

The Crisis in the Sangh Parivar and Tasks of the Left

Monday 5 September 2005, by [CPI \(ML\) Liberation](#) (Date first published: August 2005).

few could have expected the BJP and the Sangh Parivar to be ensnared in such an acute and protracted internal crisis so soon after being ousted from power. For the best part of its post-defeat period, the Parivar has been busy holding introspection sessions and battling ideological confusion and organisational dissidence. The authority of the BJP leadership has been completely eroded. Even a leader of Advani's stature has to survive on a daily dole of approval from the RSS. The contagion of the Sangh's crisis has also spread to the BJP's closest ideological partner, the Shiv Sena, which continues to suffer a succession of desertions and splits.

This deepening internal crisis of the rabidly rightwing and communal camp is indeed wonderful news for every secular democratic Indian. But before we start celebrating the decline and decay of the political progeny of the RSS, it is instructive to take a look at recent history and study the political dynamics that catapulted the BJP into the centre stage of Indian politics.

The late 1970s had witnessed a similar crisis over the issue of the Sangh's intervention in the affairs of the then 'unified' Janata Party into which the Jan Sangh, the predecessor of the BJP, had 'dissolved' itself. Left to choose between the RSS and the Janata Party, the children of the RSS chose to have their own new outfit in the form of the BJP. The new party flirted for a while with what it termed Gandhian socialism, and in November 1984 it suffered a veritable electoral eclipse when it could win only two seats.

The BJP's spectacular resurgence through the 1990s took place against this bleak backdrop of the 1980s. Advani is universally acknowledged as the key architect of this resurgence, but Advani himself has never shied away from acknowledging the role that the Congress played to facilitate this biggest political turnaround of the twentieth century. And Advani is absolutely right on this score.

Ever since the 1971 Bangladesh war, Indira Gandhi had secured her own space as a 'goddess' in the political imagination of the RSS. The rise of Khalistani extremism in Punjab, which again was largely a creation of the Congress, further accentuated the pro-Hindu tilt of the Congress. When the BJP and its communal cousins launched the 'Ram Janambhoomi' campaign, the Congress under Rajiv Gandhi thought it could outsmart the BJP by 'unlocking' the Babri Masjid.

The subsequent 'course correction' attempted by the Congress by overriding the court verdict in the Shah Bano case only proved counter-productive and provided more fodder for the BJP. The initiation of the neo-liberal economic policies under Narasimha Rao did not help either and by 1998 the BJP inexorably reached the pinnacle of power.

The Congress is once again playing a similar role. Thanks to its collaboration with the CPI(M)-led opportunist Left, it believes it can take the Left and the working people for granted. All its attempts are therefore aimed at appropriating the BJP's agenda and space. Look at the alacrity with which the Congress is rushing ahead with the economic policies of liberalisation and privatisation and with the

foreign policy of 'strategic partnership (read collusion and slavery)' with the US. Look how UPA spokespersons describe the terrorist incident at Ayodhya as an attack on the 'Ram Janambhoomi Mandir complex' and the Congress treats the incident as an assault on India's 'national pride'. This sense of 'national pride' however melts characteristically into gratitude to the British colonial legacy of 'good governance'. This is how the Congress has always hoped to blunt the political edge of the BJP and ended up sharpening it.

When the livelihood of the people is being systematically attacked and the history of the country is being painted with comprador colours, the Left should hold high the banner of people's interests and national dignity. It is only through a powerful intervention of the Left and advancement of the people's agenda for democracy and social transformation that the opportunities arising from the BJP's decline can be utilized in the interests of democracy and the people. This task is however beyond the purview of the CPI(M)-led opportunist Left which operates within the framework of Common Minimum Programme (as permitted by the ruling classes and their government) and 'coordination' with the government. Revolutionary communists must show the way with a powerful mobilization of the toiling masses and the democratic intelligentsia.

P.S.

Editorial of the August 2005 issue of "Liberation", central organ of the CPI (ML) Liberation.