

Rectification—CPM Style

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AN EDITED VERSION OF 4800-word document, 'On Rectification Campaign', adopted by the CPI(M) central committee at its meeting in October 2009 is now available in the party's website. But do chaste verbiage and revolutionary phrases (hackneyed due to consistent lip-service for years together) therein correspond to the burgeoning growth of nepotism, unbridled opportunism and compromise with communalism?

Let's first pick West Bengal. Even after successive poll reverses from 2008, the party has the most conspicuous presence there. Dr Rozina Khatun, wife of CPI(M) CC member, ex-minister and former MP, Mohd Selim, was allotted a 3400 sq foot living quarters free of rent in the hospital building of Chiitaranjan Sishu Sadan, a government hospital in south Kolkata, in the late 1980s. Selim, after the matter was leaked in several dailies, argued that it was allotted to her being an anaesthetist attached to the Emergency and she should be available anytime in day or night, as if anesthetists everywhere stay compulsorily within the hospital compound, although silent about the size of living quarters.

Look randomly at the goings-on in the education sector during the Left Front regime. How the erstwhile West Bengal chief minister and CPI(M) polit bureau member Buddhadeb Bhatta-charjee unashamedly shielded the D.Phil controversy of Pabitra Sarkar is now widely known. Sarkar falsely claimed to have the doctorate in linguistics from the University of Chicago in 1975 . He got the degree in end-2004 to cover up the calumny . But during the intervening years, he became the head of Bengali department, JU, became the vice-chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University furnishing the assumed doctorate diploma: courtesy-patronage of mandarins of Muzaffar Ahmed Bhavan, WB CPI(M) headquarters. A conceited Bhattacharjee argued, Dr Sarkar is the best known linguistics, blissfully unaware of India's far-better-known scholars such as Prof Prabal Dasgupta, known for path-breaking research on modern India's logic-linguistics boundary and grammatology or Uday Narayana Singh whose areas include sociolinguistics and transcreation of texts.

Dasgupta now heads the linguistics division, Indian Statistical Institute, while Singh is currently, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Visva-Bharati and Tagore Research Chair, Rabindra Bhavan. The two are general editors, eight volume Language and Development, series, published by the Sage India.

Even the ISI couldn't escape M A Bhavan's partyocracy led by Dr Atis Dasgupta , then head, Sociology, Ph.D. in modern history, never done any research on sociology. Look at the ISI annual reports in the end-1990s. The section on 'academic recognition' is occupied almost wholly by him but not due to prestigious awards, nomination to editorial board of international journals of repute or the like, nomination to various committees of the LF government, totally delinked from sociology. Dr Dasgupta is twin brother of Dr Asim Dasgupta, finance minister of LF government between 1987 and 2011. He was instrumental in choosing Dr Sankar Pal as the director, denying more competent scholars like Dr Partha Pratim Majumdar, globally famous in quantitative genetics.

One of the black holes of West Bengal's Left Front government, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is erosion of educational institutions and CPI(M) is singularly responsible for this as educational portfolios have always been ministers, nominated by the party. The rot deepens as the main criterion picking up academics is not scholastic brilliance,

but allegiance or desirably, subservience to mandarins at Muzaffar Ahmed Bhavan, state party headquarters. There being no checks, the collage of scandals and misdeeds enlarges cadaverously. Dr Ashok Mitra, LF's first finance minister, in his autobiographical narrative *Apila-Chapila* (A Prattler's Tale: Bengal, Marxism, Governance) suggested a dichotomy : the subservient versus the efficient. The former are climbers. A fellow traveler of CPI(M) and a wellknown scholar in mathematical statistics told this writer several years ago, "the general impression among academics in Delhi about the LF's partyocracy in the field of education is very critical and frustrating." Let's illustrate the point. History honours (part II) were awarded a flat grace of 12 marks, but for which the daughter of Anil Biswas won't get first class. Her first job was lecturership at the Rabindra Bharati University. The feeling of repulsion in the academic area among top class scholars has been a common experience. An internationally renowned historian like Rudrangshu Mukherjee too had to leave the department of history in the University of Calcutta.

The pathos of a professor, electrical engineering, Jadavpur University, at the fag-end of his tenure vouchsafes Dr Mitra's jibe. Frustrated, the professor once lamented amidst a select-few colleagues that his unflinching loyalty towards the CPI(M) went in vain. "My daughter cast dozens of false votes wearing burqas of different colours for the party nominees in the state assembly elections. Yet I was not considered for vice-chancellor of any varsity". A party member after the LF came to power in 1977, he didn't realize that his confession lowered his image of ethics and morality among his listeners, including a few of his former students. Perhaps he could not convert loyalty into sycophancy.

A top leader of CPI(M)'s frontal organization among scientists and technologists, based in New Delhi, told Subrata Sinha, a doyen among earth scientists, in the 1990s that the activities and the outlook of the LF government was in the way of Left movement and prospects elsewhere in India.

But the most stunning act was coalescence with retrograde forces :CPI(M)'s poll alliance with the People's Democratic Party (PDP) led by Islamist leader Abdul Nasser Madani whom the CPI-M PB member and Kerala secretary Pinarayi Vijayan frantically projected as a reformed person. Madani's wife Sufiya was nabbed by the central intelligence agencies and Tamil Nadu and Karnataka police for alleged involvement in the T'Nadu bus burning case at Kalamassery in Kochi in 2005. The unholy alliance was ticked off by AKG Bhavan. Small wonder, AKG mandarins belittled V S Achuthanandan to buck up Vijayan ignoring that VSA was a member of the national council of undivided CPI. The 4800-word document states, "Rectification has to be a continuous process and not a one-off effort in order to protect the revolutionary character of the Party. The purpose of such a campaign is to remove the wrong trends and shortcomings so that the Party emerges more unified and strengthened." Isn't this a pious platitude? □□□