

VIOLENCE AS A STRATEGY

There is a consensus across the board that violence is a non-productive, inhuman and a barbaric strategy to be denounced and stamped out from the society. All the great religious and social philosophers have expressed their opinions against 'violence'. There is, however, one exception that when one is confronted with violence, then recourse to violence may be justified. In such situations also the general rule is that violence may be countered by violence when all the peaceful means have been exhausted. Here also the golden rule is that the quantum of violence should be minimum and just enough to stop the violence and it should not take the form of 'no-holds-barred'.

There is an opinion prevailing among social and political scientists which per se does not approve of violence, but in a bid to relate it to social and political causes, almost reach the levels of according legitimacy to it. For long, the academia, the scholars and the activists have been lamenting that political repression and social inequalities are mainly responsible for individual and/or group violence. There is no dearth of empirical data available to support this hypothesis. However, there is equally a growing empirical data available which indicates that the theories of political repression and social inequalities might be easily available for the actors in employing the technique of 'violence', but the technique does not adhere to the rules or the framework for which it is used in the first place. The studies of the individuals and groups who advocate and use violence to redress the social or political grievances indicate that this abhorrent technique degenerates to the horrendous acts of crime. The individuals and groups who sponsor the strategy are either helpless to check the phenomenon or they themselves become the partners in the criminal games.

In a recent report documented by the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (AP-CLC) and reported in the Indian National daily *Indian Express* (February 2, 2005), after surveying the 11 bands of renegade Naxalites, reports that "in the revolutionary lexicon of Anantpur's (in Andhra Pradesh state of India) Naxalite (the left-wing Maoist extremist) outfits, the class enemy has taken an entirely different meaning. It now means the enemy of the local faction's don hiring them to kill." According to this media report, besides these big factions, the smaller and spurious ones sport the Naxalite label and sustain themselves by small extortions. The report further provides that the "Naxalite label is important here. It gives them added threat potential and some very local legitimacy. So, most of these outfits have names with the pre-fix 'People's War' (PW)".

It may be argued that one has to differentiate between the so-called genuine ones and the spurious lot. But there is no yardstick to do that as long as means—that is violence—

remain the same. It is not the case with the Naxalites alone. It is the same with other groups advocating 'violence' as a means to achieve political or social objectives. For instance, the groups advocating 'Jihad' through violent means. These groups or the factions within them ultimately end up the Anantpur way. And Kashmir provides an illustration to the point. In a frank admission, a Jihadi in Punjab in Pakistan said in an interview that "there is money, respect and clout in Jihad".

The non-violent, political methods remain the only means to redress the grievances. This needs to be underlined and advocated.