

Social Movement Decomposed into State: Understanding the West Bengal Experience

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Abstract

Indian politics has been passing through a transitory phase and social movements have become the major fulcrum of such changes. West Bengal has seen two massive transfers of power in post independence period – in 1977 the Left parties came to power and in 2011 the Left parties were ousted by Trinamul Congress. On a comparative note the paper argues that after coming to power, the Left Front for over three decades and the Trinamul Congress in its one and half a year regime have failed to translate their revolutionary zeal in the state structure in a sustained manner and concludes that the character of a social movement changes after its decomposition into state power and the story of social movements remains a story of political illusion.

Keywords: - social movement; state; West Bengal; Left Front; Trinamul Congress

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“...There is an eerie sense of panic in the air, a silent Fear and Uncertainty that comes with once reliable faiths and truths and solid institutions that are no longer safe to believe in....” (Thompson, 2003)

1. Introduction

West Bengal has been in the whirlwind of changes for the last couple of years and as such attracted a wide scholarly attention relating to the end of an entrenched Left regime¹ and the alternate regime, at times whimsical, building by the Trinamul Congress. The present paper approaches this ‘field’ from a different route – through the theoretical paradigm of social movements. The paper highlights the ways in which the Left and the Trinamul Congress utilized the mass sentiments of the time against the State per se and came to power with thumping electoral verdict and how from the palatial heights of state structure misunderstood or misinterpreted the expectations of the mass sentiments itself and thereby a promising social movement got decomposed into a distant state apparatus. The situation becomes interesting for a social scientist to analyse when the vanguard of these movements, i.e. a particular party in turn

¹ Throughout the paper ‘Left’ and ‘Left regime’ is used indicating the coming together of the Left Front coalition in post 1977 years but the phrases also carry the way CPI(M) led social movements like agitation against one paisa tram fare hike in the years before 1977.

becomes the ruling party through a change in electoral verdict. Does it stick to its own goal and promises? Does it welcome movements against? Or does the state with cobweb of power restrict its own brand of emancipatory potential? In the background of these queries, the present paper tries to capture the experience of West Bengal that has literally saw 'history repeating itself'. The first section deals with variations within social movement vis-à-vis the state, sections II and III mention about the journey of the Left and the Trinamul Congress from street politics to management of state politics respectively and a concluding section highlighting the similarities in the experiences of distantiation between declared promises and achieved targets and how the 'pathway' from social movement to state remains the same even with changes in the character and composition of the 'travelers'.

Discussion on social movements- both in its 'old' and 'new' avatar – centers round a constant tug-of-war with the state per se. Social movements spring mostly from civil society space and call for transformation of the distributive policies of the state and constantly criticises the state not to live up to the expected standards of their 'just' demands and gradually a situation erupts when social movements become political in its objective to transform not the policies of the government but the government itself that functions in the name of the state and turns into a socio-political movement. Simply put, a movement that strikes chord with every nook and corner of society through its agendum can be seen as a social movement in its truest sense. These movements seem to be repository of supreme wisdom identifying the fault lines of the state and presenting a roadmap for a well equipped state. However sanitized, these movements appear as the argumentative face of the society, the direction of grievance is not the state structure per se but the political party in power. In recent past 'new' social movements, i.e. single-issue based

movements with procedural change as its focus seem to be superimposed over 'old' social movements, i.e. 'multiple-issue based movements with structural change as its focus. In its both variants, social movements negotiate with the state with a new vision and hope for betterment mainly in democratic/developmental milieu.

The position, place and role of social movements, in the ultimate analysis, depend upon the nature of the state, the level of social protest and the sensitivity and consciousness of the people in general. Of all these factors, the state factor is very important. The thinking and philosophy in state circles, particularly the coercive apparatus is that the constitutional norms and legal niceties are meant only for the law abiding citizens rather than law violating forces. In fact the repressive laws are passed only on those assumptions. The state carries a unifying propaganda against the social movement whose activists are powerless and helpless in the face of massive state apparatus. The people- particularly the oppressed- take the initiative and strive and struggle to reorder and restructure the society. The state, given the monopoly over force and power, reacts with repression and terror². (Balagopal, 1998)

Social movements have repeatedly acted as a force for social and political change: the agrarian movement and labour movement altered the course of Western development, and the American civil rights movement reshaped basic aspects of social relations in the span of a single decade. Old social movements arose to represent the particular interests of a clearly defined social aggregate and the movement depended on an organizational network that integrated members of

² In this paper repressive power of the state in the context of West Bengal indicates how the state structure has been used to negate the dreams, aspirations and demands of the society that was inspired by the political parties' vanguarding the movement.

the class collective. Social movements were a vehicle for groups that lacked access to political power through other political channels. New social movements signify a shift from group-based political cleavages to value-and issue-based cleavages that identify only communities of like-minded people.

The New Social Movement concept probably originated among West German social scientists because these movements marked a dramatic new development for West German society that captured the attention of political observers and because the German movements accentuated the traits identified with new social movement concept. The new movements and organizations usually begin by addressing people's immediate problems of survival and development on the local level. This is in contrast to previously dominating leftist ideas of first trying to get hold of political power, which could then be used to redistribute essential means of production such as land (Tronquist, 1998). The challenge that new movements pose to the political order springs from within. It is not a revolutionary attack against the system but a call for democracies to change and adapt. The challenge comes from individuals and new social groups demanding that democracies open the political process to a more diverse and citizen-interest lobbies. It is claimed that new social movements challenge the contemporary political order on several fronts. (Dalton, 1990)

New politics parties serve as a political vehicle for those movement supporters whose grievances have been ignored by the larger established parties. New politics parties give assurance to their voters that they are doing something on a parliamentary level about the causes of their discontent. By making themselves the spokesmen of the discontented, New Politics parties, however, additionally promote the process of change of party loyalties and prepare the way for increasing volatility and for a de-alignment within the party system. New movements and

movement parties seem to undergo a process of partial detachment owing to the differentiation within the movements and the need for movement parties to achieve greater coherence. Movement-related parties provide the link between the movement and the established political system. Their policies are (not necessarily truly representative) manifestations of the latent and often rather vague general goals of the movement. Parties engaged within social movement are committed to changing societies. However while socialist parties seek system change through reform policies addressing the traditional conflict between capital and labour, the New Politics parties ask for a fundamental rethinking of the economic growth theory (Muller-Rommel, 1990).

The 'new social movements' in India arose as single-issue or 'one-point programme' movements, have been increasingly expanding, overlapping, engaging in mutual dialogue and moving towards more encompassing ideologies and campaigns moving to become a critique of the development path of the state as such and call for 'alternative' or people's development. It seems clear that 'these' popular movements have had a central role in recent historical events (Omvedt, 1998).

West Bengal has the distinction of having longest ruling democratically elected Communist government in world history. The task facing the Left Front government on assuming office in 1977 was fraught with difficulties, despite its massive majority in the Legislative Assembly. The problems posed by the transition to socialism in the conditions of West Bengal were hardly amenable to easy solutions. The victory of 1977 was a result of a long and protracted period of peasant struggles and mobilizations based on the unity of classes, castes and communities

constituting the toiling rural poor base in West Bengal. It is necessary to note some differences between the struggles of the post 1967 era and earlier ones. The most important difference was in its leadership. While Tebhaga was very largely spontaneous and as such ill-prepared for the repressions facing it, the post-1967 struggles were much better organized and led with determination. The communist leadership, especially of the CPI-M, was relatively clear in its perspective. This is reflected in the speeches of H. Konar, the leader of CPI-M led Kisan Sabha as also the United Front and Left Front minister. The transition from issue-based struggles to capture of power seems to be fairly well delineated in his writings and speeches (Bandopadhyay, 1998).

The United Fronts of the late 1960s, under pressure from the Maoist left, had attempted rapid radical change only to be brutally repressed in its active phase. Initially radical activity helped the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to gain a larger base, but the party's inability to withstand dictatorial government arrested it. Only the return of democracy after the Emergency enabled the CPM to show that its popular following had been enhanced during the years of semi-fascist terror. Surprisingly even the Communists never expected to win all but sixty-three of the 293 assembly seats when they ran for election in 1977. Their unexpected victory left them without an articulated strategy for directing their new-found power. Their ad hoc reactions to problems indicated where their interests lay and the groups they were most oriented to promoting. It was these policies which insured their popularity and consolidated their base in the state (Mallick, 2003).

The vision of the Left Front regarding political empowerment of the poor rural folk leading to their economic wellbeing through participatory democratic practices at the grass roots has pushed the opposition forces to such a political margin where they have been struggling to prove

their viability and relevance in West Bengal politics. The trend continued smoothly and unabated till the 15th Lok Sabha election of 2009 and more particularly in the state assembly polls of 2011. In these elections the Left Front in general and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in particular have witnessed the most dramatic setback in their electoral fortune.

In West Bengal Left domination seems to have greatly contributed to dispirit civil society initiatives in the state. Stepped in the notion of the totality and charged with the dream capturing state power for revolutionary transformation, the communists have never been very differential to micro efforts and incremental changes. In fact, they have often viewed local-level constructive works as reformist endeavour impeding revolutionary change. The CPI-M led Left Front which continuously ruled the state for about three decades has started with party-mediated mobilization for implementing its agenda. A relatively efficient blend of administrative activism from above and regulated people's initiatives from below earned the government considerable success in its early days in areas like land reform and institutionalization of the panchayati raj system. This initial success, however, has not matured in sustained grassroots activism. While the party and its mass organizations mobilized large number of rural people, all-pervasive party mediation also alienated a very significant section of them. With the phase of land reforms over and its dividends exhausted, the government went in dire straits to explore other ways of economic growth. The varied, and sometimes conflicting, demands of economic growth and political hegemony seem to be pushing the party to disparate directions (Chakroborty, 2007).

A critical scholarly effort concludes as early as in 1993 that the Left Front was a dismal failure should no longer be a matter of debate. What is more significant is the nature of its failure. This failure took three forms: (a) transformational and development reforms that failed to achieve their objectives, (b) non-policies which merely continued the status quo or followed Congress

precedents, (c) regressive policies which were more elitist than the Congress policies. The first category of failures falls under the theme of agrarian reform, namely Operation Barga, land redistribution, and rural input credits. Operation Barga was largely a repeat of an earlier recording operation in the sixties under the Congress regime, and in any case proved ineffective in preventing evictions or ensuring legally specified crop shares. Under the land reform programme land was distributed but at a rate not sufficiently different from previous regimes and no better than what was taking place elsewhere in the country. Even what was distributed could not be supported by provision of rural credit and inputs, leaving the beneficiaries vulnerable to loss of newly acquired assets. Under the category of non-policies, were policies that a Communist government might have been expected to promote in order to advance the class struggle, namely mobilization and legislation in favor Scheduled Castes and Tribes, add agricultural and industrial labour. In the case of Scheduled Castes and Tribes the Left Front was content merely to implement largely centrally initiated and funded programmes, though much of this remained only on paper. Most surprising of all were the regressive Left Front policies, namely demanding lower agricultural taxation and going along with the central CPM policy of higher food prices. Agricultural taxation was initially sponsored as a progressive form of taxation but was watered down in Select Committee till it was virtually non-existent. Likewise the state CPM despite initial misgivings went along with the policy of higher food prices which the central party was demanding as a means of enlisting the support of the rural rich, at the expense of the poor. The original CPM position as formulated in the resolution of the Central Committee on Tasks on the Kisan Front of 1967 and on Certain Agrarian Issues in 1973 is as far different from the CPM policies in the latter half of Left Front government (Mallick, 2003).

Analysts mention that the over-reliance of mass organisations on the party and the conviction of the latter that economic upliftment will drive away all such evils have resulted in neglecting the problems of such an important support base of the Left Front. The womenfolk in West Bengal, like their counterparts elsewhere, tolerated the neglect, and remained pro-establishment, that is, pro left for a long period of time. The LF has also lost a significant amount of its support base in the production sector of the rural area, comprising mainly the skilled and semi-skilled workers. The shifting political allegiance of the two important pillars of rural economy, the farmers and producers, probably reflects the LF's failure in providing the much required breakthrough, technological as well as institutional, for its further development (Basu, 2009). The impetus for societal and structural reform which the victory of the Left Front in 1977 seemed to herald, ceased after a brief flurry. The lack of reform only served to disillusion the rising expectations the Communists helped to foster when they were in opposition. (Mallick, 2003, p. 40)

The Trinamul Congress evolved out of a break up in the West Bengal unit of the Congress. The TMC came into its formal existence on January 1, 1998. A significant part of the TMC's prehistory in the Congress must be tracked down to Mamata's own rise to political prominence. TMC's rise in West Bengal has exposed the lacunae of a Left increasingly bereft of its radical protestations, and of a rudderless Congress that failed to embody the anti-Left sentiments of a substantial electorate. The 2009 national polls and 2011 assembly polls has shown a remarkable shift in the support base of the LF in West Bengal. Particularly, the rural electorate has revealed their skepticism to the ruling alliance.

Mamata Banerjee's triumph can be attributed to her skill in tapping into (i) the reservoir of accumulated mass anger against the outrages committed by the CPI(M)'s arrogant leaders, cadres and panchayat heads in the vast countryside; (ii) the desperate need of the urban middle class to get out from the CPI(M)'s stranglehold on civil society, which determined every stage of their professional careers from appointments to promotions, and commandeered every step in their quotidian existence from buying a house to selling it; and (iii) in the absence of a better alternative, the ultimate choice for both these unhappy sections of the electorate to vote for the only available option – the Trinamul. In 1977, the West Bengal electorate was offered an alternative political package of socio-economic reforms and restoration of democratic rights that was presented by the CPI (M)-led Left Front (as opposed to the Emergency-tainted Congress). But in contrast to the political ethos of the Left programme in those days – however deficient – today's Trinamul leadership lacks any ideological vision of change either in politics, economics or culture. Unlike the ideationally bound homogeneous multiparty Left Front of 1977, the Trinamul is a party based solely on the charisma of a single personality who has usurped some of the Leftist slogans, and drawn a heterogeneous medley of supporters ranging from ex-Congressmen, disgruntled Left intellectuals and opportunist Maoist cadres to retired senior police officials and Right wing representatives of big industrial interests. In fact, her election campaign represented an interesting unique selling proposition (USP) in the West Bengal electoral scene, marked by a deft mix of a populist image of a pro-poor leader (dressed in a crumpled sari and living in a humble house in a crowded middle-class locality) and simultaneously of a media-savvy politician adept in the modern technological gimmicks of press-button solutions and instant recipes – like her slogans assuring ten lakh jobs (aimed at the skilled unemployed), and the reported promise to change Kolkata into London (to meet the tastes of the

upwardly mobile upper middle class youth). Despite all her claims of loyalty to *Ma-maati-manush* (mother, the indigenous soil and their people), the colonial model of London still prevails over the mindset of the chief minister of West Bengal. That provides the key to the future contours of the state's economy under her rule. The two electoral trends – the negative vote of a rejection of the Left Front, and the positive vote for the promise of a better governance under the Trinamul – coexist in an ephemeral zone where the popular mood hovers between hope and fear about the new government. 'Poribarton' or *Protyaborton*? These were the two terms that were bandied about between the Trinamul and the CPI(M) during the election campaign – the former promising to bring about a “change” from the three-decade old failed Left Front monopoly of power, and the latter urging the voters to “return” it to power to enable it to fulfill its long-forgotten promises that were made in 1977. Now that the Trinamul has won on the platform of *poribarton*(change), the new government will have to live up to the aspirations for change inspired by Mamata Banerjee. The popular expectations can be summed up in the following order of priorities: (i) immediate restoration of the much-needed peace in the countryside – which had been ravaged by years of violent intimidation by power-hungry local CPI(M) leaders and cadres; (ii) end to the prevailing corruption in the operations of the public distribution system, the panchayati administration, and the centrally-sponsored schemes like the rural employment programmes; and (iii) a reconstruction of West Bengal's economy and society on the basis of provision of jobs, guarantee of social justice, and delivery of civic services. In fact, rumblings of discontent against the Left Front had started reverberating within a few years of its assuming office, though less publicised and confined to a few areas of concern. One such issue was human rights³ (Banerjee, 2012) . Soon after forming Trinamul Congress, in an

³ Incidents like Marrichjhappi, Ananada Margis, Rizawanur Rahman etc.

interview to Suman Chatterjee, a noted journalist from *Anandabazar Patrika*, Mamata explained what she understood by sacrifice. “Sacrifice means not automatically grabbing whatever comes your way...every public thinks as the correct decision” because “instead of getting trapped by the seduction of power the public wants us to work for them. They especially want us to work from the soils of Bengal. I have talked to many people; from housewives to office clerks, teachers, and freedom fighters... everybody tells this to me.” (Bhattacharyay, 2004).

After the lapse of a year and a half such expectations have not been fulfilled and the main causes of this annoyance against not the government but ‘Mamata Banerjee are: (i) her administration’s moves to serve the interests of her party’s local bosses in the procurement of paddy from farmers this year, (ii) persecution and atrocities by the security forces in the Jangalmahal area – which exposes how she has reneged on her earlier promise to stop such acts, (iii) widespread violence in college campuses, marked by assaults on teachers by the Trinamool’s student activists, (iv) the issue of an ordinance that curtails the autonomy of universities and vests the bureaucrats with power over them, and (v) the appointment of a committee of

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social activists who backed her to the hilt during the last elections now shamefacedly admit that they should not have gone the whole hog, but still feel that she should be given some more time. But the “more time” that they want to allow her may be used to continue the same old authoritarian policies and partisan practices that were followed by her predecessor, the CPI(M), during the closing decades of the Left Front government. It will only go towards reinforcing the more violent forms of institutionalisation of her party’s control over administration and society in West Bengal (Banerjee, 2012).

Witnessing the early tendencies, a commentator on West Bengal politics has noted in 2004 that Trinamul Congress is a party that is focused on elections, more specifically, on unseating the Left Front in West Bengal for which it is not chary of using its varied alliances even at the cost of its long-term credibility. Mamata, however, could not capitalise on them, she could not give her party a durable and depersonalized setup to enable it to play a critical role in connecting the state and the civil societal institutions with the everyday aspirations of the economically, socially and culturally marginal population. Whenever she stood by the urban toilers, the illegal slum dwellers, the displaced population or even the rural poor, her voice – in absence of a systematic attempt to build up such linkages – appeared as sporadic, unconvincing and, ultimately, driven by the urge to buy quick attention. The paradox remains: the tag of ‘trinamul’ in the party’s nomenclature continues to underscore the enduring absence of a robust grass roots politics. The TMC, therefore, failed to translate its electoral promises into a social presence, which could have been its only guarantee against a premature demise (Bhattacharyay, 2004).

Election in West Bengal is neither a one shot affair nor grossly a spectacle of community mobilisation by the political parties the way religious, ethnic or linguistic groups is allegedly forged into 'vote-banks' in some other parts of the country. Land reforms has largely broken the 'moral economy' of the peasant community, and a robust system of participatory democracy in the rural areas made everyday politics of conflict and dispute, association and negotiation, defiance and discordance highly charged elements of West Bengal's political culture. So to be effective over a period of time a leadership must engage with the life processes of the people on an everyday basis, producing a politics that keeps alive the promises of protecting the underprivileged from all kinds of adversaries, social, economic bureaucratic or political, and should work this out through an organisational grid that has the requisite skill and depth to press itself adequately at the local level. No political formation fits this description better than the CPI(M). One of the greatest paradoxes of the politics of the TMC is that the party always took pain to prove that it is not lured by the positions of authority and can readily 'sacrifice' such positions to protect the interests of West Bengal, or the poor, or the victims of the CPI(M)'s 'atrocities', yet it never dithered in its attempt to invoke the strong (and undemocratic) arm of the central authority at the slightest pretext (Bhattacharyay, 2004).

Various rural development programmes and their effective implementation had given the LF a political mileage sufficient enough to rule West Bengal for such a long period of time. The successful implementation of the land reform programme allowed the left to have a stronghold on the rural segment of the society. To uphold and consolidate these gains, further innovation in the field of agriculture was perhaps required, which could guarantee the generation of agricultural surplus so vital for the development of rural society. Instead, the industrialization

drive of the LF, probably, has acted as an impediment against this. The dwindling rural economy in the face of such a process of growing de-peasantisation, thus, reached a point of stagnation. Hence, “Maa, Mati, Manus” (mother, land and the people), the catchy slogan of the AITC floated during the campaign for the 15th Lok Sabha and following assembly election in West Bengal, perhaps became too contextual and matched the sentiments of the rural electorates. The victory of the AITC in this sense reminds the people of West Bengal about those days in 1977 when the LF had assumed power in a similar way, depending on widespread support of the rural populace. The electorate has shifted the mantle from the LF to the AITC. They have ultimately found an alternative to the LF in the form of AITC. With this, a change in the political leadership in West Bengal is apparent. Such transformation notwithstanding, the driving impulses of the electoral behaviour have probably remained largely unchanged. The issue of land and other aspects of rural agricultural population have acted as prime movers behind the electoral choices of the people as usual. This is very much in tune with the heritage of peasant movement in West Bengal. Such a mandate, hence, is not a fundamental change in the ethos and direction of politics in West Bengal (Banerjee, 2011).

Why is it that the new popular and democratic development efforts within civil society have not generated more widespread and dynamic politics of democratization? It is the central question this paper raises in the context of West Bengal. An authority on civil society in India addresses this question in the following terms: - “Compared to the grand revolutionary imaginaries of an earlier era, the demands of civil society campaigns in India today are practically tame, limited as they are by the boundaries of what is politically permissible and feasible. They do not demand ruptures in the system, all that they urge is that social issues be regarded as of some import and

something be done about them. Perhaps campaigns for the efficient delivery of social goods belong to a post-ideological era: an era where the State is no longer seen as the object of political contestation, but as a provider of social goods. And the citizen is seen as the consumer of agendas formed elsewhere, not as the maker of his or her own history. ... Human beings are political animals, but the kind of politics we do depends on the political context that offers some choices and not others. So when Anna Hazare raises the banner of corruption people rush to acclaim him simply because he has taken on the state. That democracy is more than the eradication of corruption is forgotten, because few civil society organizations have put forth “big ideas” before them. And that is the irony of civil society in India today.” (Chandoke, 2012)

In West Bengal both the Left Front led by CPI (M) and Trinamul Congress has emoted the public opinion in favour of immediate state power seizing. However they have not been able to put forth long term policy oriented vision in a sustained manner. A commentator on Left regime in West Bengal analysed that – “The three decades before 1977 had marked its rise on the political landscape of West Bengal as a ‘Party of Struggles’. In the following three decades, abiding scrupulously by the Leninist principle ‘Party Above All’ and this was also the phase of its consolidation as a ‘Party of Establishment’.” (Gupta, 2010). The Trinamul Congress seen as a ‘New Politics’ party has been a ‘Party of Struggle’ and probably in the way of becoming a ‘Party of Establishment’.

The political theory and rhetoric of new social movements often proclaim their anti-establishment views with unbridled enthusiasm. The Left parties in the pre 1977 period acted like socialist parties demanding systemic change of society through various reform policies which it reflected after coming to power through land reform measures. On the other side even the Trinamul Congress got new lease of life with its Singur movement in late 2006 questioning

the growth paradigm of the state government after it went ahead with single point agenda of ousting the Left Front from power since its inception in 1998. The political opponents of new social movements may be even more vocal in stressing the challenge these groups pose to Western industrial democracies. Michel Crozier and his colleagues (1975) maintain that the social forces represented by new social movements do not represent a challenge to democracies but a *Crisis of Democracy* (Dalton, 1990). Remembering Emmanuel Levinas' favourite phrase 'difficult freedom', scholars argue that those who practice and proselytize human rights (read right based movements) engage in the most difficult of all difficult freedoms since, above all, they owe an accountability to the victims of violation of rights, who should never experience the possibility that human rights advocacy or action may in turn re-victimize them. The leitmotif of human rights movements in India, and elsewhere, is to resurrect the sovereignty of victims against that of the state (Baxi, 1998).

Jump cutting to West Bengal experience suggest that crucial element of democracy – trust- is hard to repose upon any two alternatives – the Left and the Trinamul- after they are seen within the state – even if their movement potential spread across various frontal organization remain so catchy. Movements are transient phenomenon by their very nature; all movements ebb and flow. It is more important to determine whether, and how much of, the impact of a movement on the pre-existing sociopolitical system persists even after it passes its apex. During periods of high activity a movement is typically able to reach some of its goals before subsiding into a latent, submerged state. The achievements of previous cycles of high movement activity may serve as a starting base for the ensuing one. Again it is hard to deny that both the Left and TMC led opposition inspired social movements in West Bengal against the state of the day were successfully completed. However instead of a marking a 'new age' the experience shows it as yet

‘another cycle’ of low ebb in a movement. In the coming years it will be of sheer interest to see whether history repeats itself or not - whether the Left and Trinamul Congress regains their movement potential to gain popular support – accepting that power alternates between these two political groups in West Bengal.

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