

Searching For An Enemy

Angry at the Nandigram debacle, emboldened by the American certificate for a fast growing state in India's liberalised economy, the Marxist left has metamorphosed itself completely whose concerns include investors' unlimited rights, too much grassroots democracy for the poor and possibility of foreign direct investment. Surprisingly saffron danger seems to have vanished from the agenda of Marxists and their secular allies. It is no longer the principal enemy. Even in the ensuing Uttar Pradesh assembly poll, no political party, was serious enough to raise the issue of communal threat posed by BJP. All of them fought doggedly over the OBC factor and quota question. And in the absence of communal terror they can always make a case out of maoist terror for public diversion, particularly in a situation of peasant-based new radicalism.

As peace eludes Nandigram and its adjoining areas even after five weeks of the carnage, the Congress-led UPA government at the centre is now dishing out an old story of maoist guerilla onslaught throughout the state in view of the seizure of large quantities of explosives in nearby Jharkhand. In truth it is one way to save the Marxist left otherwise falling sharply from grace.

Even at the initial stage of Nandigram movement the left rulers tried to blame it on maoists for large-scale violence by anti-land grabbing protesters while Trinamul opposition was accused of crating trouble to block the economic progress. In reality nobody had ever witnessed any kind of naxalite (or maoist) activity in Nandigram and its neighbourhood—not even a harmless poster, during the last 30 years. Even parliamentary naxalite outfits went to the scene for the first time when poor and marginal farmers decided to break with the official left and revolted against forcible acquisition of land. While Jamat had its own agenda to polarise predominantly muslim voters of the region, right opposition parties found in the emerging social unrest an excuse to make their presence felt in an 'exclusive CPM-enclave'. The initial outcry against the maoist-induced violence did not last long. With the centre re-inventing maoist danger and the CPM-led left government not showing any urgency to normalise the situation in Nandigram and elsewhere, there remains a lot to read between the lines. In plain words reviving maosit threat means the possibility of another round of encirclement and repression of defiant villagers who refuse to kowtow to the diktats of official left despite tremendous hardships, cannot be ruled out in the immediate future. For over a month now the persons in authority have declined to allow Nandigram people to set their own course and done everything to make their lives hellish.

Having failed to tame the poor agitating peasants by strong-arm tactics, they resorted to economic blockade. Those who participated in anti-land grabbing movement are being specifically targeted and harassed in so many ways by party activists that they may be economically redundant and immobile in a very short time. Whether, economic sanctions can work is a different matter but the crisis illustrates among other things the alienation of CPM from masses. More they get politically isolated, more they get furious. And they may go to any length to regain their lost territory. So maosit danger is being orchestrated.

But one more carnage in and around Nandigram, even by 'death squads' with red bands may literally trigger a chain reaction across the length and breadth of the state which won't be a happier proposition for election-all Marxists.

Ironically maoists too suffer from the same dilemma like the Marxists as to how to win over the aggrieved peasant masses. Despite enormous goodwill they enjoy maoists have no mass organisation worth the name to back their armed campaign. The result : isolation. As for the ruling Marxists they have stretched their class collaborationist strategy to the point of rupture or in other words they are ready to lose a section of their traditional constituency to woo big business and foreign capital. They have not learnt anything from their fellow-travellers of Europe where parliamentary communist culture is a thing of the part. All the mighty communist parties of Europe are today struggling to survive through tokenism without any success. They are now an integral part of the global neo-liberal system. In East Europe after the collapse of Soviet Union and East European 'socialism' as well most communist parties transformed themselves into social-democratic and democratic outfits with the avowed objective of developing free market capitalism. Indian parliamentary communists are lucky in the sense that they are not being pressurised by America and America-owned international financial institutions to change the signboard. After all label does not count in their calculation. What matters is how sincerely 'communists' or 'anti-communists' are implementing their neo-liberal policies. □□□