

NOTE

Armed Revisionists

Vijay Singh writes :

West Bengal, in Singur and Nandigram, is witnessing a crisis resulting from a peculiar path of development. The Indian communist movement from its genesis, as elsewhere, advanced the proposition that the transfer of the land to the tiller creates an internal market which can facilitate the industrialisation of the country on the basis of a democratic path of development in the interests of the working people. The domination of reformism from the nineteen-fifties ended this project. It was the peasantry of Naxalbari and the communist revolutionaries in the nineteen-sixties who once again posed the question of agrarian revolution in India. In reaction to this the reformist democratic left front in West Bengal carried out a land reform in the nineteen-seventies which ameliorated the position of the sharecroppers while retaining intact the landlord structures. This was the basis of the three decade-longevity of the political rule of the reformist left in West Bengal. The modification of the sharecropping system, although it led to a regeneration of Bengal agricultural production, never led to the abolition of landlordism as such nor the transfer of land to the tiller, no more than it developed a system of cooperatives of the sharecroppers which would have been consistent with the reform of the capitalist system in agriculture. Similarly, no perspectives were elaborated for the industrial development of the state based on the internal generation of financial resources through public institutions. The overall failure to evolve a democratic path of economic development, despite the marked productive advances in the agrarian sector, in the decades of the chief ministership of Jyoti Basu in West Bengal could only lead to the *cul-de-sac* of economic stagnation. Under the current chief ministership of Buddhadeb Bhattacharya the left front administration has sought to break out of this stasis and opted for a full-fledged neo-liberal programme of economic development in cooperation with big Indian and foreign capital through the establishment of Special Economic Zones. A large section of the working people in agriculture who are already bereft of sustainable economic livelihood face a future where they will be stripped of their land in return for paltry compensation while those sharecroppers who do not have legal titles will have to be satisfied with no compensation at all. Many of the people of Nandigram face a future of pauperisation which compels them, whether or not they have given their support to the CPI(M) in the past, to defend their livelihood from the intrusion of the Indonesian Salim group and its projected SEZ.

The pressure of US -the only superpower in the world is mounting on the ruling class to further push forward the neo-globalisation agenda in India and to effect a deeper alignment of the country, with the requirements of US foreign policy around the world. The two major parties of the ruling circles, the Congress and the BJP in the main concur with the economic and political policies of the US; sections of the CPI and the CPI M still retain significant reservations on this score. It must be considered positive that the current peoples' struggles in Singur and Nandigram have compelled the central government to rethink and revise their policies on SEZs in the country and led to a belated, half-hearted and partial re-evaluation of their role by the parties of the left front government in West Bengal.

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