

ABSTRACT GOALS?

In Search of Vanguards

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Revolution is a serious matter. Talking loosely about it makes little sense. It is not something to be played at. And barring orthodox communists, nobody thinks Indian workers would lead a social revolution encompassing Indian peculiarities with the noble objective of liberating toilers in the foreseeable future. But in India all communist parties, no matter whether they are officially recognised or officially proscribed, invariably produce dozens of resolutions from their party congresses and plenums modelled after the Bolshevik tradition and methodology of party building and mass organising with the same stereotyped slogans of workers' vanguard role in any brand of social revolution while reiterating their almost ritualistic faith in the appeal of 'workers of all countries, unite'. These days these slogans are so hollow and sterile that even a solidarity movement in a single industry in a country, not to speak of the world, at a time of massive neo-liberal onslaught against labour seems impossible. And yet the self-professed representatives of the vanguard force think Indian workers are just on the threshold of doing their historic role.

The way communist parties talk about working class leadership and its vanguard role—in truth they have been talking about it for more than eight decades in this hapless country—doesn't attract the oppressed and marginalised masses who need revolution most to change their lot. For the leadership of communist culture this concept of working class leadership is a funny business. How is it that workers who are under the sway of mass organisations affiliated to this communist party or that, are not yet convinced about the inevitability of a working class revolution. They know many aspects about yellow revolution, velvet revolution, orange revolution and to some extent they are influenced by them, thanks to corporate propaganda. The only thing that remains volatile and vague in their perception of world vision is red revolution in which they are supposed to play the vanguard role.

Ludicrously enough, all communist parties, even insignificant groups, need left deviation and right deviation to project their correct vanguard line. After all for all of them it is a two-line struggle in the ideological sphere. And all communist parties in their congresses begin with the pet theme of permanent capitalist crisis and a unique opportunity for the working community to make a revolutionary swing while issuing a timetable for the demise of imperialism. It's just routine for any communist establishment, revolutionary or 'counter-revolutionary', rather reformist. But the revolutionary swing hardly gets materialised on the labour front. All that good news of radicalism comes from the peasant front.

For the Communist Ghadar Party that convened its fourth congress in October 2010, it is *Navnirman* of the Indian state and society. It's the kind of revolution they are talking about and it can be achieved again by building a vanguard party of the working class guided by Marxism-Leninism. Indian people are lucky that 'Ghadars' have no love for Mao. No it has nothing to do with the late Shankar Guha Niyogi's 'Struggle and Construction' [*Sangarsh aur nirman*]. Nor do they subscribe to CPM-brand of ballot revolution. Then their revolution is not that of Maoist type either as they are too vociferous to reject the Maoist-brand of bullet revolution. No ballot, no bullet. Then their party, the vanguard party of the working class is historically destined to lead the proletarian revolution and build socialism. For one thing they have enough time to prove their vanguard credibility as it is just 30 years old. Their "Navnirman means to establish the state and political process afresh, with a new constitution that enshrines the inviolability of the rights of every nation, nationality and people; the rights of toilers, tillers, women, youth, and the national, linguistic, religious and other minorities; and the democratic and human rights of every individual member of society." These are tired old cliches. And cliches are unlikely to produce revolution even of their kind.

The hard Indian reality is that these vanguard parties never try to motivate workers beyond their sectarian interests. The only place they organise their vanguard forces is trade union. And trade unions are not utilised to address problems affecting wider section of toilers. So the so-called red unions didn't find it worthwhile to intervene in Anna Hazare's anti-corruption crusade. If organised sector workers who are the pampered vanguard constituencies of all shades of communist parties, withdrew labour even for a day in support of Anna's movement things could have galvanised more passive sections of the society across the country to shake the status quo-ists. If political consciousness of organised sector workers and employees who are the mainstay of all vanguard communist parties, it is because vanguards are themselves not interested in anything other than levy collection and collective bargaining. A broader perspective with pressing social issues is not on their agenda as if they are not part of the society. Nor do their families get affected by social malaise.

Trade Union militancy is a misnomer because trade union struggle is a defensive struggle. Strike in this part of the globe is seen as manifestation of trade union militancy, albeit it is a legal right. It has nothing to do with AK-47 or seizure of political power. No strike can be continued for long unless there is an objective condition to pressurise employers who understand only one language—the language of production loss. Established Central Trade Unions controlled by different political parties, including working class vanguard parties, are just executors of pacification programme, all in the name of maintaining industrial peace.

Not that independent trade union initiatives that have sprung up regionally with an avowed objective of challenging the authoritarianism and reactionary role of central trade unions have succeeded in making the liberating vision of vanguards a material force in society—something the broad masses hope for a radically different and better world. □□□