

Sound of Solitude

IDENTICAL NUMBERS DON'T PRODUCE IDENTICAL RESULTS. WHILE Khrushchev's 20th congress was a world-shaking event, Karat's 20th congress was a stale affair, even by Indian standards as their communist vision didn't go beyond India's cow-belt. Khrushchev's 20th congress created waves throughout the world leading to split in the international communist movement, thanks to Chinese efforts to polarise communist organising around Beijing. The great debate is now history which the Chinese themselves would like to disown and forget. Today they are debating whether China will be listened to with respect at the Wall Street, and Chinese will be recognised globally as people who have successfully transformed themselves from a revolutionary society to a market-driven society with all its pitfalls, and in doing so, have brutally suppressed any voice of dissent. The Chinese communists who were in the forefront to confront Khrushchev's theory of peaceful co-existence and peaceful competition today look more Khrushchevite than Khrushchev. And Karats too do not lag behind as they tried to implement the so-called Chinese model of 'reforms' in Bengal and Kerala and got totally isolated from the broad masses. These days the Chinese are too willing to work together with the US to further cooperation and competition in various fields including economy and trade, investment, finance and infrastructure, in order to spur the economy, increase jobs and create more areas of mutual benefits in the future. What a tragedy!

What the marxists discussed at Khozikode on their draft political and ideological resolution was devoid of any serious programme of action as it was a business as usual ritual to boost the sagging morale of their cadres. It cannot be otherwise as their communism halts at the doorsteps of Indian parliament. For the ideologues of Khozikode revolution is neither necessary nor possible. They boast of a communist party that cannot lead a revolution, a political party that essentially speaks and acts for those with everything to lose if a revolutionary upheaval takes place. Theirs is the communist party that cannot unite broad masses who must be united and enable them to do what must be done. If revolution is not on their agenda, they have a point to prove before the world that they are not yet counter-revolutionary, albeit their communist mask stands exposed after their fascistic campaign in Nandigram and Singur.

There is nothing new in their summed up debates at Khozikode congress. Those who expected something miraculous would happen were totally disappointed. They have long stopped talking how to break the status quo. Instead their sole aim is how to make the status quo look radical and tolerable despite massive dispossession of people in recent years, particularly since the advent of 'reforms' in the '90s. Their mild criticism of the Chinese Communist Party for granting membership to capitalists makes little sense as their very own proletarian party has microscopic representation of the proletariat even in the lower rung of the leadership, not to speak of hierarchy that is exclusively dominated by high caste and rich people. The proletarian content of their party comes from the organised sector workers and employees who have a chequered tradition of nourishing aristocracy in India's labour movement.

Not that their idea of maintaining equidistance from Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has many takers even in their own ranks that are mainly drawn from middle class opportunists, self-seekers and lumpen elements. The hard reality is that they are still a regional party, notwithstanding their all-India emblem. Then regionalists cannot bargain much with the centre in a situation of bi-polar parliamentary culture. Also, their occasional attempt to float a third alternative as they discussed it at the all important congress at Khozikode, by uniting heterogeneous forces, some of them with most backward outlook, is a contradiction in itself. It never took off in the yester years and it will never take off in the coming days unless there arises an emergency-like political atmosphere.

Their short-term goal is election. Their long-term goal is election. That is precisely the message of Khozikode. No specific tactical line emerged from Khozikode other than equidistance notion which is anything but vague. Historically they have been close to Congress since the days Nehru. And it will remain so even in the absence of Nehru dynasty. More they get marginalised in electoral politics, more they get close to Congress for sheer survival. Almost at every congress and plenum they made agonising reflections on their poor performance in north India only to adopt dozens of pious resolutions to build grassroots organisations in the region. Their communism is helpless in combating caste politics and religious fanaticisms of all hues that affect mainly the poor and downtrodden. Nor can they do much in fighting communalism other than locating it in BJP though they are no less communal when it is the question of vote. The Khozikode narrative is built on half-truths, self-deception and distortions and it is quite natural in a party that just enjoys the idea of being called red. □□□