

Who is the Left?

THE DEFIANCE BY THE PEASANTS of Nandigram—lasting, unbelievably, for 11 months, despite massacres, rapes, infliction of disability and trauma—is at last over. Villagers sign undertakings, promising total submission. And the ruling marxists have reasons to celebrate victory.

Must a party, by virtue of calling itself communist, by definition be Leftist? Is socialism a matter of labels, words and signs alone?

In the murky world of official left only signboards matter.

There is no terror like State terror, though the use of terror by anyone should not be supported. This is a state whose leading party has been continuously in power for more than 30 years and, at present, the central government depends on it for its survival.

A harsh and ruthless neo-liberal power has been installed only by destroying even bourgeois legal constitutional norms — which is how Nandigram was won back. The peasant movement has been crushed by means that the Kolkata High Court considers illegal; that, in the process, civil and democratic rights of protests have been mauled.

All genuine Leftists are committed to protest and resist injustice, inequality and repression wherever it exists—in Czechoslovakia, at Tianan-men Square, at Kampuchea, in Nandigram.

Maybe, a new Left politics will emerge out of this churning. It cannot possibly come out of the morally bankrupt official Left.

The critics of apologists of multi-national capital are asked why their criticism is selective, what about CPM loyalists ousted from the villages?

The saffronites too ask secularists why they don't talk that much about Kashmiri refugees. While all intimidation is reprehensible, a swollen, huge party machinery and state apparatus exist to care for the latter. For rebellious Nandigram and Singur peasants, there was no support, except from civil society groups.

That Nandigram is not totally written off from the left front government's industrial map becomes clear after the government appointed Assembly Standing Committee expressed desire to explore the possibility of building a shipyard there. Nandigram may witness more bloodshed in the coming days because the official left is determined to show the world that 'there is no alternative.'