

The Lesser Evil

Crimes are crimes. No matter who does them in some respects left reaction, rather Marxist reaction is worse than right reaction. Because, the ruling left, particularly the CPM, has publicly floated the idea of political murder and preventive detention. The act of violence against anyone who claims a shred of conscience is now being consecrated into standard operating procedure by the left. Brutal measures by the official left are widely considered by liberals and progressives, who were once upon a time their ardent supporters, as outrages and are roundly and correctly protested. But the theory of lesser evils continues to haunt a section of those progressives and democrats who think it is always better not to swim against the current and disturb the status quo. Regime change is now a much discussed political discourse, thanks to notorious Bush the second. But in Indian context permanent settlement is more popular than change. And it is nowhere so relevant as in Bengal where marxists have been in power for the last 33 years. They treat the province as their fiefdom or a kind of republic within republic. They are 'marxists' and yet they think it is their divine privilege to defend the crime against humanity.

For the first time in Bengal's 33 'hoodlum years', a mood of change, for good or worse, seems to have gripped the psyche of the majority of the population. As the far left has failed to project itself as the alternative to the official left, it is the turn of the right, rather the right with populist image, that is now being widely seen as the challenging alternative to the anti-people left. Those who see omen in the phenomenal political rise of Ms Mamata Banerjee in the 'red' citadel of Bengal, may have reasons to get scared because 'red terror' is likely to be paid back with equal dose, or even more, of 'white terror' in due season.

But the 'lesser evil theory' has virtually crippled the parliamentary segment of naxalite movement and a section of progressive individuals. They don't agitate against out and out fascistic policies of CPM, lest the reactionary forces, like the Congress and the Trinamul Congress, return to power. When the ruling leftists on behalf of the corporate lobby, unleashed unprecedented terror on poor villagers and marginal farmers in a bid to forcibly acquire land for the much hyped, and yet less explained, industrialisation drive, it was the right, not the far left that came forward to resist the onslaught for its own political interests, of course.

It is meaningless to mourn over the sad demise of CPM, not to speak of left front, which is at worst an apology of United Front culture. People know from their bitter experience of survival that they won't get the moon under the changed regime and yet they think it is the only option before them to have some breathing space.

Fascism has no colour. Nor does it have any specific flag. It may be green, saffron and red as well. 'Red' terror that has been the hallmark of CPM-rule has not emerged as a response to 'white' terror. The compulsion of maintaining party dictatorship over political opponents and dissidents has forced the CPM to continually resort to violence against the people who refuse to become partners in their crime against humanity.

Running a marxist opera is not a tea party! And CPM has amply demonstrated it through its actions of barbarity. Ironically though, they still derive comfort from the fact that once upon a time they fought for the people for a radically different world, glorifying their Tebhaga and Telengana legacy. They have a programme that envisages to fight the power, and transform the people, for revolution. But for all practical purposes they have revised the programme for counter-revolution. In their scheme of things as they are at the moment, only elite classes with vested interests matter. The rest—the nameless and faceless millions—are expendable. They use the revolutionary clothes of the past to mask the fascism of the present. As for the future they have no future at all because fascism did not last for long anywhere in the world.

Things really are desperate as the decades old governing pattern seems to be transitioning into something different. It's evil all the way and there lies no scope to discover a lesser evil in the ensuing marxist culture. The stakes are very, very high. Which future will it be? The intolerable status quo? Or a changed regime that really can pose a way out of the impasse at which people find themselves today? □□□