

## Maoists Everywhere

Not that Maoists are threatening to roar out of the confines of “politics as usual” in a big way anywhere in the country. Yet they are everywhere as the ruling elites and their opposite numbers cannot take any step into the future without demonising them. In truth they are uniquely placed in grand Indian opera that now gets global attention for more than one reason. The ruling circles in some states otherwise perennially crisis-ridden and violence-prone due to contentious social and economic factors, always see how opposition forces engaged in power game conspire with the maoists to destabilise their rule and destroy tranquility. And this perverted logic is nowhere so prevalent as in today’s Bengal that is slowly but steadily drifting towards anarchy. Even in the seventies the official marxists—CPM—resorted to a calculated vilification campaign against the naxalities by portraying them as secret allies of Congress. Those were the days of crude bombs and pipe guns, not AK-47 and landmines. Losing power after 34 years of uninterrupted rule—or misrule—they began to highlight one-point agenda of exposing Maoist-Trinamul understanding in ensuring their defeat in that all important assembly poll of 2011. Ironically the Trinamul Congress after being voted to power is now applying the same tactical line of unearthing marxist-maoist conspiracy which can at best be a wild imagination at this juncture, to hide their authoritarian mask and dismal failure in governance. In other words maoists are born to play the role of villain in all shades of drama, leftist or non-leftist. If the maoists don’t play their role the entire security establishment would go bankrupt, rendering thousands jobless. Then the Centre never loses any chance to discover the foreign connections of Indian maoists. With the Nepalese maoists losing radical fervour and increasingly getting integrated into the system, maoists in India too are getting some respite from being dubbed as foreign-funded. True, in some cases maoists are themselves no less responsible for compounding the puzzle.

The authorities have somehow succeeded in setting people against each other. For them it is now easy to silence any voice of dissent, be it purely Gandhian or otherwise, by dangling the sword of maoist terror. The so-called ‘maoist menace’ has for a long time developed into a full-fledged multiple crisis for the rulers and their opposition critics alike. And Indian version of ‘war on terror’ means ‘operation green hunt’. For all practical purposes democracy is under attack from all sides.

Large sections of the population now understand that democratic governance they talk about is not a neutral agent of the people’s wishes. It has already been turned into an effective tool to dominate social and economic affairs for the ‘democrats’.

How long they could play the maoist card to minimise the impact of neo-liberal juggernaut is open to question. But for the time being they have no reason to spend sleepless nights.

The privatisation of natural resources coupled with dispossession of people from the resources is going on at an alarming rate endangering whatever remains of ecological and social balance in nature and society. With the systematic destruction of social security, traditional and non-traditional, built over the years, democracy as it is in India today, has failed miserably to homogenise thinking and action for the ‘common good of humanity’.

It is next to impossible to get rid of the inherent crisis of the system that became unmanageable in the 1990s with the currency crisis in Mexico and in South East Asia in 1997. The post- Lehman crisis now for a long time aggravated further, showing no signs of recovery anytime soon. It has its adverse impact on every economy—big or small, emerging or stagnant.

Domestically maoists foot the bill for public diversion because their new democracy continues to be an illusion to the vulnerable and socially disadvantaged who need democracy most. Despite so much enthusiasm generated on the eve of every poll people do vaguely understand democracy, not new democracy. And now some western thinkers, more precisely people associated with the Brussels-based ‘Rosa Luxemburg Foundation’ are trying to popularise radical democracy whatever it means in practical world, as the only way for survival of the powerless. If their idea of radical democracy gets translated into reality it looks very much like the 21st century socialism of Hugo Chavez. But all their radicalism would vanish into the thin air as they would like to see the state acting in defence of the people and commons.

It is ludicrous to think that governments, union and state, would protect traditional tribal commons in Chattisgarh, Odisha and elsewhere for the ‘common good of humanity’. It is commons that are being systematically transferred to a handful of rich people to plunder natural resources. Maybe, radical democracy in place of what is in vogue as democracy, as perceived by ‘Rosa’ followers is a nice way for the voiceless to live in dignity. But to theorise democracy for all is one thing and to have a minimum democratic space to dissent in the field is quite another. Democracy, maoist new democracy or the marxist brand of people’s democracy—people are tired of enjoying surfeit of democracy. □□□