

COMMENT

Away with Mao

Bad times breed good. But the reverse is also true. The Maoists of Nepal literally turned bad things into good. Their tremendous success in winning parliamentary polls after a decade-long bloody armed campaign with Mao's people's war strategy as a pivot, surprised their friends and foes as well. But running a republican government, rather a bourgeois government, under multi-party system with different political tendencies working all the time at cross purposes, is not that easy. At least Mao looks helpless in this gambit. Ironically though the Maoists of Nepal seem pragmatic enough not to call themselves Maoist anymore as they are very much at the threshold of getting integrated with international mainstream. They have earned the dubious distinction of being dubbed 'terrorist'. Courtesy America! Absence of Maoist tag from their party banner will make them acceptable to all as communists being good parliamentarians everywhere are not untouchable to America. But 'terrorists' with Maoist inclination are. For good reasons or bad, Maoist formations are invariably identified with violence. As they are no longer in armed struggle they do not need Maoist label anymore. For all practical purposes they are in a period of transition, devising ways to get away with Mao.

An ideological rift, as things are, is likely to emerge which in turn may lead to a split. And a vertical split means weakening of popular Nepali uprising and a lot of obstacles in the path of mass mobilisation to cope with the on-going onslaught by global capital. The Maoists of Nepal may go the CPM way in India, saying bye bye to revolution.

For one thing Mao is not essential for marxist insurgents in Latin America, not to speak of dozens of non-marxist insurgents elsewhere across the world. Even in Vietnam communists never borrowed a single page from Maoist literature to conduct their historic anti-imperialist armed struggle. They did their people's war in their own way in the concrete situation of Vietnam. Giap never quoted a word or two from Mao to elaborate his strategy on guerilla war. In fact the Chinese never elevated Mao's thoughts to Maoism even when Lin Piao theorised Mao's idea of people's war as an international phenomenon, applicable nationally and globally as well. The diehard Stalinists never thought of anything akin to Stalinism.

Initially communist revolutionaries in India and elsewhere were satisfied with Mao's thoughts, not Maoism. Then overenthusiasm coupled with dogmatism created Maoism. The international platform of Maoists is too weak to present Maoism as a cohesive theoretical advancement in marxism. But sectarianism in the Maoist camp in Nepal and elsewhere is so strong that they are creating a new dogmatic culture at their own peril. For Nepal Maoists pragmatism seems to be replacing their ideological commitment. And American 'decision' not to treat them as 'terrorists' anymore is not without reasons.

If Mao fades from Nepal scenario, he will still survive as the lone monk in Indian jungles. □□□