

## Double Talk

In order for there to be a radical change, it is necessary for the population to refuse to continue to live in the same way as before, and for the ruling elites to be in no position to govern in the same way as before. So double talk is the hallmark of political discourse of politicians of all hues all over the world. In truth double talk is their right. Maybe, it is the most crucial fundamental right of Indian political parties in this biggest showpiece of democracy. Not that double talk is the sole prerogative of political right. The political left is equally afflicted by this virus. And in communist culture, particularly in CPM variety of communist culture, it is almost endemic. They defend their double talk simply by changing context as per their pre-determined strategy to further party's vested interests and yet they think they reflect objectivity.

Immediately after the nuclear catastrophe at Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant in Japan a two-member CPM-delegation comprising Suhashini Ali, ex-MP and a veteran trade union leader from Uttar Pradesh and Khagen Das, MP from Tripura, visited the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant site in Maharashtra and their report was totally against the proposed project as it would displace a large number of people and destroy their livelihoods. The people of Jaitapur have been agitating against the government's notorious, rather a suicidal, plan to build atomic reactors in an area that is extremely prosperous, for quite some time, without being noticed by the CPM-leadership. Judged against their misdeeds in Bengal and Kerala, the report sounds like swan song as it states 'the farmers and fisherfolk produce the best mangoes and also the best fish and sea food in the region.... The attachment of the people to their land and to their professions is extremely strong and it is this that explains their determined resistance and willingness to sacrifice'. They told the world just the opposite when the peasants and fisherfolk of Nandigram and Singur opposed their forcible acquisition of good quality farmland for the money bags of Indian corporate world. They didn't hesitate to crush people's movement by deploying police and paid mercenaries while silencing all dissenting voices even within their own ranks, all in the name of development and progress.

They never explain why they are silent about the proposed nuclear power plant to be built by the Russians at Haripur in the coastal district of East Midnapore of West Bengal. All segments of Haripur population like their Jaitapur counterparts have been continuing a mass movement against the Haripur project for long. And it is no secret anymore that thousands of peasant and fisherfolk families would be systematically evicted and eliminated from the region. Losing their traditional livelihoods and homes they would be paupers and destitutes. But they never talk of the plight of Haripur people, let alone sending a fact-finding mission there.

As they are not in power in Maharashtra, it is easy to refurbish their progressive image by showering sympathy towards the would be nuclear power plant victims of Jaitapur. It is unlikely that they would raise the issue in parliament and move a no-confidence motion, demanding a thorough review of India's ambitious nuclear energy programme and its impact on the society and the economy. They are not going to demand the cancellation of Haripur Project, albeit the Government of India, has not yet shown any inclination to shift the project, Fukushima or no Fukushima.

Incidentally "Fukushima" coincides with the 25th anniversary of "Chernobyl". The Chernobyl Nuclear disaster released energy equivalent of 0.01 kiloton of TNT which was even more devastating than the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the close World War II.

The point at issue is whether tokenism, rather adhocism can stop the nuclear chariot of the Congress-led coalition dispensation at the centre. The answer is 'no' because no political party is opposed to nuclear power in principle. And communists see ominous signs in Indo-US nuclear deal, not nuclear power as such. They are more interested in playing with the gallery to gain cheap popularity. The persons in authority won't rethink nuclear energy so long as Indo-US nuclear deal is in place.

Faced with the prospects of losing assembly elections in the so-called red citadels of Bengal and Kerala, they—the CPM people to be precise—are now talking in multiple voices only to reinforce their double talk strategy, if it can be called a strategy. For more than three decades they have been opposing what they call the Centre's anti-people policies while implementing the same with a kind of religious fanaticism in the states where they are in power.

They are not against India's massive nuclearisation drive. What all they want is a share of the pie. Nor will they campaign for renewable and sustainable energy sources—solar, wind, bio-mass and others—in place of nuclear power. They would like to keep it on record that they also opposed "Jaitapur". But history will record their reverse role for "Haripur". It remains to be seen whether double talk could enhance their electoral fortunes. The hard fact is that the voters are no longer a mass of illiterate peasants. □□□