

Time to Think

For decades if the poor wanted a radical appeal worthy of passing on to future generations, it had to come from the political left, more precisely the marxist left. It's no longer so. Today leftism is defined by people not being able to tell the truth and fight for the have-nots. Their worth is gauged in their ability to serve the haves. Two square meals a day, a place to live, basic medical care, elementary primary education, all these essentials, for ordinary people, are often and chronically beyond reach, and yet the marginalised, living on the fringe, are being further marginalised to make wealth for the privileged few while capitalism, the accrual of wealth from wage-slaves seems to be the new religion for the marxist left. For long the communists and leftists in general used to occupy the space between poverty and wealth and agitate for the underprivileged and the class of limited privilege or so-called middle class. It is no more. Nowadays they defend ruthless capitalistic enterprises working against the interests of the people and yet they think their political chastity cannot be questioned. Political honesty is for the opponents and dissenters.

Their policy of alignment with the historically anti-people Congress Party to keep the saffronites at bay is billed as their historical compulsion. The issue of ideology and political opportunism does not arise. But when the forces on the far left or naxalites as they are still popularly called, ally with a faction of Congress, more precisely Trinamul Congress, otherwise a Bengal-based regional outfit with the potential of becoming a mass party to protest against forcible acquisition of agricultural land, they see red in the emerging combine.

Bengal marxists and their all India communist party without any representative national character, are latecomers in capitalist competition in Indian 'federal set up'. As a result they are in a hurry to disown their own past by nakedly betraying the interests of the toilers. The way they are posing the issue of industrialisation and implementing pro-industry land policy to further what they call industrial rejuvenation, ultimately hastens the contradiction between workers and peasants—between town and village. The question of worker-peasant alliance as it is in their programmatic stance, even in the context of 'relief revolution' through parliamentary means they talk about no longer features in their political discourse.

They are in reality pitting workers against peasants and, in some cases middle peasants against agricultural workers while destroying whatever remains of worker-peasant unity.

For one thing all forces on the broad left, not excluding the far left, continue to theorise on unfinished democratic revolution with worker-peasant alliance as the pivot of that revolution. And yet peasants are under attack from all sides. Big business and multinationals are hell bent to wipe out traditional agriculture and the leftists are aggravating the crisis by refusing to speak out.

In the name of developing special economic zones they are inviting old colonialists to recolonise parts of Indian territory as the East India Company once did by brutally evicting and killing peasant and artisan masses.

Given the situation peasant movement can be developed in depth only by resolving the ensuing contradiction between the state—the chief wrecker of peasant economy—and the peasant community in general. The advocates of neo-colonial industrialisation do not explain who will buy industrial goods if peasants die. Maybe, they look at middle class people but middle class market is shrinking. Those who toil in fields and factories live in squalor and poverty but they are the domestic market for industrial products. Export-oriented industry cannot survive unless purchasing power of locals is improved. What is not discussed is de-industrialisation which is the main trend, not industrialisation in most third world countries. Not for nothing western powers are spending crores of rupees to dismantle labour-intensive industries.

All Indian states irrespective of colours of rulers face a grave emergency. The very nature of administrative dispensations and their relationship to ordinary people are being reshaped in horrific ways before the eyes of all. Yet the full implications of the sweeping changes are yet to be widely understood, even among those who oppose anti-peasant policies. ~~del del del~~

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