

CURBING MAOISM

India is not the world's only extremist violence Dominated state but what distinguishes its predicament is how extremist violence came about. For the country's growing violent outbursts are, in many ways the logical outcome of growing social and economic dispossession of the toilers. And it cannot be otherwise because the recent history of India is in reality the tale of a country being systematically overwhelmed by Americanisation. Also, the police and other security forces, having discovered the efficacy of torture and fake encounters to suppress peaceful protests by the socially and economically deprived, are now using these techniques to greater effect only to force the aggrieved to think in terms of violence. But the persons in authority will never recognise it. Nor will they admit how they allow the culprits—the security establishments to enjoy impunity and get away with murder. The recent jail breaks by the desperate maoists (or naxalites) in Chattisgarh and Bihar seem to have tempted the top echelons of security structure to refurbish their much publicised plan to curb the mounting 'menace' of maoism (or naxalism). Last month at a chief ministers conference on internal security Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asked all state governments, irrespective of degree of maoist violence they face, to establish specialised, dedicated forces to curb 'naxalism' because he perceived it as the "single biggest security challenge to the Indian state". In other words he was asking his chief ministers to encourage their men with guns to get ideologically motivated in executing crime against the people.

With Pakistan heading towards a civil war, if it can be so-called, and China favouring diplomacy to resolve the boundary dispute with India, the Singhs find no great external threat at the moment. And border irritations with Bangladesh do not count in their calculation. The only threat they visualise comes from left-wing extremism or what is euphemistically called maoism. Even religious extremism promoted by Pakistan's notorious ISI in Jammu and Kashmir does not get top priority in India's security planning. For reasons best known to the Singhs their favourite theme of proxy war by Pakistan in the Kashmir Valley does not get currency. Even the Hindu Right seems to have lost enthusiasm in vigorously pursuing its campaign against Islamic terror in Kashmir. The rightist, leftist, centrist—all parties are worried about the danger of maoism. It illustrates among other things that maoism despite its limitations is a growing political phenomenon. India is not yet Latin America where leftist guerillas traditionally fight the brutal army but maoist guerillas in the Indian context are a force to reckon with in certain areas.

"Not a day passes without an incident of left-wing extremism taking place somewhere or the other". Thus observed the prime minister at the same chief ministers' meet. If naxalism is the only danger they perceive threatening their vested interests it is because naxalism has an ideological orientation and a goal to reach. The missing link in Mr Singh's observation is that class polarisation in Indian society is getting sharper and sharper with every passing day, thanks to globalisation and all pervasive anti-people reforms for which Mr Singh can claim

the major credit as all it started under his stewardship during the Narshima Rao regime.

But maoism as it emerged in the wake of naxalbari uprising in the late 1960s was basically an anti-revisionist ideological project targeting mainly the reformist CPM and international revisionism represented in those days by the Soviet communist party. The initial ideological thrust lost in the middle in no time because of sectarianism leading to the syndrome of 'split within split' and ideological disorder from which it is yet to recover.

Despite too many shortcomings maoist movement is developing somewhat horizontally in areas where social democracy is non-existent and backward economic relations predominate as in Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar. Though Andhra continues to be the nerve centre of maoist leadership the movement in general seems to have reached a stalemate for more than one reason, the principal reason being the near absence of a proper mass-line. It's a tragedy that organised sector workers are with social-democrats, revisionists and reactionaries. As they can not coordinate extra-legal campaign with legal activities, it is easy for the ruling elites to isolate them and unleash rein of state terror. Also, Mao's popular idea of a broad-based united front is not on their agenda. They are pinning too much hope on guerilla action but mere guerilla operation can hardly mobilise the masses—the poor masses, in their millions. □