

No contradiction in Basu's remarks on socialism: Karat

Rubbishing criticism against veteran Marxist leader Jyoti Basu's remark that socialism was impossible in the Indian context, CPI-M general secretary Prakash Karat said Monday that the comments were well within the party's stand on economic policies.

Karat's statement came even as Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) Chief Minister in Kerala V.S. Achuthanandan as well as his allies aired criticism of Basu and said that socialist ideology was very important for the Left parties.

While Karat took strong exception to the disapproval expressed by a Left Front partner, Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), he did not refer to Achuthanandan's statement in Kerala.

The Kerala chief minister, known for his Stalinist image, told party workers in Aluva, in Ernakulam district: 'Those who toe and support the ideology of capitalism will have to surely repent in the near future. It is best to take a look at the fate of all those who backstabbed the party.'

Karat said Basu's remarks on the nature of capitalist development in West Bengal and the role of the Left government were reported in a 'confused and contradictory' manner.

'Jyoti Basu has explained the economic development in West Bengal and the role of the Left Front government on the basis of the perspective of the CPI-M. Only those ignorant of the programme of the CPI-M can talk of the party saying 'goodbye to socialism and welcome to capitalism', 'Karat said in a statement issued here.

Basu on Saturday stated that though socialism was the party's goal, it was not possible and capitalism was necessary for industrialisation of West Bengal.

Karat said the CPI-M was always aware that the party governments cannot build socialism on its own but should undertake some 'alternative policies within the capitalist system'. He said land reforms, followed by the CPI-M-led governments in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, were among such steps.

'It is amusing to see some leaders of the BJP and the Congress portray this approach of the CPI-M in simplistic terms of socialism versus capitalism. For them socialism only denotes a slogan to be used as a smokescreen for promoting the interests of big capitalists and foreign finance capital,' Karat said.

Referring to the RSP's strong reactions against Basu's statement Karat said RSP was a party that had declared socialism as its 'immediate goal' unlike the CPI-M.

'But one may ask why the RSP has been, in all these years of being in Left-led state governments, working to implement some reforms and welfare measures within the capitalist system?,' the CPI-M general secretary asked sarcastically.

Some of the RSP leaders had viewed Basu's remarks as an indication of his leaning towards 'capitalistic system'.

Karat said the Left government in the three states were testimony to the communists' 'democratic alternative' to ensure a degree of social justice within the framework of an 'all India capitalist model of development.'

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