

Surging Towards Catastrophe

Double talk is not the monopoly of the Bushes. The official communists in this part of the globe have a chequered history of maintaining double standard in their political discourses on national and international issues. They did it during India-China war. They did it to dislodge the first Janata government. They again did it somewhat blatantly in supporting Indira Gandhi's presidential candidate, all in the name of progressiveness. They have no 'marxian problem' though they are communist parties; right now they have a peasant problem—and more so with those who refuse to buy their anti-peasant policy otherwise showcased as 'development bonanza'. Multinational money talks and it talks nowhere so loudly as in the marxist citadel of Bengal. They are the worst apologists of multinational capital and they find no solution to the peasant question in Marx's capital. Ironically though, they lost no time to condemn police firing on the agitating Khammam peasants of Andhra Pradesh and at the same time went hysterical to defend the indefensible—police barbarity in Nandigram. What they spread around the country is not democracy but hypocrisy, sheer hypocrisy and political propaganda to enforce that hypocrisy.

Policemen always open fire even on unarmed civilians as they did under the baton of marxist police minister in Nandigram, in self-defence but the same people in uniform indulge in barbarism by enacting similar acts if the marxists are not in power! Quite expectedly the Sitaram Yechuris have every reason to grill the Andhra government and its 'blood-thirsty' police, conveniently forgetting what their own police did not very long ago in West Bengal.

Those who know the CPM-style of functioning are really worried about the next genocidal onslaught—a police-party partnership exercise—against the rural rebels of Nandigram who continue to defy 'red fascism' and economic blockade. Maybe, another 'Baranagar-Cossipore of 1970s' is in the making. This time the script is in the hands of marxists, not Gandians of yester years.

For all practical purposes, a low-key civil war like situation has been prevailing in and around Nandigram for the last six months or so. And a full-fledged civil war to be propelled by the security establishment may engulf the entire area in and around Nandigram, if what CPM leaders are saying overly—or subtly about the 'imagined' danger the dissenters of Nandigram pose, is seriously taken into account. Only the other day, the senior most politburo member of the most flourishing social-democratic shop of India—CPM—expressed concerns over the absence of rule of law in Nandigram as he saw in the scenario a 'liberated zone' emerging, much to the bewilderment of ordinary people.

The hard fact is that Nandigram is very much under the CPM-led left front rule. There is no parallel administration; even emotionally charged maoists do not foresee any possibility of Nandigram evolving into their dreamland of 'yenan' in the distant future. Those who are spearheading the anti-land grab agitation and resisting 'red terror', CPM terror to be precise, are law abiding citizens of this country. Close on the heels of the 'liberated zone' gospel a top brass of Bengal CPM leadership talked tough in respect of the Nandigram crisis which, after all, was the creation of the persons in authority of his own party.

This way or that they have started a fresh campaign to encircle Nandigram and crash the fighting spirit of villagers who decline to kowtow to the party with enormous money and muscle power. They sell lies about Nandigram because lies are largely ignored in the so-called mainstream press. They may succeed in their nefarious game this time because the role of parliamentary opposition is no less dubious if not hopeless.

In short both ruling establishment and opposition have many things in common, and neither really represents the interests of the toilers. Those cling to the hope that parliamentary opposition forces would do something better than the ruling marxists should carefully watch what they are actually doing. For the CPM and its supporters the issue is how to best maintain a ruthless, unjust administrative set up. And for the opposition the issue is how to best gain political mileage without disturbing the status quo.

If the advocates of foreign investments, rather neo-liberal marxists, fail to achieve what they want—a *laissez faire* atmosphere for big business—through legal and not-so legal devices, they will resort to brutish force to reach the goal. It's not without reason that the marxist rulers have kept the police 'inactive' in Nandigram and its adjoining areas since the 14 March operation. They are simply planning for a bigger operation. First they tried to split the movement against land acquisition without much success. Then they deployed 'bad elements' to execute their 'hit and run' policy. But nothing really worked to their satisfaction. So another bloodshed is all that they can think of. And they are just creating a fear psychosis to mobilise public opinion for a bigger offensive.□