

Bringing back the Past

It's worse than one might think –where the CPM-led Left Front of Bengal is taking the state in the name of industrial rejuvenation and why they must be stopped. Everyone seems quite certain that the left's plan to hoodwink the people is bound to fail. But one cannot be so sure if resistance remains isolated in some affected pockets only. Instead of engaging directly with the aggrieved—the oustees and landlosers to be precise—the ruling marxists have virtually plunged the hopelessly backward state, even in terms of education and culture, not to speak of economy, into greater misery in their authoritarian determination to consolidate corporate power at the expense of ordinary people. The left administration, undeterred by the rising peasant anger continues to view the situation through the prism of its much touted 'war on industrial backwardness'.

The positive outcome of the on-going peasant movement against the left's brazen policy of wooing big business and overseas investors is the emergence of a political atmosphere that has been absent in the state for the last three decades, thanks to Singur and Nandigram. Even CPM-ideologues, otherwise perennially bogged down in parliamentary calculus and overconfident about their ability to play the secular card, are taking pains, somewhat reluctantly, to reinvent some popular phrases from marxist classics. Still they are at odds to champion their 'bourgeois revolution' at this juncture.

While defending CPM-led left front government's unjust land acquisition policy, the party general secretary, the other day, discovered 'modern-day Narodniks' in peasant agitationists and intellectuals who support them. To see Narodniks in organisations like Jamat-i-Ulema Hind and Trinamul Congress is simply ludicrous. By destroying social equilibrium and subsistence peasant economy in rural Bengal, the ruling marxists are dancing to the tune of Washington Consensus, to save the people hopefully from 'narodniks'. Never before had such vast areas of fertile agricultural land been ever taken at one go by the concerned authorities for the purpose of non-agricultural use. Modern-day Indigo planters, not narodniks, are back with a different agenda and a different timetable for social catastrophe.

They have a plan to acquire about 1,40,000 acres of agricultural land in nine districts of Bengal by applying brute force, if necessary. Yet they would like to call it a paradise for the poor—a people's democracy.

But the ghost of Nandigram continues to haunt the apologists of 'bourgeois revolution' to be completed under the able stewardship of Tatas, Salims, Ambanis and their like.

Having failed to tame the affected in the proposed industrial hubs, they are now trying to indulge in a subtle way, of course, in refined communalism to divide the peasant resistance from within. Congress is no less communal than the saffron party BJP. And the CPM may become equally communal like BJP if they do not get their objective fulfilled in their own way. While addressing the

public on 'Nandigram Day' on January 27, 2007, some marxist leaders including one veteran peasant leader, in fact, issued veiled threat to the minority community people because of their refusal to kowtow to left diktats.

The question is all about land, eviction does not bother about religion. But they did not forget to raise the issue of Babri masjid demolition and Congress culpability in that episode. To agitate over the Babri tragedy in a totally different context in which peasants, irrespective of their religion and party loyalty, were in rebellion, was deliberate. Initially they tried to dub Jamat-i-Ulema Hind communal, to create fissure in the movement but when the idea back-fired they went back to the pet theme of saffron danger, Gujarat syndrome and all that. After all the undivided Communist Party of India supported Partition, not the Jamat-i-Ulema Hind. This time Gujarat won't sell. Nor will attempts to vilify the agitationists as narodniks make things easier for the marxist ruling elite. Party functionaries today, in reality are land agents, having no other concept to deal with. ~~del del del~~