

COMMENT

Verdict on Land

THE WINDS OF REGIME CHANGE in the marxist citadel of Bengal? Not yet. But the recently held 3-tier panchayet election in Bengal assumed national importance in the sense that it was held against the backdrop of Left Government's bloody land acquisition policy. The forcible land grabbing by the persons in authority is a general phenomenon in almost every state, albeit resistance to unprecedented onslaught on land and the people who live on land, is sporadic and has so far failed to acquire a general orientation because no mainstream political party is interested in it.

The panchayet verdict, though fractured in some cases, was unmistakably against the Left, more precisely against the CPM's brutalities unleashed in the wake of resistance by poor villagers, mostly under the leadership of some regional outfits against forcible land-acquisition. The decimation of CPM power is nowhere so suggestive as in the total rejection of marxist hypocrisy and high-handedness in the clear-cut anti-left mandate in Nandigram, Singur and elsewhere otherwise severely affected by land-acquisition drive.

Given the prevailing economic culture and euphoria over 'growth and development', the policy of industrialisation by the centre and different state governments is the moot question in every poll. The ruling marxists of Bengal who now act as social fascists, could have been marginalised further in the panchayet poll had the opposition succeeded in forming even a broad 'rainbow' type coalition, with a definite alternative model of growth to reach. Even in the absence of a powerful propaganda blitz to counter marxist lies and strong-arm tactics rural voters in Bengal clearly expressed their anger through ballot.

Maybe this is the beginning of the end. Maybe not. But double talk cannot sell all the time. Being the zealous apologists of imperial capital and having no re-thinking over their naked surrender to multinationals official communists have reached a stage where they can hardly defend their communist identity. But they are more concerned about the present, not the future. They have already consumed their future They have not learnt any lesson from Europe. The decline of communist culture in European parliamentary system is so complete that even a minor commu-nist project produces a rightist backlash. Communism is a dirty word in that hemisphere and it is increa-singly becoming so in India, particularly in West Bengal and Kerala where communists are rulers. They treat these two states as their exclusive fiefdoms where they could resort to medieval barbarism to have their way.

By gagging cultural activists and dramatists to express their solidarity with the persecuted, marxists virtually recreated the Indira Gandhi sponsored 1972 scenario of fear psychosis that gripped the entire society in those hoodlum days. If the ruling marxists continue to stick to their present policy of industrialisation at any cost, to woo the captains of the corporate world, both domestic and foreign, they are going to lose their traditional constituency once and for all, much to the delight of the political right.

Land question played a significant role in furthering independence struggle and it is again the basic question of change at a time when second independence movement is more than urgent to avert a human catastrophe. □□□