

NOTE

From Salkia to Rajasthan

Sankar Ray writes :

THE RECENT CPM-VICTORY in Rajasthan assembly poll in three seats with over 34 percent of votes polled in each and 9 to 22 per cent votes in half a dozen of other seats reflect an unmistakable impress of inroads made by the party in the Hindi belt.

It took 30 years for the CPI(M) to get Organisational Plenum Resolution (Salkia, West Bengal, December-end 1978) implemented. CPI(M) led the *sangharsh samiti* comprising farmers, traders and workers in the Ganga-nagar and Bikaner districts to "mobilize people for the struggle, which was carried on for two months with tenacity and courage. They were met with brutal repression. In the course of the struggle two persons, a man and a woman have died due to the injuries by severe police beating in the lathi charges. More than 200 were seriously injured. The army was deployed in the affected areas. Main leaders of the movement were jailed."

This way of penetration is qualitatively different from the opportunistic way the late Harkishen Singh Surjeet, the erstwhile CPI(M) general secretary or polit bureau member Sitaram Yechury ostensibly tried to push in by wooing Mulayam Singh Yadav or Amar Singh of Samajwadi Party to win one or two seats in UP Assembly and coalesce with Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal to produce a few legislatures in the Bihar Assembly at the cost of Left unity.

Salkia Plenum asked the party leaders to achieve a better rate of growth in the Hindi-speaking States. But in practice, party bosses looked forward for MLAs or MPs instead of party-building to heighten class struggle. In an interview to the pro-CPI(M) fortnightly *Frontline*, Surjeet defended the failure and discovered the difficulty of taking on the "impact of bourgeois-landlord ideology". Urban cadres couldn't work in the "peculiar cultural traits" and overcome the dominance of superstitions, Surjeet argued. Strange plea indeed. How could the party make inroads into the countryside in Rajasthan? The success story in Rajasthan proved the lack of seriousness of mandarins at A K Gopalan Bhavan, CPI(M) national headquarters, who mortgaged class consciousness to 'parliamentary cretinism'. Yechury's campaign against the CPI candidate in Bihar assembly polls to appease Laluji was infamous.

The same Yechury told on 9 December greeting the electorate of Rajasthan saying that people there waged a struggle from 'class outlook' which aroused optimism for winning a parliamentary seat. Words like class struggle and class outlook are sheer chicanery for CPI(M) general secretary Prakash Karat or Yechury, who were instrumental in drafting the 18000-plus word draft political resolution at the last Congress of CPI(M) where the word 'class struggle' failed to get an accommodation.

Lastly, the protest platform that CPI(M) had built certainly created an awareness among sections of people including traders who seem to get disillusioned with the BJP in Rajasthan—at least in rural areas such as Hanumangarh, Shriganganagar, Shikar and Jhunjhunu. But do traders belong to the same class as broad combination of peasantry? The issues that the Sangharsh Samiti took up in the new citadel of CPI(M) were electricity and irrigation-water. These are directly in the interests of marginal and small peasants, not landless peasants or agricultural workers whom Lenin defined as 'rural proletariat'. □