

Political Gimmicks of all Ruling Class Parties in India

Certain common features

As a result of the policies pursued by the various ruling class parties in India, particularly the long Congress rule, the Indian economy is caught in deep crisis.

The policies of the ruling classes and their parties have only helped the imperialists, the big capitalists and the big landlords in the country. They have only resulted in greater misery for our people.

In order to end the present economic crisis in the country, one should end the foreign exploitation in our country and the exploitation of the big capitalists and big landlords in our country. Only then the lot of the common man could be improved. But this could be achieved only through successful Agrarian Revolution.

But the ruling class parties in India, either in power or in opposition, national or regional belong to same comprador ruling classes, serving the interests of exploiting classes both foreign and national. They are opposed to the Agrarian Revolution, and are determined to preserve of the present system of exploitation.

That is why none of these parties raise their voice against imperialist exploitation or the exploitation of the big capitalists and landlords in our country. That is why none of them raise their voice for any basic change in the land relations or industrial relations in the interests of the peasants and agricultural labourers or the working class in the cities.

The truth is they are no more interested in moving the people into action against the government on any important issue of the people even as in the days of 1980, when they were speaking of Rasta-Roko, Rail-roko movements or General Bundhs.

Meek opposition in the parliament

Look at the way these opposition parties have behaved meekly in the recent session of the parliament.

The opposition parties welcomed Indira Gandhi's proposal for setting up a new Pay Commission. Her game was to postpone the

issue of raising the basic pay scales of the Central Government employees, which is against the interests of these employees. But the opposition meekly submitted to the government proposal. Why? They are not for any increase in the basic pay scales of the Central government employees.

Look at the way the opposition parties have welcomed Indira Gandhi's announcement to set up the Sarkaria Commission to go into the relations between the Centre and the States. They did not even wait to see the other members of the Commission, the points of reference to it, or the period in which the Commission is to submit its report. Why such a haste? The truth is that some of these opposition parties are not for any de centralisation of powers from the Centre to the States.

Or look at the behaviour of the opposition parties with regard to the proposal of Indira Government, permitting the nationals living abroad to purchase shares in the Indian based companies. The industrialists have raised a hue and cry saying that this is an attempt to take over the Indian companies by the foreign monopolies through the Indian nationals abroad. Faced with this the Indira Congress declared that the Indian nationals abroad will be permitted to purchase only 5% of the shares in the Indian companies. Have they banned the purchase above the 5%? No. It says over and above this percentage, they should get the permission of the Reserve Bank. It has also promised that the Government financial institutions will use their shares against the change in the managements of the Indian companies from going into the hands of the Indian nationals abroad. This is only a promise.

Here is an opportunity for the opposition to rouse the whole nation against the attempts of the Indira Congress government to sell the Indian companies to the foreign monopolies in the name of the Indian nationals abroad. But the opposition failed to do that. It did not go beyond verbal criticism. Why? They also belong to the same comprador ruling classes subservient to imperialism.

Mere verbal protests against the new taxation proposals

Finally take the new taxation proposals of the Indira Congress government amounting to about Rs. 2000 crores in one single year. This was coming in the wake of Congress defeats in Karnataka and Andhra. All the sections of the people were shocked at the new heavy tax burden on the common people.

If the opposition was really interested in replacing Indira Congress government, if they were really interested in mobilising the people against the Congress government, the opposition should have come forward with their own alternative economic programme, on the basis of which they could have asked the people to oppose the taxation proposals to beat back the Indira Congress government.

But the opposition parties in the Parliament did not go beyond verbal protests in Parliament, oral condemnation in the press and a few protest public meetings and demonstrations.

This only shows that the opposition ruling class parties are no more prepared to move the people into action on any immediate issue of the people even on their immediate issues. If the people move on one issue, they will move on other issues, ultimately to a struggle for a change in the system of exploitation. If the situation is in their power, they are no more prepared for any big movement of the people, even of the type of 1980.

There is another truth. There is not a single incident in the Parliamentary history of our country, or for that matter in the history of any capitalist country, where the opposition, when it comes to power, has withdrawn any taxation measure or economic measure, which they have opposed while in opposition.

The truth is that all these ruling class parties follow basically similar economic policies and taxation measures which in essence means "Tax the poor to pay the rich".

The experience of the Janata government the experience of the various state governments under the leadership of the opposition parties, the regional parties or the CPI-CPM led governments adequately confirm this truth. The taxation measures of the CPM led government in West Bengal are in no way different from those of the Central government of the Congress.

Their attitude to repressive measures

All the ruling class parties— national and regional—swear by democracy but in actual practice, all of them resort to various kinds of repressive measures to oppress and suppress the just struggles of the people.

The record of the Congress, the record of the earlier Janata government or the state governments under the leadership of the various opposition parties is a confirmation of this truth.

Look at the role of the AIDMK government in Tamilnadu. Its record of false encounters and wanton killings of arrested individuals in the name of putting down 'Naxalite' violence is beating the black-record of the Congress governments. Police torture of prisoners in police custody has become so horrible that recently the Supreme Court has given notice to the Tamilnadu government to submit a report about these tortures and deaths under police custody. The lathi charge on such Civil Liberties Agitation leaders like Tarkunde and Kannabhiran recently in that state has beaten the Congress record.

The record of the repression by the CPM led government in Tripura and West Bengal is no better than any other state government.

Let us remember that it was the CPM government in Tripura that sought more army help from the Central government to suppress the tribals. The recent Calcutta High Court's strictures on the jail administration—their food, clothing, medicines, treatment are an eloquent demonstration of its "progressivism". In the name of suppressing 'Naxalite' violence, the torture of arrested persons, arrest and harassment of the relatives of the arrested persons, adopted by the West Bengal government is in no way different from that of the record of the Congress government in Andhra.

The performance of the Telugu Desam government in Andhra, on the question of civil liberties is in no way different from other governments. It is continuing the same old Disturbed Areas Act in the tribal areas and Karimnagar district. No release of Communist Revolutionaries or withdrawal of pending arrest warrants against them, or withdrawal of false cases against them. The firing on the Tobacco farmers in Prakasam district, the lathi-charges on the students in Hyderabad city, the continuing arrests and beatings by the police in Karimnagar, Khammam and Warangal districts show which way the Telugu Desam government is moving. Faced with a demonstration of thousands of people on the question of civil liberties in Andhra, the Chief Minister had promised to settle the issue by April 23. But till now he is silent.

What is significant to note is that none of the opposition parties, except certain individuals among them, speak up against the continuation of Disturbed Areas Act in large parts of Andhra for such a long time. The CPM leadership, on the floor of the Assembly, most shamelessly demanded not only the continuation of the Disturbed Areas Act, but demanded more repression to suppress the people. What a fine example of 'Marxism-Leninism' of the CPM brand ! Out of the total opposition in the Andhra Assembly, it was left to Jaipal Reddy of the Janata to oppose the continuation of repression in Andhra.

The attitude of the opposition parties on the question of repression is too clear. Their opposition is nominal. When they come to power they do not withdraw a single repressive measure, but strengthen them. That is recorded history.

Separatism, Regionalism, Communalism, Casteism— the common weapons of all the ruling class parties

Another common feature of all the ruling class parties that is coming more to the forefront in the recent period is that all of them are now adopting separatism, regionalism, communalism and casteism, provoking riots among people, all for their selfish, narrow class interests to disrupt and destroy the united struggles of the common people.

The frequent quarrels over the language, border questions between states, River water distribution between states, or the question of Chattis-

Chandigarh, or Jarkhand in MP, or the so-called Utterkhand in UP, are only products of this policy.

The branches of these parties range themselves against each other and provoke bloody riots among the people, one against the other, one section against the other, one community or caste against another community or caste leading to bloody riots, resulting in wanton killings and burnings and destruction of properties. It is the Harijans, Moslims and the tribals that are often the worst sufferers in this holocaust, the very people that these parties claim to be defending.

The frequent Hindu-Moslim riots in North-India, the riots in Bihar, UP, Gujarat over the job reservations right from 1978, were all engineered by these ruling class parties for their own selfish and narrow class interests. The Congress, the Janata, the Lokdal, the BJP and RSS, the CPI-CPM and certain chauvinists in Assam itself, are all part of this game.

Look at the way how the Congress, the BJP and RSS or the CPM—are all vying with each other in creating and continuing the divisions between the immigrants and the Assam people, between Non-Assam and Assam people, between Hindus and Moslim people, between various tribes in Assam—all aimed at destroying the just struggles of the Assam people against economic backwardness and in defence of their language, and culture, instead of solving the problem of immigrants, which is the sole responsibility of the Central government.

Look at the way the Congress, the Akalis and the BJP are feverishly engaged in creating tensions between Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab, leading to the present explosive situation, relegation all other important issues of the people—the workers, peasant, middle classes and students — to the background, all with an eye on the ballot box.

The problems of Punjab and Haryana should have been long ago solved by giving Chandigarh to Punjab and the Centre giving financial help to Haryana to build its own capital, which was the original agreement when Chandigarh was built as the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana. The disputes and division of river waters and border question could easily be settled by referring them to an independent Tribunal.

But such a simple and straight solution does not suit the election interests of these parties and hence the prolongation of the crisis.

Regional parties—certain common features

As the ruling class parties at the national level have begun to lose their glamour among the people, in various parts of the country, regional parties have emerged claiming to represent the particular interests of their regions, claiming to represent the particular religious traditions of a particular community or the language and cultural traditions of a particular nationality inhabiting that region

The National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, the Akalis in Punjab, the AIDMK and AMK in Tamilnadu, the Telugu Desam in Andhra are all regional parties of this type. One should note certain common features which are inimical to the interests of the common people.

All these parties belong to the big bourgeois, big landlord classes of that region and are one with the other ruling class parties in preserving the present system of exploitation.

They raise extreme sectional slogans relating to their own regions or communities, not because they are really interested in the economic well-being, the religious and cultural traditions of the people of the region concerned, but only to create chauvinist feelings among the people to catch their votes and to separate the common people of that area from the united struggles of the common people in other states.

They have no policy quarrels with the existing ruling class parties at the national level. They are on friendly terms with all the ruling class parties, They are prepared to remain at peace with any ruling party that comes to power in the Centre. That is why all the ruling class parties run for electoral adjustment with these regional parties.

They raise extreme sectional demands of their particular region, not because they want to conduct any struggle with the Central government but to bring pressure on the Central government for more economic concessions.

The performance of the state governments under the leadership of these regional parties in the matter of economic policies, taxation measures or in the matter of repression are in no way different from those of the Congress government or other state governments under the leadership of the other opposition ruling class parties.

The performance of the AIDMK government or the Telugu Desam government in A. P. is no exception to this general rule, inspite of all their false claims. There are already reports in the press that both these parties are in consultation with Indira Gandhi for electoral adjustments in the next parliamentary elections. Just now Rama Rao has invited all opposition party leaders to attend his party Conference. The purpose seems to be for electoral agreement for the next parliamentary elections. Let us wait and see.

The counter-revolutionary role of the CPI-CPM

The role of the CPI-CPM combine in the present day political situation in our country is more exposing itself as counter revolutionary.

They have no alternative programme of struggle either against the Congress government in power or the other opposition ruling class parties.

Their praise for Indira Gandhi's foreign policy and pretention of opposition to the internal policies of Indira Gandhi's is exposing itself as nothing but critical support to Indira Gandhi, as shown in their support of fascist repression of Indira Gandhi against the Assam people and their support to the bogus elections she conducted there.

Having accepted that even basic changes in the society can be achieved through amendments to the present big bourgeois-big landlord constitution, they have reduced themselves to a party of status quo, to maintain the present system of exploitation.

Their slogan of 'left and democratic front' has exposed itself as nothing but united front with all ruling class parties—from united front with Indira Gandhi on international affairs, to united front with any opposition ruling class party or parties, which ever is convenient to them. Their 'left and democratic front' has become so elastic that they can unite with the Muslim League at one time and oppose it at other times, that they can change their support from DMK to AIDMK vice-versa, as it suits them.

This 'left-and democratic front' has reduced itself to nothing but opportunist political alliances with all sorts of ruling class parties, all for electoral gains.

The performance of the state governments led by the CPI-CPM combine have proved themselves to be in no way different either of the earlier Congress governments, or of the state government under the leadership of other bourgeois opposition parties or the regional parties.

They have thoroughly failed to effect any basic changes either in land relations or in industrial relations. They are following the same economic and taxation measures as of the other ruling class parties.

Even in Bengal, the present Agrarian Bill, which confers the right to a share in the produce, about which they are trumpeting so much, is a bill passed by the earlier Congress government and nothing more. It is not a bill giving land to the tiller. Even in implementing they are collaborating with the Jotedars, if they are prepared to support them. They are using the government machinery to confer even these limited rights only to those peasants who follow them.

Whenever they are in power, their slogans are in no way different from the slogans of Indira Gandhi. No strikes, no civil strife, more production, peace on the agricultural and industrial fronts, appeal to foreign monopolies to invest more in their states are in no way different from Indira Gandhi's appeals at the centre.

In the face of this performance in the states under their rule, all their pretensions of opposition to Indira Gandhi's economic policies or authoritarianism is being exposed as nothing but bogus.

Their whole political practice has proved itself to be nothing but economism and parliamentary path—exposing their revisionism and counter-revolutionary role in all its nakedness.

The CPI-CPM combine trumpet their electoral gains as a victory for their political struggle. Practice has proved that the Indian ruling classes and their parties are very happy with the performance of the CPI-CPM since it is binding the people of these states to reformism and not revolutionary struggle. CPI-CPM will be allowed to be in power in these states as long as it suits the ruling classes.

At present, that both the CPM and India Congress are in the best of terms, is no more a secrecy. Indira Gandhi wants the help of the CPM in suppressing the just struggle of the people of Assam and the whole North-East states. The CPM wants the help of the Indira Congress government and its army to suppress the tribals in Tripura and other North-East states. Both are at one in supporting the hegemonic policies of the Soviet Union both in India and abroad.

This growing friendship between Indira Congress and the CPM is reflected in the friendly relations between the Central government and the West Bengal state government.

Commenting on the recent Central government's financial help to the West Bengal, Inder Malhotra, in Times of India (May 5) writes :

“Now at last, the Centre has agreed to fork out another Rs. 90 crores—the state has no money—and hopefully the second Hoogly bridge will become a reality one of these days. This, one might add, is the only cheerful news to come out of Calcutta and it has wider implications than might appear at first sight. New Delhi's willingness to finance the completion of the second bridge is a measure of the improvement in the relations between the Centre and the Marxist ruled state...”

“At government to government level, there is reasonable cordiality between the two sides. In fact, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee's cosy chats with Mr. Jyoti Basu almost one every week, have become a major talking point on Calcutta's cocktail circuit. Even Mr. Ghani Khan Choudary is responsive to the CPM's requests for minor favours to West Bengal by the railways. ...”

Vague promises, Bogus social welfare schemes.

Having no programme to effect any basic changes either in the agricultural or industrial relations, having no will to implement the basic demands of the agricultural labourers, farm servants, poor and middle peasants or the working class in the cities, all the ruling class parties are now resorting to only vague promises about removing poverty in general, improving living conditions of the people in general, establishments of co-operatives, loans to farmers. They are so vague that they can be interpreted in any way and practice has provided that all these programmes are nothing but some variety of social welfare schemes. In practice, these welfare schemes have always benefitted the richer classes and not the poor. They do not even touch the fringe of the basic issues of the people—their land, growing debt, basic wage, food and shelter. In actual practice, they have reduced themselves to do nothing but the efforts of the ruling class parties to create their own dalals among the backward sections of the people.

All these parties speak very loudly about abolishing corruption in the administration. Can they remove it without destroying the present social system of exploitation? A pipe dream! That is why, in spite of their loud cries against it, corruption, blackmarket, and black money have continued to thrive, getting worse and worse.

Having no definite socio-economic and political programme to change the present system of exploitation, the leaders of all these parties are resorting to all sorts of political gimmicks to deceive the people.

Attending religious centres of worship with fanfare well advertised in the papers, performing well-advertised Yagnas, swearing by Puranas and Bhagavad Geeta, all to demonstrate to the innocent people about their 'faith' in 'god'—this has now become the common methods of the leaders of all these parties, with Indira Gandhi in the leading van, just to appeal to the backward and religious sentiments of the people with an eye on the ballot box.

Rama Rao, the Chief Minister of AP, has now beaten them all in these political gimmicks. Now he says that he has renounced this world and he has become a Sanyasi, going about in Kashaya vastram (Saffron robes) and Rudhraksha mala.

But will such political gimmicks save Rama Rao from the wrath of the common people when they understand his failures to fulfill the demands of the people, to fulfill the election promises he made?

Another political gimmick is the Padayatra, imitating Gandhiji, Vinobha Bhave, Jayaprakash Narain etc.

Look at the way how Rajiv Gandhi flew from Delhi to Bombay to participate in a well-advertised Padayatra to walk a few kilometres in the bastees of Bombay. Can such feats bring any succour to the hungry bastees people ?

Look at the way how Chief Minister of Tamilnadu conducted a well advertised fast for a few hours to get more food grains to the people of Tamilnadu from the central government.

Lastly, look at the press-build up for the well-advertised padayatra of Chandra Sekhar, the President of the Janata Party, from Kanayakumari to New Delhi, as if earlier he did not understand the miseries of the rural people, and that he is learning them only now through this padayatra. But notice how he has been avoiding any alternative programme to the ruling Congress party except vague promises.

All these are nothing but political gimmicks of the ruling class parties to win the sympathy of the people with vague promises all with an eye on the ballot box.

Thus one could see the common features of all the ruling class parties, national and regional.

They all belong to the same ruling classes comprador big bourgeois-big landlord classes, subservient to imperialism.

They all speak of 'patriotism' and 'independence', but in actual practice, faithfully serve the interests of imperialism and social imperialism.

They all speak about the removal of poverty, but in actual practice follow similar economic and political policies that serve the interests of the big capitalists and big and landlords.

Separatism, regionalism, communalism and casteism - have become the common weapons of all the ruling class parties-national and regional-to divide, disrupt and destroy the united struggles of the common people to serve their own class interests.

They all speak in the name of 'democracy', but when they come to power, they resort to various repressive measures suppress the just struggles of the people.

These are the common features of all the ruling class parties either in power or in opposition.

Then, what is the difference among them ?

The difference is that while some depend more on one super power, the Soviet Union, the others depend more on the other super power, USA.

Their difference is about the share in the common loot of the common people.

Their difference is while Indira Gandhi depends on the divisions of the opposition parties and their failures to retain her power, the opposition parties depend on the failures of Indira Congress and the growing divisions in the ruling class party, to come back to power.

These divisions and splits in the ruling class parties are bound to be there and they will get intensified in the coming period. It is these divisions among the ruling classes and their parties leading to the present instability for the ruling classes as a whole.

While utilising the divisions among the ruling classes to advance people's struggle we should see the reactionary common features of all these ruling class parties.

This is the basis of our rejection of 'left and democratic front' peddled by the CPI-CPM or the so-called 'anti-authoritarian and 'anti-autocratic' front, which mean nothing but general political united front with sections of the ruling classes. Such fronts are incompatible with the struggle for Agrarian Revolution.

The people are getting disgusted with all the ruling class parties. Their opposition is being shown in defeating these parties in power, and supporting some opposition party, from election to election. This is so because the people have not yet shed their election illusions. This is so because they have not realised the necessity of Agrarian Revolution to change the present system of exploitation and their own direct role in it. This situation also shows the weakness of the Agrarian revolutionary movement which can galvanise the dissatisfaction of the masses towards sustained revolutionary struggle.

So it is the duty of the communist revolutionaries to utilise the contradictions of the ruling class parties on the immediate issues of the people, however weak they are, and step by step advance the people's struggles towards Agrarian Revolution.