

Counter-revolution: An overview

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(The two comments given below were first published in February and May 2015 respectively. By then, the country had witnessed both the faces of counter-revolution – ‘Kejriwal-kranti’ and ‘Modi-kranti’. The people of the country could get the ‘good fortune’ of this witnessing due to the courtesy of the progressive and secular intellectuals. A lot of water has flowed in the Ganga and the Yamuna since then. (However, in corporate India, water in the rivers of the country rots more than flows; and rivers are used more for winning elections than washing away sins.)

In the just concluded Delhi Assembly elections (2025), the big face of counter-revolution has defeated the small face of counter-revolution, obviously, in a mutual fight. The progressive and secular intellectuals, particularly those who have been guilty of alternative politics, are upset with this sudden setback and are busy analyzing the same. They are convincing themselves more than the people that they were right, they are right, and they will remain right. For them the struggle to save secularism and democracy in the country's politics goes on like this, and will continue in the similar manner in the future as well. I would also try to present my point of view on this entire political phenomenon after a few days. Till then, these two comments are released again for the new readers.)

Fellow-Travelers of counter-revolution

“What is happening in the entire world at present is perhaps the biggest counter-revolution in world history. It is organized, global and is going to change every aspect of society and life. It is even going to affect nature and the animal kingdom. If the consciousness of human society and civilization remains even after the twenty-first century, then this kind of mention will be made about today's time in history books. The date of the Dunkel Treaty can be considered as the date of the beginning of this counter-revolution.

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“Counter-revolution does not mean decline or decay. Decline or decay occurs where maturity has arrived or the peak has been reached. Soviet Russia collapsed; or we can say that the decay of modern civilization started a long time ago. Unlike this, the form of counter-revolution is similar to revolution, only its purpose is just the opposite. It is also organized and is equipped with an ideology and works to uproot many values and foundations. Its ideology is bound to be such that its movement is a campaign run by well organized small groups.” (‘Vikalpheen Nahin Hai Duniya’ (The world is not without options), Kishan Patnaik, Rajkamal Prakashan, Delhi, p. 172)

Kishan Patnaik wrote this in February 1994. Since then, the path of counter-revolution has been gradually paved in the world and India. The ideology of counter-revolution has reached a very strong position due to the centrality of Narendra Modi and Arvind Kejriwal in the Indian politics in the last three-four years. It is worth mentioning that both have achieved this status by adopting almost similar propaganda style, in which immense power of media and money has been put in. Many Marxists, Socialists, advocates of social justice, Gandhians and intellectuals have given political legitimacy to this counter-revolution by standing

with Arvind Kejriwal; or by supporting him in the Delhi Assembly elections even without being asked. Whether the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) or the BJP forms the government in Delhi, it is not going to make any difference to the fact that there is no genuine opposition left to ongoing counter-revolution in the mainstream politics of India.

The supporters of Kejriwal's politics have been consoling themselves and assuring others that Kejriwal will soon be brought to their side. However, the opposite has happened. Kejriwal has brought everyone to his side. I have heard that Kiran Bedi's 'Chhota Gandhi' is the Lenin of the comrades! Prakash Karat has said that those who oppose Kejriwal do not understand Marx. The counter-revolution is so rampant that even Marx has been dragged in its support. This phenomenon reflects the fatigue and confusion of India's progressive politics, to say the least.

The statement between the two paragraphs of Kishanji given above is as follows: "Revolution had been a major theme of discussion throughout the twentieth century. A specific meaning of revolution had reached the common people; revolution meant radical change through an organized movement, which would take society forward and improve the life of the ordinary man; the last man would not be ignored. The central importance of the ordinary man and the rights of the last man dominated the politics and economics of the twentieth century as never before."

While writing this, Kishanji would not have even suspected that the gang of NGO chiefs would turn the millionaires into *aam adami* (common man); would take away the votes of the poor to further increase their prosperity; and the leaders and intellectuals claiming to be the champions of socialist revolution would come out in support of it! In the same article Kishanji has stated that "In the 1980s, a chapter of counter-revolution started under the cover of Hindutva to change the political culture of the country. It is in sync with the wave of counter-revolution that is flowing at the global level at this time; ..." We know that the Babri Masjid was demolished in 1992 as part of the communal counter-revolution that was taking place in the channels of the capitalist counter-revolution.

Kishanji had envisaged the ideology and struggle of alternative politics against the counter-revolution that started with the Dunkel Agreement. He also wrote a detailed manifesto of secularism ('Dharmnirpeksha Ka Ghoshnapatra'). Most of the people who were associated with him are with the counter-revolution today. Obviously, they kept deceiving Kishanji during his lifetime and are engaged in destroying the political venture of his entire life after his death.

In such a situation, there is not much left to say or to listen; however, some points can be noted:

1. The talisman of Modi, to break that Kejriwal was given uncritical support, is actually the talisman of corporate capitalism. Marxists, socialists, social justice activists, Gandhians and intellectuals have made that very talisman long-lasting by supporting Kejriwal.
2. Kejriwal's victory is not the victory of secularism, as has been preached by many from the extreme leftists to the political illiterates of various kinds. Secularism, which was built on the wall of fear of Muslims, has collapsed many times. India's secularism has faced defeat many times even before Modi's victory. The partition of India, Gandhi's assassination, many riots even after the independence, the massacre of Sikh citizens in 1984, the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992, Gujarat riots of 2002 - these are the indelible marks of defeat of secularism in India.

3. (3) The claimants of secularism know all this. Therefore, there is a need to understand their psychology behind supporting Kejriwal. Many of these gentlemen have not been able to digest the crushing defeat at the hands of Modi. They had a firm belief that a person like Modi cannot become the Prime Minister of India. Their faith has been shattered. In order to vent their anger, they want to see anyone defeat Modi.

The second underlying reason for their support to Kejriwal is related to the politics of hatred. It is well known a fact that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) practices politics of hatred. Secularists also have feelings ranging from contempt to hatred for *sanghis*. Kejriwal's victory satisfies this feeling. The third reason is related to government positions and prestige. Secularists have become addicted to enjoying the cream of power in Congress rule. They know that Congress is not going to come to power in Delhi. They feel ashamed in accepting BJP's invitation directly. With Kejriwal in power in Delhi, they will not feel ashamed to join various bodies/committees in Delhi government. However, they make a mistake here that if NGO chiefs have come into politics, then their own siblings would be there to enjoy the cream of power through the governmental bodies/committees. Therefore, there is not going to be an open feast for secularists here as they used to enjoy in Congress rule. Any way, they will drag the support given in the name of defeating Modi to the level of supporting counter-revolution. It remains to be seen what tactics the comrades adopt then?

4. No complaint can be made against the poor people of Delhi who voted for Kejriwal. The media and intellectuals did not let them reach the information about the economic and anti-poor ideological sources of AAP. This working class will soon realize that they have been used against themselves. However, 'idealistic' youth, who have been crazy for Kejriwal, cannot be called that naive. These so-called meritorious/talented youth have played the role of the foot soldiers of the counter-revolution very well.
5. The advocates of Dalit capitalism should see that most of the upper caste leaders, administrators, thinkers, NRIs including the Shudras have joined the capitalist counter-revolution; that there is never a point of equality in the race of capitalism.
6. We have to acknowledge the strength of that invisible agency which prepared and ran this election campaign of Kejriwal. That agency has shown very well how a "people's CM" (*janata ka mukhyamantri*) is made. It is comparable to the agency that has made the "people's chief servant" (*janata ka pradhan sewak*).

A lesson in the end. There has been continuous resistance to the counter-revolution that started with the implementation of New Economic Policies in 1992. Now that all illusions have been dispelled, the struggle of the revolution must intensify towards a decisive victory.

Guilty Men of Alternate Politics

In this era of globalisation-liberalization-privatization, the work of the creation of a comprehensive political philosophy– the political thought which in the context of this phenomena, springs from the ground of the have-nots to create a self-reliant, equitable economy – is stalled. Neo-liberalism has been successful to a large extent in not letting this kind of political thought come to fruition with its complete strength. Whatever little efforts have been made towards a political thought juxtaposed with neo-liberalism by certain active political and intellectual activists are not able to make their presence felt in the political discourse. The natural outcome of this is that in every aspect of Indian life, the neo-liberal grip is increasingly becoming tighter. In these times of TINA - there is no alternative - Kishan Patnayak, the important political thinker and socialist leader of our times, put forth the claim that the world is not without alternatives – *Vikalpheen Nahi Hai Duniya*. It was obvious for the neo-liberal ruling establishment to oppose this significant and relevant endeavour. But his idea of an alternative politics was blocked even by certain socialists, Gandhians and peoples' movement activists having vested interests.

In this challenging situation, the legacy of the freedom movement and the anti-capitalist imperialist struggle after that can be and should be made use of. But the neo-liberal ruling class, which includes a horde of veiled neo-liberals, do not leave any stone unturned in distorting that legacy. This horde mostly includes civil society activists and intellectuals. Whatever remains has been usurped by the battle which has been created about the icons of this legacy.

The unique feature of modern Indian political philosophy is that it was created mostly by active political personalities. The political thought of modern India has its genesis in the juxtaposition of the conscious concerns and worries of the Indian intellect/psyche against colonialism. Literature, arts and scholarship have been inspired by and have many times complemented this political philosophy. It is true that even in the neo-liberal era, good literature has been crafted in the Indian languages. Serious scholarly writing has been done especially in the subjects of humanities and social sciences in English. But in the absence of a comprehensive political philosophy as juxtaposed against neo-liberalism, most litterateurs and scholars offer themselves up to be co-opted in the neo-liberal machinery or get cop-opted by the system. It can be said that if there is no political vision, then even literature and scholarship remain bereft of a vision. It is not without reason that one finds that the so-called movement which has been built in the name of anti-corruption, and the so-called political party which has been created 'out of its ashes', are found to be championed by many big writers and scholars. A group, thriving on foreign funding, schemes to grab the political power by strengthening the neo-liberal and communal nexus, the Indian intellectual class becomes available to fight in its support. They are not able to see what garb is worn by those who call the emperor without clothes.

Under the leadership of Manmohan Singh, there was a 'reticent era' (*chuppa yug*) in favour of neo-liberalism. Manmohan Singh himself worked silently; the intellectuals who supported globalisation also did not make any grandiose claims. Their real work was to silence the agony of the large population reeling under the devastating repercussions of neo-liberalism by telling them that there was a consensus in the country in favour of neo-liberalism; and it is very good because there is no alternative. The scholars who were a part of Manmohan Singh's 'National Knowledge Commission' (NKC) and the civil society activists who were a part of Sonia Gandhi's 'National Advisory Committee' (NAC) worked to make neo-liberalism acceptable even to its victims.

Suddenly, India Against Corruption (AIC), Anti-Corruption Movement, Aam Aadmi Party, along with a large number of civil society activists, intellectuals, NGO dons, spiritual/religious personalities gathered forces to take the Indian political thought in one jerk from the 'reticent era' to the 'babbler era' (*labaar yug*). Corporate houses and NRIs lend their full support to that 'great movement' carried out in the name of eliminating corruption. A lot of speeches were heaved. The devaluation of language and speech reached its nether. The condition ultimately reached a point where the civil society became impatient to lash out here, there and everywhere. Delhi's Jantar-Mantar and Ramleela Maidan became the epicentres for this carnival. Along with mainstream media, social media and small magazines, including literary magazines, did not lag behind. All of this was held under the auspices of the RSS. Obviously, intrinsically, all of them were hoping to profit from and hence were supportive of neo-liberalism. Otherwise, the anti-neo-liberal strength which was formed in the last two decades could not have been broken by NGO dons along with the communal forces.

Before we knew it, Indian political discourse had become such an open market that a loquacious religious wheeler-dealer Baba Ramdev dared to take his 'high thinking' to comrade A. B. Bardhan; so many socialist leaders and thinkers, including Bardhan, registered their presence at Jantar Mantar and Ram Leela Maidan. Having emerged from the womb of market capitalism, 'Aam Aadmi' has charmed the Gandhians and the socialists alike. In this way, it can be said that the worrisome lack of political thought is being compensated by speechifying. This indulgence in prevarication blew imagination to its pinnacle when the images of Gandhi, Lenin and JP were seen at the same time in the players of market capitalism!

Ideas and concepts like Satyagraha, Swaraj and alternative politics were brazenly being depreciated and distorted amidst this din. The term Revolution became akin to the curd-butter of the Braj milk maids, which Krishna used to steal and relish along with his cowherd friends. It is almost as if fact and rationale have been banished from the world of political discourse. It is not surprising that in this celebration of blabbering, thinkers like Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, J.P. Lohia, Ambedkar etc. have been so devalued that it hardly seems possible to establish their genuine worth even in the future. This trend of reducing the thinkers and politicians with a socialist vision for the future to thinkers and politicians who see India's future only in corporate capitalism is continuing unabated.

Team Modi rode the wave created by this irreverent use of language and speech through the mainstream/social media and came out victorious in the general election. The ruling class of India came together to do this so that neo-liberalism, which was facing a crisis, would not only escape clear but also become strengthened and deep rooted.

Satyagraha and Swaraj are the old and established concepts of modern Indian political thought. It can be hoped that these will be established again sooner or later. But the concept of alternative politics is comparatively new and still taking shape. It is also the most needed and significant as it has been conceptualized in juxtaposition to neo-liberalism. Alternative politics is a serious attempt to present a holistic ideological alternative to neo-liberalism. An idea of an alternative to politics rather than alternative politics has also been under discussion. This viewpoint believes that the power should rather remain with the society than with the politics. A sub-stream of this perspective is a complete banishment of politics. Another sub-stream acknowledges the role of politics. While the first sub-stream considers politics to be an evil; the second sub-stream is not averse to politics, but it advocates disciplining politics/political parties through civil society resistance. Here, however, we are not entering into the important debate of alternative politics or an alternative to politics.

Contemplation on 21st century socialism is central to the visualisation of the ideology of alternate politics. Threads of the ideology of the alternative politics are tied up in the burning questions of technology, natural resources, development, environment, inequality, poverty, hunger, displacement, suicides, massacres, weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and chemical weapons, civil/human rights and gender and identity questions. The ideology of alternative politics places firm emphasis on the decentralised egalitarian model of prosperity while rejecting the centralized wealth creation model. In this is found a decisive rejection of the modern industrial capitalist model of development. This is why alternative politics naturally leans towards Gandhism. From Dr. Lohia to Kishan Patnayak, the indispensability of Gandhism has been stressed. Dr. Lohia, who is considered to be a revolutionary commentator of Gandhi, has delineated a well-thought out discourse of putting Gandhian filter to the socialism which is separated from capitalism and communism.

The incident of the destruction of Babri Masjid in 1992, is just as important an inspiration behind the creation of alternate politics as the imposition of neo-liberal policies in 1991. The Masjid was destroyed by initiating a 'movement' by a political party and its top leaders. Constitutional institutions, secular politics, the common legacy of the freedom struggle, the feelings of co-existence and tolerance or the liberal stream of religion could not stop that destruction. Hence, the strengthening of secular democracy is an important dimension of alternate politics.

It is not possible to create the alternative to neo-liberal ideology and the politics based on it in a hurry. Even one step, as suggested by Gandhi, is enough, but that is on the condition that the step be genuinely taken in this direction. If there is unity and agreement in the antagonists of neo-liberalism, then a national movement can be created. In such a case, it would not be possible for mainstream politics to not be affected by it. Then, it would be possible to throw off the yoke of neo-liberal slavery in the near future.

Keeping in mind this brief description of alternate politics, it can be seen how hollow are the claims of those who call Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), an instrument of alternate politics. That is also hilarious, because AAP is a party born straight out of the womb of neo-liberalism. In this party, some leaders are chanting fresh about alternate politics due to the cheap power-struggle within it. This is an extension of the blabbering which has already been going on for a long time now. These 'Pandavas', who have suddenly started calling Kejriwal a 'Kaurava', have already put at stake the inheritance of alternate politics in the game of power. This has been a long drawn process. Some people, who work in peoples' movements and academics with foreign funding, had long since agreed to carry out a hit on alternative politics. The trio of Anna, Ramdev and Kejriwal had only to give them a chance and they finished it off.

It was people like them only who took Kishanji to the Mumbai show of World Social Forum (WSF). Kishanji constantly tried to politicize the anti-globalization NGO activists. Hence he agreed to go there with the aim of finding the possibilities in a large gathering. He used to go to the various programmes organized by NGO activists with the same aim. But instead of understanding and accepting Kishanji's perspective, the NGO activists used his presence to validate their position. This is because these clever ones understand very well that as soon as they accept Kishanji's perspective they would have to face the prospect of actual struggle. The funding would stop. Kishanji fell ill and expired during a similar programme. A number of genuine socialist workers iterated then and still maintain that while the NGO activists ceaselessly tried to murder Kishanji's endeavour of alternate politics but they had a hand in his corporal death too. Sunil Bhai, perhaps the best manifestation in the continuing tradition of Kishanji's alternate political ideology and political culture, was also sacrificed in a similar manner.

The examples of Kishanji and Sunil have been given here because alternate politics and the NGOs, flourishing on foreign funding, can never get together to create a common platform. It is possible, even though it happens rarely, that a person may leave NGO work to join alternate politics, or, what happens more often is that a person may leave alternate politics and join NGO work. Their co-operation cannot sustain. In fact, in trying to balance both, NGO cases usually become dominant.

It is well known a fact that if those who raise the flag of revolt in AAP had won the Lok Sabha election or if they would have been sent to the Rajya Sabha from Delhi or if they would have been given prominent positions in the party then for them AAP would have remained a true party of alternate politics and Kejriwal, who could salvage the Ganges with just a dip, would have remained a messiah of alternate politics.

These were the people who were saying that AAP would be made a socialist party. Keriwal would also be converted into one; and if he refused then because of the control of the socialists in the party, he would be asked to leave. The reverse has happened. If their conscience was clear, then they would have admitted, to the members they had roped into the party with promises of making AAP a socialist party, that their understanding and approximation was wrong. We leave this party and work towards strengthening the socialist movement. It is evident that socialism was a mere excuse for them and the real motive was to lure more and more socialists into the party to strengthen their position. Just to amplify their strength in the court of Kejriwal, they even did not hesitate in black marketing *Lohiagiri* by using living icons of socialism like Captain Abbas Ali and in black marketing *Gandhigiri* by using living icons of Gandhism like Narayan Desai. It is mischievous to give the example of SP-PSP-SSP or Kishan Patnayak by these people in this whole mess.

They use the excuse of Swaraj, already used and thrown by Kejriwal, and alternate politics, which has been utterly destroyed by them only, so that some or the other process keeps going on. Revolution tests its children hard. Sometimes it claims their lives too. It has also been seen that sometimes it devours its own children. But counter-revolution loves its children immensely. It will care for these people along with Kejriwal.

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