

REVOLUTION AND COUNTERREVOLUTION

So Now it's history. Bolshevik Revolution. As most post-revolutionary societies are on the verge of extinction, marxist and non-marxist revolutionaries everywhere are struggling hard to bring forward another way to say 'no' to the status quo. But the way they are responding to the post-Soviet reality is counter-productive. Their revolutionary gospel taken literally is a horror. Vietnam's glorious anti-imperialist national and democratic revolution seems to be turning into its opposite, slowly but steadily and, peacefully as well. The very reversal in post-revolutionary societies has strengthened the notion that 'Revolution begets counter-revolution'. The Chinese Revolution was essentially a peasant revolution and the protracted agrarian revolt that shook the world, was creative and robustly defiant of entrenched power. Oppressed peasants, humble people in the bleakest circumstances forged unity and audaciously took on the reactionary citadel to acquire governing power and their initial agenda radically changed the old nation. Vietnam re-created an identical scenario. But what is happening in these two post-revolutionary societies under the leadership of the same communists, is aggressive capitalistic development and destruction of peasants who fought valiantly and sacrificed enormously for liberation.

All revolutions were rich in great ideas about how to use government power to abolish imperial capital, eradicate mass poverty, eliminate social and class inequality from the depredations of concentrated wealth and corporate hegemony. Successful revolutions in Russia, China and Vietnam provided impetus that influenced the oppressed throughout the world to challenge oppression. But reverse is true now. Peasants are being ruthlessly suppressed and evicted to enhance corporate power. As for Cambodia revolution was a disaster. Not much is heard about Laos. As for Cuba it has survived the American blockade for long but the possibility of Cuban revolution getting into a higher stage seems bleak, at least not in the immediate future.

Despite the failure of Soviet socialism Bolshevik model continues to inspire whatever remains of the international communist movement. But the working class strategy that became the defining moment of truth is yet to be defined in its entirety in the changed context of global onslaught by capital. Workers do hardly call the shots even in the industrialised West, not to speak of underdeveloped third world. As a result Maoist Project seems to be the only idea the far left in most third world countries can think of, albeit it has lost relevance completely in the land of its origin—China—where capitalist roaders under the banner of communist party are hell bent to make China an economic and military superpower to rival America and Japan. In short revolutionaries have so far failed to evolve new models other than Soviet and Chinese though they never lose any occasion to highlight national peculiarities to frame programmes. The maoists of Nepal implemented the Chinese model, rather successfully, upto a certain point but they too had to innovate populist ideas and finally landed in the quagmire of parliamentarism. Whether copying old Bolsheviks can produce revolution is open to question. Nor is there much scope for diehard maoists to

derive comfort from Yenen model, particularly after the setbacks of maoists in Nepal.

Parties that once led revolutions also sowed the seeds of counter-revolutions by vigorously pursuing wrong policies and abandoning democratic space in favour of authoritarian mandate. Party bureaucracy killed people's initiatives and popular sentiments only to hasten the process of counter-revolution everywhere.

After revolutions class position of most revolutionary parties changed dramatically and in most cases where revolutions failed parties in power alienated themselves from basic masses in such a way that the very talk of revolution (or for that matter communism) sparked massive protests which in turn made it easier for the beneficiaries of old order to swing the pendulum back. The point at issue is whether socialism as a liberation project can get back its old glory at a time when neo-liberalism reigns supreme, simply by quoting Marx, Lenin and Mao. No new ideas are emerging at the national and international levels. Ideological wilderness continues. War is ravaging a number of countries. Also, Bush's next war is in the making but the imperial war has not really paved the way for social revolution, thanks to bankruptcy of revolutionary left. □□□