

Peace Without Justice?

The colour of Fascism may be saffron. It may be red as well. But it is fascism all the way. And the end result cannot be anything but persecution of toilers. Tehelka sting operation, *Kalank*, brought forward the truth of Godhra and Gujarat violence, albeit the investigation only reinforced the findings known earlier. And yet the top leadership of Congress kept mum as if nothing serious happened. And the Congress Party remaining true to its class position hardly did anything better in case of Nandigram. Most of the reports by human rights bodies, including semi-official ones have unearthed the complicity of state police with CPM-cadres and hired goons to unleash terror and violence against the non-partisan poor, burning their properties and destroying their livelihood. The way criminals, dacoits and professional killers were mobilised to recapture Nandigram—after all it was not a liberated zone—strengthens the common belief that the marxist left literally represents ‘lumpen proletariat’. Essentially there is hardly any difference between Godhra-pogrom and Nandigram massacre, only the scale of violence matters. For all practical purposes Nandigram today is a chilling image of hundreds of poor and middle-class families desperately fleeing the flames of fascistic terror. The degeneration of communist party has reached such a low that to label it as totalitarian or authoritarian may sound innocuous.

If they—the ruling marxists—can continue to hoodwink the oppressed and have-nots, it is because of their ‘popular’ past. Strictly speaking they are living on the past glory and borrowed time.

After Nandigram saffron-bashing by the communist left does not cut much ice. With the ruling marxists getting increasingly alienated from the minority community people, the days are not far when the marxists and saffronites will see eye to eye in suppressing the minority community people. The Congress once did it and reaped the bitter harvest in due season.

Today, the easiest thing for any ruling dispensation in any part of India to unleash terror on anti-establishment agitationists is to dub them maoists. Despite the CPM-led left front government’s relentless efforts to discover maoist presence in the Nandigram movement, the National Human Rights Commission, the Minority Commission, state governor and even the home secretary did not find even a skeletal presence of maoists in the area. On the contrary all of them virtually blamed it on the ruling camp for gun culture. The chairman of NHRC even went to the extent of describing the Nandigram incident as one more ‘Godhra’ while the Governor saw in the state government’s action illegality and violation of constitutional rights, much to the discomfiture of the marxist left.

Despite outcry at the national and international levels, they are unlikely to change the course. Fascists are fascists. And they cannot call it a day without being condemned by history. The marxists of Bengal have mastered the art of extra-judicial killings. People are disappearing from police custody while the guilty police men get promoted. Bikhari Paswan disappeared from the police custody 14 years ago. And Partha Majumdar was picked up by the police in September 1997, and Partha too mysteriously disappeared. Nothing happened. As the government of India has already ratified the International Convention for

the Protection of all persons from enforced disappearance at the special ceremony organised by the French Government in Paris on February 6, 2007, the marxists can no longer shield the guilty policemen involved in the enforced disappearance cases of Bhikari Paswan (abducted by the police on 31.10.93) and Partha Majumdar (abducted by the police on 5.9.97). The left has lost its leftist tradition. What is left of leftism—in truth the so-called left front exists in name only—is sheer horror.

Also, democratic institutions evolved over the years make little sense because the persons in authority do not bother about them if they fail to serve their vested interests. The National Human Rights Commission has been monitoring abuses and excesses by the security establishment across the length and breadth of the country with very little impact on the ruling parties. True, its findings have some influence on the civic society but liberals, democrats and intellectuals have their own limitations to go beyond a certain point. Not that NHRC did not express its concerns over the continuing violation of human rights in the North East and Jammu & Kashmir and, yet official response to take appropriate steps seems negligible. Unofficial human rights watch bodies, both national and international, and sponsored in most cases by civil liberty activists have so far produced dozens of reports on atrocities by security forces and partisan hoodlums in J&K, NE, Gujarat and Bengal, only to gather dust as no political party, ruling or opposition, is serious enough to take note of them.

No doubt effective challenge to the CPM-brand of social fascism comes from maoist formations, mainly the non-parliamentary groups. But in the absence of a popular massline, maoists (or naxalites) are being easily isolated and subjected to all sorts of false propaganda. Without demolishing the social-fascists of India ideologically and politically maoists are bound to move in a circle despite their sacrifices. Indications are that social-democrats turned social-fascists are losing ground in their traditional citadels but political response from the far left seems too inadequate to pave the way for an alternative centre of mass mobilising. What is needed is 'mass solutions to mass problems'. Tragically they too—the maoists—are groping in the dark.□