

CHINA AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

The second session of the tenth National Peoples Congress, the sovereign legislative and executive representative body of Peoples Republic of China which met between 5th and 14th of this March took very far-reaching decisions of national and international significance. But the popular media seems to ignore the depth and ramifications of the deliberations and decisions of NPC and play up the question of the constitutional sanctity given to private property. It gives the impression that china has taken right about turn on private property. That is wrong. Any one who has closely watched Chinese revolution and post revolutionary development must be aware that chine never abolished the right to private property at any point of time. Actually the national bourgeoisie as opposed to the comprador bourgeoisie was a class which was considered revolutionary in the context of Chinese peoples democratic revolution by Mao Tse Tung and was included in the peoples democratic front which took over power in 1949. Even the land reform of distributing feudal land to the peasantry is a measure of creation of millions of property owners. What the revolution was opposed to was not private property as such but large private holdings of comprador bourgeoisie, war lords, feudal land lords, enemy collaborators etc. Even from the fifties onwards there were peoples and strata's in china who owned fairly big agricultural farms, better houses, work shops, small enterprises, motor cars etc. There are already a number of laws in china protecting the rights of these private property owners including middle peasants. But the constitution as such did not include the right of private property as a fundamental right as is done in the constitutions of USA, France, Germany, India etc. This was because the post revolutionary constitutions of USA in 1776 and France 1789 and post independent constitutions of India gave the impression that sanctity of the private property is the source of all human rights and freedoms- a bourgeois position that no socialist can every agree with. Socialists consider private property as a historic institution which will disappear and should disappear at a proper time with the advance of society towards the socialist goal. But that stage has not arrived either in China or any existing socialist countries today. Even the former Soviet Union was only in the primary stage of socialism. Much more for the present day China. So what the NPC has done is only giving a firmer legal basis to the rights of private property which already exists in China so that with the development of the rule of law and the human rights, to which the NPCs present session has given much attention a firmer legal and constitutional basis would be more logical and effective. Nothing more

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