

Workers connect...

Can Robots really take away our Jobs?

... Now the man that invented the steam drill
Thought he was mighty fine
But John Henry made fifteen feet
The steam drill only made nine, Lord, Lord
The steam drill only made nine

John Henry hammered in the mountains
His hammer was striking fire
But he worked so hard, he broke his poor heart
He laid down his hammer and he died, Lord, Lord
He laid down his hammer and he died...

Excerpt from the African American folk song 'John Henry'

This is a song about an African American construction worker cutting a tunnel through a mountain to lay a railway line sometime in the 1870s. The legend goes like this: the company building the railroad wanted to bring in a steam drill to replace the workers but John Henry challenged the company that he could drill more than the machine. And he did – he drilled fifteen feet and the steam drill could only drill nine. He won the challenge but lost his life. He lives on to inspire forever.

Every day we hear a new story about how Amazon has a robot that will deliver our orders to our doorstep, or how Suzuki and Volkswagen or Siemens already has robots on the shopfloor that perform tasks that were earlier performed by us, or how General Motors and Ford are planning huge job cuts of their white-collar workers. Every one of these stories are true. Every day we also read about jobless growth, about rising unemployment, of skill gaps that are making it difficult for workers to find jobs. We are simultaneously reading about the proposal of a universal basic income as a policy initiative to address this growing crisis. All these are being read in two possible ways: one, those reading are getting paranoid and are beginning to think that eventually all jobs or most jobs will go away and there will be no option left before working people but to survive on dole given away by our governments; and two, those reading this are also deciding to ignore it all and believe that this will

not affect us in any way as our jobs are either too low end or too high end to be replaced by robots. These are also people thinking that our economy is far too less developed for any of this to reach us in the near future. The problem is that neither of these positions are totally true or totally false. Digitalisation, in the broadest possible sense, is a mix of both realities. While it is creating loss of jobs certainly in certain categories of employment, and these categories of employment are present across the world irrespective of their level of development, the spectre of digitalisation is far more amplified than what it can do in reality. This is also because much of the writing on the impact of digitalisation is technological predictions that somehow assumes away any form of resistance of people to this technological progress that will destroy their rights and pose a challenge to their very existence.

Is Digitalisation different from earlier technological changes?

A lot of us are primarily confused as to what is digitalisation. Many of us often confuse it with automation. But this is not the case. To put it very simply, digitalisation is the process of collecting and converting all information into digital data that can then be processed and analysed to feed back into the same system or other digital systems. So in the manufacturing industry, digitalisation often means that a system is put in place that collects and converts data from the shopfloor to then change how a production process works. For example, a simple biometric device installed at the gate and doors of a factory converts entry and exit data of workers and their movement on the shopfloor to analyse worker attendance, movement on the shopfloor and its need, leave and breaks taken, and so on. This can then also be used to streamline and rationalise the organisation of work and make it leaner by squeezing break times. And the difference that this process has with earlier forms of automation is that in this case this information processing is happening without human intervention and hence is devoid of an understanding that this

change will affect the life of a human being and not the functioning of a machine. Thus this change is more ruthless.

In this context, it is worth remembering what David Ricardo had argued in 1821. He had stated that machines may “render the population redundant” but what we saw in the 1830s, was widespread worker protests and trade union activity reached a new level. For the first time in England workers began to organise trade associations with nationwide aims. In 1830, agricultural workers in southern and eastern England rose in protest against mechanisation in agriculture. It began with their destruction of threshing machines. In the years to come trade union membership kept on increasing and so did the power of unions. In the post-world war period, the power of trade unions pushed even governments to move towards a welfare state. In the 1990s, employers realised that large workplaces may increase productivity but it also provides the opportunity to workers to come together in large numbers for collective action against employers. Thus began the effort to break down production processes all over again. The post-Fordist models of production is all about breaking down each process into tiny fragments produced at centres spread across the world to increase profits and destroy the power of unions. The smaller the workplace, more isolated is the worker in it. More isolated the worker, the easier it is for employers to control her and more difficult it is for unions to organise her. Digitalisation is the newest improvisation towards this but its ramifications are far more challenging than the earlier innovations.

Some of the key challenges that digitalisation poses before us are:

- **Job loss and Precarisation of work:** Digitalisation will bring in robots or processes that will replace humans on the shopfloor.

E.g. The photo is that of a collaborative robot used at by Bajaj Auto Ltd. in its two wheeler plants at Chakan, Aurangabad and Pantnagar. The company has installed close to 120 robotic arms,



which are termed collaborative robots or co-bots produced by Universal Robots, which are used to perform certain specific tasks that were of course earlier performed by workers. Bajaj claims that this has increased their productivity from 507 vehicles per person per year to 804 vehicles per person per year in 2016.

The Chakan and the Pantnagar plants of Bajaj saw militant workers struggle from 2013 onwards. Most of the workers were young and large number of them were on precarious contracts. The Bajaj management was adamant. They refused to bargain in good faith with the union representing all workers. They even claimed that the union did not enjoy the support of the workers despite the fact that they struck work for 50 days in a row. Thus, it is not surprising that this management brought in the co-bots in 2016 just before the renewal of the wage agreement at Chakan to create an atmosphere of threat and fear among the workers. An average of 40 co-bots per plant will not replace all workers but it certainly creates enough fear amongst those remaining that they may lose their jobs too. It also creates enough fear to reign in any future protests. And it also creates enough fear to make workers work much more in the fear of being replaced. Thus even if the loss of jobs is not substantial, the fear of this loss is more than substantial. Simultaneously, the increase of productivity may be real but to attribute it entirely to the co-bots is not real. Productivity on the shopfloor also increases due to this heightened sense of fear and insecurity among workers.

- **Change in Work Organisation and Increased Control at work:** Digitalisation increases monitoring and control over workers whether at the workplace or even remotely.

Eg. In the last few years the courier or the delivery worker at our doorstep has started coming with a tablet on which we are supposed to sign off when we receive a package. Similarly, sales representatives today across the world are equipped with tablets to record their progress during the day. The tablets were introduced to increase their productivity and shorten sales cycles. Despite the fact that many sales representatives were paid based on their achievement of certain sales targets, the new device pushes workers to also run against time to achieve these targets thereby increasing their work intensity and increasing the monitoring

of their work at every point of the day. This has led to increased stress at work. It has also led to an increase in the number of road accidents of sales representatives or delivery workers on two wheelers trying to keep up with the targets. The road accident statistics in urban centres do not however correlate it to these targets. Thus data created is used only by employers while there is a lot of data available that is not used by us.

Additionally in the case of a sales representative, the tablet reduces the need for a skilled worker. The knowledge of the product that an individual sales worker was supposed to have which determined his capacity to sell a certain product is no longer required. All the information is standardised and made available on the tablet. This takes away the need for a skilled worker and lowers the value of the work and hence pay.

- **Loss of Control over Data:** Workers as workers and as citizens become providers of a lot of information about themselves, their choices and their vulnerabilities to various agencies, be it employers or others. Once this data is provided the individuals no longer have any right over how this information that has been gathered about them is used. It may even be used against them without their consent.

E.g. This is a Fitbit that is provided to many employees by their HR department, often as a gift, to help employees monitor their own health. This gesture looks like a gift that shows a genuine concern for the health of employees and is provided to 'motivate' employees towards their own individual fitness goals. A Fitbit can be used to accurately track movement based fitness of the user. Fitbit, when it provides its devices to a certain company for its employees, also trains its HR managers on how to use the administrator platform, which gives them access to aggregate data around the health progress of employees.



This data on how the employee leads her life, how much she exercises to remain fit, are now available to the HR department of the company. When a worker in this company now falls ill, especially affected by work-related stress, the HR can use this personal data to show her that she fell ill because she did not adequately take care of herself and thus hold her responsible for her ill

health. Thus a collapse of an employee's health is no longer the responsibility of the employer who causes it, but becomes the responsibility of the employee herself for not taking care of herself. What this evades is the simple fact that she may not have had the time to take care of herself. She worked long hours, or worked extremely intensively for a certain period of her day which exhausted her, and then of course she had to also come home and take care of her home, or work part time on a different job to make ends meet. Thus data gathered is only used selectively to suit the purpose of the employer. What this also means is that with the Fitbit on her wrist, the employer employee relation does not end at the workplace. There is a monitoring mechanism attached to her 24x7 that keeps providing information about her life to her employer without her knowledge or consent.

To take this example one step further, let us assume that you are not given this Fitbit by your employer but you buy it with your own money to monitor your own fitness. There is no employer trying to control your life through your health data. But even then your health data is not secure. This is because Fitbit stores its data in a cloud. Recently Google has offered to provide Fitbit users with an online space to store their data. This generosity implies Google will now have access to this data and can sell this data to others who can then use this data to profile you as a consumer and sooner or later you will be offered various goods and services that you will be told is good for you.

Moreover, most of these products like the e-book Kindle, the Fitbit or the Amazon echo in the room, do not give you a real choice to protect your data from snooping or abuse by other apps. If you choose not to use their cloud based storage services or log-in using your account the product is, in most cases unusable or performs extremely poorly.

- **Disturbs Work-Life Balance:** This sounds a bit extreme in our country where the largest majority of workers have no work-life balance as they struggle to make both ends meet. However, the mobile phone is the greatest intruder in our lives. From a domestic worker being called on her mobile phone by her employer to check if she is coming to work or changing her hours of work to the office executive who has to attend to work phone

calls and emails through the day and even possibly at night. The working hours are no longer restricted to the hours the worker is present at work. It eats into family time, into rest time, into holiday time.

- **Not on Policy agenda:** There is no clarity on the issue of Digitalisation and no concern for its impact yet among policymakers. The issue is discussed in business circles as a way forward but there is no discussion on its impact on workers or even citizens. Unfortunately, this is also not on the collective bargaining agenda of trade unions. The vast variation within the country and the large number of workers in the informal economy along with those unemployed makes it difficult for unions to even understand the issue clearly.

Is this the Beginning of the End?

Very unlikely. The problem with those who believe that this is the beginning of the end is that they discount the capacity of workers to understand changes and how it affects them, they also discount the capacity of workers to come together and take collective action against changes that adversely affect them, and they also discount the fact that this will not be the first time that workers may do so. The assumption is that technology progresses in its own trajectory and there will not be any resistance to it from any quarter. The problem is that in a capitalist world, it is not just workers who resist a certain trajectory of technological innovation but even competing companies resist each other and create barriers in the path. The predictions of job loss due to digitalisation is all based on the assumption that there shall be no resistance.

Resistance builds whenever there is oppression and the challenge before trade unions today is how to bring this resistance together, how to provide it direction and how to sustain it to build sufficient power to resist this stage of industrial development.

We started this piece with the story of John Henry who stood alone against the powerful steam drill and defeated it on his own. However, he died too in resisting the power of the steam drill because he was alone. Changes have happened through history however not with individual actions but when individuals come together to take collective action.

Policy News

Sikkim: Government announces 'One Family One Job' scheme

13 January 2019: The Government of Sikkim has rolled out 'One Family One Job' scheme that ensures a government job for one adult in every family. The scheme was announced during an employment fair where 12,000 unemployed people were given appointment letters. The government has also announced regularisation of 25,000 contract employees who are currently employed in various government departments.

Odisha: ICDS Worker's honorarium hiked

12 January 2019: The Odisha government has increased the honorarium for Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) workers and extended the retirement age from 60 to 62 years. Monthly honorariums for anganwadi workers has been raised from ₹6000 to ₹7500, for mini-anganwadi workers, it has been increased from ₹4125 to ₹5375 and for helpers from ₹3000 to ₹3750. The hike will have a retrospective effect from October 2018.

The government has also introduced a social security package of ₹20,000, ₹15,000 and ₹10,000 for anganwadi workers, mini-anganwadi workers and helpers respectively. A 15 day summer break has also been provided to the workers.

Cabinet approves amendments to the Trade Union Act, 1926

8 January 2019: The cabinet approved the Trade Unions (Amendment) Bill, 2019 put forward by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The Bill amends the Trade Unions Act, 1926, making provisions for statutory recognition of trade unions or a federation thereof at the central and state level.

Legal News

Karnataka: HC slams Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for employing workers under sham and bogus contracts

8 January 2018: The Karnataka High Court has ordered the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to regularise 15 contract workers with full benefits. The HC found that the workmen were employed in work of perennial nature and that HAL was using sham and bogus contracts to deny the workers' wages and benefits at par with

permanent workmen. These 15 workers had been in continuous service of HAL since 1974 during which time they were hired through different contracting agencies to avoid the law.

Kerala: Contract workers are entitled to maternity benefits

2 January 2019: The Kerala High Court has ruled that contract workers are entitled to maternity benefits and cannot be discriminated against merely on the basis of their employment status.

The court was hearing a petition of an assistant professor, employed on an annual contract at the School of Health Sciences, Calicut University, since 2008. The University had denied her maternity rights claiming that this was not part of her contract. According to her contract, she could only claim 15 days of casual leave during the 1 year period of employment.

The court ruled that maternity benefits are not merely benefits flowing out of an agreement and thus directed the University to grant maternity benefits to the petitioner as available under the Maternity Benefit Act.

Collective Bargaining

Bihar: Mid-day meal workers strike

24 January 2019: Over 2 lakh mid-day meal workers from across 38 districts of Bihar under the banner of the Bihar Rajya Madhayan Bhojan Rasoiya Sanyukt Sangarsh Samiti have been on strike since 7 January 2019 demanding higher honorariums, status of a government employee and a monthly minimum wage of ₹18,000 until they are recognized as government employees.

Workers held a 2 day dharna in Patna and gheraoed the Chief Minister's residence demanding immediate implementation of their demands. The government has promised to form a team to consider their demands by 1 February 2019.

2,48,000 mid-day meal workers in over 70,000 government primary and middle schools in Bihar are currently paid around ₹1000 per month.

All India General Strike

10 January 2019: The National Convention of Workers held an All India General Strike on 8 and 9 January 2019. The National Convention of Workers put forth its 12 point charter demanding payment of ₹18,000 as minimum

wages, social security and pension for all workers, lowering of prices of necessary commodities, abolishment of FTC and an end to outsourcing and contractualisation of public services. Lakhs of workers from across sectors joined a country-wide strike to protest against anti-worker policies like the introduction of Fixed Term Contracts (FTCs) and consolidation of 44 labour laws into 4 codes.

Discrimination

Uttar Pradesh: BSNL fires over 3000 Contract Workers demanding Unpaid Wages

18 January 2019: The Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has retrenched over 3000 contract workers in the eastern Uttar Pradesh region for demanding payment of wages due to them for over a year. The workers are paid a wage between ₹1500-₹2000 per month, much lower than the statutory minimum wages for unskilled work in the state, which stands at ₹7675 per month.

Apex Court order on 13-point roster reduces SC/ST teaching posts at Universities

22 January 2019: The Supreme Court of India upholding an April 2017 order of the Allahabad High Court, directed universities and higher education institutions to calculate reservation in university faculty positions on a department-wise basis, instead of taking the whole university as a unit. This formula significantly reduces the number of posts reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Castes (OBCs) in teaching positions.

Over 5000 people marched from Ramleela Maidan to the Parliament under the banner of Delhi University Teachers' Association demanding restoration of the 200-point roster, regularisation of AD-HOC and temporary teachers in the university and a resolution on the issue of reservation through a bill.

Meanwhile, the Academic Council of Delhi University passed an ordinance on 17 January 2019 approving the hiring of contractual teachers on fixed salaries.

Police unleashes violence on workers who participated in All India General Strike

8 January 2019: Over 2000 workers from the factories of Daikin, Honda, Toyota Ghosai, Shyon Ultraware, Nidec and others from the Japanese Zone of Neemrana Industrial Area, Rajasthan

participated in the All India General Strike called by the National Convention of Workers on 8 and 9 January 2019. However, when the Daikin workers arrived at their factory gate to hoist their union flag, police along with management-hired goons lathi-charged the peaceful assembly of workers, shooting at them with rubber bullets and tear gas canisters that left 40 workers grievously injured. The police also filed FIR against 17 named and 700 unnamed people for inciting violence, rioting and unlawful assembly.

Furthermore, 14 workers who were not named in the FIR were arbitrarily arrested around midnight and later released on bail by the Behror Sessions Court.

Workplace Safety

Manufacturing

On 25 January, 3 contract workers **Gopal Singh (45)**, **Nimai Mandal (36)** and **Ajit Gorai (24)** died and several others were injured while cleaning the Ceilo storage tank at the **ACC Cement Factory in Dhanbad, Jharkhand**. A large quantity of hot cement raw liquid fell on the workers while they were on duty.

On 15 January, **Tanu (22)** working in the packaging unit of **Khaitan Beverages Private Limited** in the Shahjahanpur industrial area, Noida, died after a compressor exploded in the washroom. Police have registered a case against the management under Sections 304 (causing death by negligence) of IPC.

On 13 January, 2 workers **Ajit Sonba Nake (24)** and **Akhil Naik** died and 9 others were grievously injured in a boiler blast in **Tuem Industrial Estate, Pernem, Goa**. The workers were working in the cement brick manufacturing factory when the boiler chamber used for drying the cement bricks exploded. The police has arrested owner of the factory **Rajendra Joshi**, under sections Section 304 (causing death by negligence), 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 338 (negligently endangering life) of IPC.

On 9 January, 2 workers **Afroz (27)** and **Rani Singh (24)** died and 3 others sustained severe injured when a gas cutter used for cutting steel boxes exploded at **PL Steel Pvt Ltd** in **Jashodharpur Industrial Area, Uttarakhand**.

3 workers **Sanjay Yadav (35)**, **Hemant Kumar (21)**

and **Manish Kumar (21)**, died and another worker **Sonu (22)** was injured in a boiler explosion in a textile factory owned by the **Nahar Group** on 8 January in **Mohali, Punjab**. The blast occurred while workers were repairing a motor at the co-generation power plant. Police have initiated an investigation under Section 174 (Investigation over unnatural death) of the Criminal Procedure Code.

On 3 January, 6 workers **Mange (55)**, **Ramphal (45)**, **Rajesh (40)**, **Ajay Kumar (25)**, **Ajay Kumar (22)**, **Sanjay Prasad (18)**, died and 8 other workers were grievously injured when a fire broke out in a fan-paint factory in residential area of **Sudershan Park, Moti Nagar, New Delhi**. The workers could not escape the factory as the gates were locked from outside.

The factory was running out of a residential building without a no-objection certificate. A case under IPC sections 337, 304(a) and 288 has been lodged by the police against **Ankit Gupta**, owner of the factory.

Construction

On 24 January, 5 workers **Altaf (20)**, **Anand (22)**, **Kuldeep (32)**, **Vishal (17)** and **Mohit (19)** died after an under-construction building collapsed in **Gurugram, Haryana**. Police have registered an FIR against the owner **Daya Ram** and contractor under section 304(a) (causing death by negligence) of IPC.

On 21 January 2 workers **Jasvir (20)** and **Karim (25)** died while another worker **Sonu (21)** sustained serious injuries when a 13 feet wall collapsed in **Dwarka, New Delhi**. The workers were welding grills when a wall in the warehouse fell on them.

Arvind (28) died after falling from the 5th floor of an under-construction building in **Dwarka, New Delhi** on 21 January.

The police have arrested the builder and the contractor under IPC sections 288 (negligent conduct with respect to pulling down or repairing buildings) and 304 (a) (causing death by negligence).

3 construction workers **Bhimraj Devraj Rot**, **Subhash Mansukh Baraiya**, and **Jashwant Mayur Baraiya** died when a wall collapsed in an under-construction site in the **Kalp Business Park** in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat** on 2 January.

Police have arrested **Piyush Sudhani (supervisor)**,

Prakash Hirani (supervisor) and Tulsi Gajjar (contractor) under sections 299 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) of IPC.

Sanitation

On 22 January 2 workers N Murugan (33) and A Pandi Durai (29) suffocated to death inside a manhole in Thirunagar Colony in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu while unclogging an underground drainage system in a housing colony. The police have registered a case under section 304(a) of the IPC and sections 7 and 9 of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.

Krishan (37) died after being trapped inside a drain which he was cleaning in Wazirabad, New Delhi on 20 January. The police have registered a case against the contractor Anil under sections 7 and 9 of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 and section 304(a) of IPC.

On 16 January, 3 workers Mafizzul (19), Muzaffar Mohlik (24) and Rafiq Mandal (50) choked to death and another worker Aftar Mulla (49) was grievously injured while cleaning a clogged valve in a chamber of a sewage treatment plant in Thane, Maharashtra. The Mira Bhayander Municipal Corporation had outsourced maintenance of the plant to a private firm Subhash Projects And Marketing Infra Limited (SPML). The police have arrested the supervisor Prince Santosh Singh and the plant in-charge Narendra Antadr under section 304(a) of IPC.

On 9 January 2 Santosh Waghmare (40) and Praful Sabal (25) asphyxiated to death after inhaling poisonous gases inside a sewage line in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra. Both the workers had entered the 20-foot-deep manhole to clean the underground line. The workers were hired by a private contractor Vilas Mhaskar who was appointed by City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) to do routine cleaning work in the sewer line. Police have registered a case against the contractor and officials at CIDCO under 304 (a) of IPC.

In and Around

Employees' Right to Disconnect Bill proposed in the Parliament

9 January 2019: The Right to Disconnect Bill,

2018 was introduced in the Parliament by Supriya Sule as a private member's bill. The proposed bill seeks to confer the right on every worker to disconnect from work-related telephone calls and emails after work hours and on holidays.

News from Around the World

Mexico: Over 70,000 automotive workers go on strike

18 January 2019: Over 70,000 workers from 45 factories in the Matamoros region of Mexico have gone on strike demanding a 20% increase in wages, \$1700 as bonus and return to the 40 hour work week. The Matamoros region is a well-known export hub and houses component manufacturers for big automobile companies like General Motors, Ford and Fiat-Chrysler.

France: Court rules, Uber drivers are workers not independent contractor

11 January 2019: Ruling in favour of workers, a French court has observed that Uber drivers are employees and not 'independent contractors'. The drivers are therefore eligible for health care and overtime pay and all other benefits due to employees as per law. Uber has lost similar cases in the European Court of Justice and in the US and UK in recent years and has been dragged these cases through litigation instead of changing its employment policies.

Garment workers strike work over low wages and union busting in Asia

Cambodia: Over 500 garment workers in the Bai Hong factory in Svay Rieng Special Economic Zone (SEZ) went on strike after their union leaders were fired by the company to suppress the newly formed union at the factory. The workers at the factory had got together recently to put forth a charter of demands to management that included a hike in wages and shorter work days.

Bangladesh: More than 5,000 workers from around 20 garment factories went on strike demanding a raise in wages on 07 January 2019. The striking workers who produce garments for major brands like Zara, H&M and Gap blockaded the Dhaka-Meymensingh highway for 5 hours after which police dispersed them using force.

The strike was followed by mass firings across companies with thousands of workers losing jobs that triggering instantaneous protests in the capital city Dhaka. The Joint Forum of Trade

Union Federations, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers Employer's Association and the Labour Department have been negotiating over reinstatement of workers and a hike in wages.

Myanmar: Around 100 workers went on strike in a Chinese-owned garment factory in Yangon the termination of seven workers including union leaders demanding better wages for all. The striking workers demanded that the company respect ILO Convention 87 and recognize worker's Right to Freedom of Association.

Our story

This month we remember Red Rosa. Rosa Luxemburg (5 March 1871 – 15 January 1919), was a Marxist theorist, philosopher, economist, anti-war activist, organizer, educator and revolutionary socialist. She was many things to many people. Killed brutally by the political establishment this month hundred years ago while crushing the workers' uprising in Germany.

Luxemburg's theoretical work includes important contributions on the conflict between reform and revolution; the relationship between capital accumulation at home and imperial conquest abroad; and the power of the strike as a tool against capitalist oppression. Perhaps equally important were her letters and public debates with the most prominent leaders of her time. Launching herself into the German labour movement, Luxemburg soon made a name for herself as a radical.



In 1905, when the revolution swept across the Russian Empire, including Luxemburg's native Poland, it was the realization of her dream. For most of that year, Luxemburg became an active proponent of the revolution and called on German workers to adopt "Russian methods" as she outlined in *The Mass Strike, the Party and the Trade Unions* (1906).

From 1906 until 1914, Rosa Luxemburg lived and worked in Berlin. In 1913, she wrote her most important work, *The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to an Economic Explanation of Imperialism*, in which she argued that capitalism was bound to expand into non-capitalist territories in order to survive and that once these territories were exhausted or even before that, capitalism would plunge into crisis.

In 1913, Luxemburg called upon German workers to refuse to shoot their French or British brothers in the event of war. For this, she was put on trial and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. Rosa spent most of the war years incarcerated. In August 1918, she completed her work, *The Russian Revolution*, in which she wrote her famous line: "Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party—however numerous they may be—is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively the freedom for the one who thinks differently". The relevance of this line remain till today.

Corporate Watch

National Green Tribunal fines Volkswagon for emission cheating devices

On 15 January 2019, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) fined the German automotive manufacturer Volkswagon (VW) Rs. 171.34 crore for installing emission cheating devices on its vehicles. The amount was proposed by an expert panel estimating the health costs of nitrogen oxide gases emitted by VW vehicles using the city of New Delhi as base.

In 2015, Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) found that VW vehicles were emitting 1.1 to 2.6 times the allowed quantity of emissions under Bharat Standards VI. VW soon recalled over 323 thousand vehicles purportedly to fix the emission software.

VW has disputed the NGT order but the bench refused to stay the order and instead proposed that the NGT expand its scope to other automotive manufacturers.

The scandal, popularly known as "dieseldgate" has witnessed VW suffer fines and legal action across many countries, including the US, Germany, Canada, Brazil, Australia etc. and even fraud and conspiracy charges against VW management.