, and I think we to shrug off that defensiveness and actually embracing internationalism. I know I've worked in the trade union and we actually benefit from having International Trade Unions come and help us in our struggle. We had trade unionists who were in prison. And it was against a multinational, and we really, we tried everything locally, we had huge demonstrations, we could not do anything. It was eventually when the international trade union took up this cause, in the headquarters in Zurich back, that the company was forced to come and talk to us and resolve the issue and we got a victory. So I really think I don't know exactly how this internationalism is going to work out. But I really do think that at this time, let us not get caught in that, that that division of nationalism versus internationalism, we, I think we're seeing nationalist regimes all over the place. So that's a very good way to divide us. And somewhere we have to overcome that and you make international Coalition's whether it be based on occupations, professions or based on issues that we have to do that. I don't see a way out.

Gacheke Gachihi 1:43:57

Thank you guys. I become very inspired by, especially by S'bu in South Africa. We want more to learn about how shack dwellers in South Africa. We read about them about you and the great work that you have done. I'm very happy to meet you here because we have a lot to learn from South Africa. A lot, a lot, a lot to learn. So I think first, we can connect struggles in Nairobi. Police brutality and violence. All the challenges you're facing. I think we can connect and have a collective campaign. Every time you issue a statement, about Police brutality, that kind of thing we can connect and see how we amplify each other's voices. When the miners were killed we did a small protest here at the South African embassy. Let's start on that level. I think we can create a networks on the level of a social movement, The challenges your having, we're also having in the organisation of our struggles. So I think with this this topic is very important. I have, I was linked up here by progressive International Congress and because they are trying to create a network together and I hope we can think about hope we can build a network – I hope it's not the last time!

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:46:03

Thank you Gacheke. That would be the perfect opportunity and invitation to bring S'bu into this conversation in response but I fear that we may have lost the connection with S'bu, We can come back to S'bu. But just to repose the question again and make an invite Brian to respond. The question was about the practical, how do we build international Coalition's of resistance, how do we support each other practically and if you have any sort of like prompts for how the listeners to this session can support the movements that you're involved in to also discuss sthat.

Brian Hioe 1:46:53

So I think a challenge facing, for example, a country that isn't fair to places such as Hong Kong or Taiwan or, or Tibet, or Inner Mongolia regarding, for example, attempts to forcibly assimilate minority groups or to erode freedoms is that the people there sometimes will just try to appeal to the US to another imperial power, instead of building solidarity with international social movements, and that kind of thing. And so then when you try to do that up from a left wing perspective, people tell you, well, what's the point of this work? Like, why are you doing this, you're just building ties with useless small fragments and movements. And so then really, I think a lot of challenge facing us as activists is to show people like why these ties matter that these aren't ties in which we're using each other for mutual interests that we can learn from each other, and build alliances to challenge the power structure that exists between the great imperial powers and world superpowers and so forth. To actually in that sense actually push for self determination. And so I think then one can point to, for example, skill sharing. That's one way of showing each other different tactics, like I mentioned earlier regarding how to deal with states and surveillance technology and that kind of thing. But then also, another important role is then emotional support. Working as movements, actually is just very, very damaging to mental health. It actually isn't, actually is, it just wears down at you, knowing that you have support sometimes, even if it's not very tangible support is actually helpful. And then, more importantly, we can point at largely structural things. For example, 12 hour working days. I mean, there's an interesting campaign between American and Chinese tech workers, pointing to the fact that Chinese tech workers have a schedule, it's from working from 9am to 9pm, six days a week. And so then bringing kind of awareness of this between the two context, then maybe just kind of pointing towards how such conditions effect more than one It's an industry. And that may be something that could shed light on this kind of global issue. I mean, that's just an example that comes off the top of my head. I think that particularly I think we have to think about how to build alternative structures to just the power that exists now, because then those structures are just states. And then how do we out organise state? That's that's a challenge. I think that are non state actors. That's something that we're all trying to figure out.

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:49:12

Thanks, Bright, just to stay with you. Ask a follow up question. And this might be a bit of an unfair question. Because you know, precisely that difficulty of the struggle of building I guess we're autonomous forms of counter hegemony or revolutionary power, whatever you want to call it. So like, you point the point into a couple of examples, but did you have any other great practical examples of that sort of working? The example of connecting different workers struggles. This is an interesting one, especially because it directs us towards thinking about, among other things, international divisions of labour and the way in which that is often used to exploit workforces. But do you have any other examples of the sorts of international connections that might be useful to learn from?

Brian Hioe 1:50:06

Absolutely, I mean, I think the issue is then that capitalism is global. That's That's how it is. Oftentimes, if you own a company and their workers, they're actually somewhere else. And so then how do you then it challenge them, it is actually having workers in more than one country mobilising around the issue, being willing to stand up for that for other workers in another country, because of the fact that basic conditions and not viewing them as competitors for the same jobs? An example I would think of is that many Chinese workers are employed by Taiwanese companies. Well, then I would like to see them Taiwanese workers standing up for their Chinese counterparts rather than seeing these as people that

stole their jobs and the factory has been real good there and so forth. I think that's that's something very important at present with the nationalism that we're seeing across the world, splitting workers in this yes each other, and so forth. And I think that that actually, that's maybe the historical issue facing internationals, or let's say even something like non aligned movement. Is that they were actually still built around states in that way. And so that actually then led to dissolution of internationals, when their national interests came to conflict each other when there national security issues, then came into conflict with each other, and how do we actually move beyond that towards solidarity that won't actually be fragmented this way, and leave us mired in nationalism? Because the failure of international as I look at it, this really strengthens fascism. All the more.

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:51:25

Thank you. Radha. I want to bring you in on this question now, and especially because I think in your talk, you really emphasised the need to think about the international and the way in which the international agreements and treaties and laws are being constructed in this space of the International rather than domestic as a site of struggle. And I was wondering if you feel like that that's a that's a way of like, renewing our understanding of internationalism. So moving beyond simply saying we have our separate domestic struggles, we need to connect them. If there's something more we can do is thinking about our struggles internationally.

Radha D'Souza 1:52:11

Yeah, I think let me just clarify, we have to struggle domestically. Because that's where we live in. That's where the struggle has to be. I would say in our cities, in our states, in our countries, there is no two ways about that. But we are already doing so we would rather focus on what we are not doing much of which is not linking what is happening at home to the international system under international domain. And since the Second World War, more and more our domestic states and structures and economies and everything is structured by that, and is influenced by that. Let's take a very simple example of Venezuela. Venezuela wants to do something within its own country, it has got it selected systems, and the whole world is against Venezuela for human rights, etc. The kind of human rights abuses in India at present is unimaginable, unimaginable, because it takes page after page out of Nazi logbooks and introduces that whether it's national citizen or registers, whether it was crystal map techniques, everything and nobody's talking about why. Tomorrow, if India goes against the United States for whatever reason, then the whole world will be talking about human rights abuses in India. And I think our inability to comprehend this not negative. This is not this view because some accustomed to this dualistic framing of things, international, national, state, you know, non stat, etc, etc. We don't live in those kind of insulated cubicles anymore. And I think it's important to understand that. The reason I mentioned a new type of international is we are already doing a lot of national struggles and supporting each other across boundaries in many cases, and we could do more of that. But there are certain issues that we should focus against the international system. We did a bit of that in the anti globalisation movements where we came out against the World Bank 50 years is enough campaign for example, the IMF structural adjustments etc. But on security issues, we have not focused on the international the arm Manufacturers the arms traders, or the Pegasus intelligence spy ware people who supply to every government. If you look at Pegasus, it's an Israeli company, and Israel only sells it to other states. We have not taken up issues like this on a global platform. I mean theres are bits like, you know. I'd like a lot more of that. Extraordinary rendition. Yeah. torture, for example, CIA legalised

torture in Guantanamo Bay and in many other places with extraordinary rendition, but we have not seen torture as an international issue. We continue to see it as a state issue. So I think we need to build international platforms on questions, like torture, like securitization, like anti-terrorism laws, in the same way or comparable to what we did against World Bank and structural adjustment.

Kerem Nisancioglu 1:55:49

Thank you Radha, we've got S'bu back. So hoping to bring you in on this question of internationalism, perhaps taking Gacheke is prompts. Also talking about what kinds of coalition we can build.

S'bu Zikode 1:56:12

Thank you. Sorry that I somehow got disconnected. I just want to say that capitalism is a global force, imperialism is also a global force and there can be no advancements for the working class in the impoverished majority of the world if our struggle is not global one. We must and we have to build solidarity in humility. I mean, a solidarity in which any injury to one becomes an injury to all we have seen how this can best work, for instance, 10 years ago, whenever movement was under attack, there was a protest in London by London coalition. There was a protest in New York City. There was a big protest in Budapest, in Hungary, and on its own really brought about change in the South African history of us being marginalised, criminalised, but confined into dark corner, as if we belong nowhere. So we have seen in our past, we have a great experience of how this has played out today, today we have amazing support internationally, which is why when we received international solidarity but we want to offer ours like as we speak, the Philippines comrade are under attack with a lot of, you know, assassination in the Philippines and on Monday Abbasali would be, you know, staging a protest here in solidarity with the Philippines. So we need to be very realistic and be practical and be passionate when we are actually talking about, you know, the question of internationalism, as well as solidarity. And the point that I want to stress is that without any foundation on the grounds, there can be no real internationalism and solidarity. So we need to be realistic about what we can do and how we can relate. Otherwise, it becomes an abstract and academic exercise that does not really render any support to anyone. So my plea is that let's build our organisation at the national or regional level. And then with that, reality, and then we can connect that globally. So the problem becomes when we want suddenly to become suddenly so big, when we actually have no foot on the ground. That would be a big mistake. We've seen movements, networks and so on, trying to look big without actually having a substance on the ground. So this is my call to say, internationalism and international solidarity is so important. But without us organising on the ground where we are able where we are capable within our reach, so that we can build a substance. So we must be honest with what we're capable of. And we must also reflect on our weaknesses. And the way to go is to acknowledge that the global cause that we are forcing requires us to join at a global level. But then to do that, when it's important, of course, that we build a very strong force on the ground in order to tackle these global monster. It is a global monster and it's only when the you know the masses of people the working class, are speaking in one voice. How one frames that then we can relate back to what Dr. Raja was saying. In terms of I would do advocacy work around our communities, so for me, that's the only way to we must act locally. And build, you know, international solidarity. It is just very important. I think it's only when we can become a threat to these global force that is working against the people.

Kerem Nisancioglu 2:00:08

Thank you. S'bu I think we're, we're running out of time, but that was a great note to end on. It's a shame because I could listen to your speak for hours. Honestly, this has been a great session to listen to all of your thoughts and wisdom. And I would encourage anyone listening or the audience to say thanks to our speakers, I mean, just popping the thoughts in the comment section. And yeah, my thanks to the speakers as well, I'll hand over to Tanya and Adrija just to conclude, and wrap up. Thanks, everyone.

Tanya 2:00:45

Thank you, we didn't really have anything to say except thank you .As Kerem said, I wish we could listen to you for another two hours. So thank you so much.