

## **‘Controversies’ Still Many?**

For the persons in power it is nice to have too many controversies to enlighten the people! They have nothing to hide, there are no lies, no concealment. And yet everybody thinks they are lying—the saffron rulers of Chattisgarh. What they publicised as the biggest anti-Maoist encounter in recent months, was actually fake. The victims—19 in total, including boys, school students and a girl—were all innocent tribals. They were neither maoist nor anti-maoist. The preliminary report by the fact-finding team sponsored by the Chattisgarh state unit of Congress, about the ‘cold-blooded murder’ was embarrassing both for the state government and the Centre. Over the last seven years Chattisgarh has witnessed an unprecedented escalation of violence. More than 800 people have been killed while some 30,000 tribals continue to be displaced from their villages. Human Rights groups apart, the civic society reacted across the length and breadth of the country to protest against the heinous crime of Chattisgarh’s Raman Singh government.

There is every reason to believe that the state Congress is talking Turkey because they are in opposition. They want to dislodge the saffron government in a state that is backward in terms of usual indices but financially a real gem for the fortune-seekers. Their stance could have been otherwise had it been in Andhra—or in Bengal’s junglemahal. Nor do they dispute dozens of fake-encounters that the security forces resort to in North East and Kashmir.

Strangely enough, the Congress party is talking in multiple voices and at cross purposes as well, as their central leadership is reluctant to subscribe to state Congress allegation that it was a planned murder, not an encounter, by central and state security forces. In truth the Centre is more inclined to back the Raman Singh administration to continue their ‘kill all, burn all’ policy, all in the name of combating maoist terror to pave the way for multinational investments in large scale mining.

The left parties—CPI, CPM, CPI-ML, otherwise not friendly to the CPI (Maoist) at all, have demanded a judicial inquiry to ascertain the truth in the incident in which central paramilitary and state police took part on June 28 in the Bijapur district of Chattisgarh. No doubt a CBI—for that matter a magisterial inquiry into the brutal massacre of the innocent tribals can hardly reveal the truth. But how much justice could be done to the victims through a judicial probe is open to question as there are so many judicial inquiry reports gathering dust, having no possibility to get implemented. Then in parliamentary democracy, it is the only way, they think, that could address the problem to some extent.

Unless there is broad-based mass mobilisation against institutionalisation of police brutalities, fake encounter will go on unabated. Then there is no political party, left or right, to bail the cat. The established left, rather the traditional left, has everything in common with Congress and BJP when it is the question of tackling ‘maoist menace’. Individuals like B D Sharma and Swami Agnivesh who lost no time to condemn the calculated mayhem of

Chattisgarh government while demanding a judicial probe but their voice is not powerful enough to expose the atrocities of undeclared emergency. Even Anna Hazare's crusade against corruption that initially galvanised a large section of the society seems to be losing momentum. And human rights groups and civil liberties bodies are so localised that they are in no position to develop a country-wide human rights movement against the police raj.

For one thing Chidambaram's security establishment will go bankrupt if there is no maoist threat to their rule. After the setback in junglemahal, the maoists have been on the defensive even in their stronghold—Chattisgarh. Maybe, this is one reason, Chidambaram's blue-eyed boys in uniform look desperate to go on offensive. If there is no 'enemy', they can always create one. What is true globally is equally true nationally. America cannot sustain its huge security machine without an enemy threatening American supremacy. So do the Chidambarams and Raman Singhs as they need more budget allocations and funds to oil their security apparatus.

People are dying in cross-fire. Roughly 58000 people are said to have died due to armed violence in the last 15 years throughout the country. The CRPF Director-General Mr K Vijay Kumar was most vocal to defend the indefensible—joint operation in the dense forests of Dantewada and strongly opined against any investigation, administrative or otherwise. But nobody believes in his 'factual statement'. He said his forces never resorted to the firing and always showed extreme restraint. Being provoked by the maoists, they just opened fire, killing '19 hardcore maosits'. People are familiar with the police version of firing, provoked or unprovoked, thanks to numerous fact-finding reports filed by human rights bodies. There are no takers of Vijay Kumar's Bijapur gospel other than his bosses in New Delhi and Raipur. They need money and poor tribals are their goldmines. Every operation will require further follow-up action, creating strong arguments in favour of more funds to beef up security measures.

As cross-border terrorism is on the wane, maoists are the saviours of the most brutal security machinery of India. They are not accountable to anybody, they are immune to laws of the land. They are at worst licensed murderers.

Mineral wealth is a curse to the tribal people of India. The British didn't succeed to map and explore all the mineral bearing zones of India. Also, they exploited mineral resources to cater their captive market which was not that big compared to today's scenario. Eviction was there but the process was slow, it only got aggravated during World War II to meet the appetite of war industry. But now with surging demand for basic raw materials worldwide, eviction is taking place at a rapid pace, forcing the tribals to face an ethnic-cleansing like situation. And all this 'encounter' is part of a grand design of genocide. □□