

Maoist Movement *in* *Nepal*



ANAND SWAROOP VERMA

Maoist Movement In Nepal



Anand Swaroop Verma

June 1 massacre in the Narayan Hiti Palace in Nepal has just one explanation-that it was a premeditated gruesome design to abort the emergence of a saturation generally described as the Red Star Over Nepal. It could give rise to an eventuality in which King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah might have to choose whether to lead his patriotic, nationalist and self respecting valiant people against an impending intervention and aggression or be a quisling and invite the only super power and its surrogates to repeat a Vietnam. The Maoist People's War, breaking out just a half decade earlier- to be precise February 13, 1996, has taken roots in about 60 out of 75 districts and has a much lesser hostile response than its Indian counterpart-the Naxalbari Movement- which the Indira regime could crush in a short span with its well equipped apparatus of State terror.

The book **Maoist Movement In Nepal** is written primarily for Indian readers, but is equally useful for students of Nepalese affairs in other countries as well. An epilogue has been added to provide an insight into the events that followed the massacre.

Anand Swaroop Verma, the author, is not only a serious student of Nepalese history- past and present- but has also contributed not in its interpretation as a social activist with a commitment towards peasants and workers revolution. A frank and fearless journalist by profession, with a three decade track record of working for a people's oriented alternative journalism, he is noted for his prolific writing on African freedom struggle. Widely travelled Verma has contributed significantly, through translations towards the development and growth of Hindi, his mother tongue. His translations include *India Today* (Rajni Palm Dutt), *My Years In An Indian Prison* (Mary Tyler), *Political*

Philosophy of Mao Tse-Tung (Manoranjan Mohanty), *Language, Culture and National Identity* (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o), *Foreign Investment in India* (Mathew Kurien), *Bonded Labour In India* (Mahashweta Devi), *Naxalism In the Plains of Bihar* (Kalyan Mukheljee), *Everybody Loves a Good Drought* (P. Sainath), *State and Child In India* (Myron Weiner), etc. He has authored a book on apartheid in South Africa for Hindi readers.

Preface to The Hindi Edition

The People's War, launched by the Maoist communists in Nepal is perhaps the single event to have maximum impact upon the socio-political genius of this landlocked Himalayan kingdom. When this 'war' brokeout on February 13, 1996, it evoked almost a similar reaction from various political parties - that this movement would not last for six months, or utmost a year. And yet, it has completed five years just now and it has got its strong foothold in 60 out of 75 districts. There is absolutely no aspect in Nepalese political life which is untouched by it. The Maoist movement figures prominently in the agenda of every political party- be it the communist parties the Nepali Congress or the royalist Rashtriya Prajatantric Party (National Democratic Party).

There are innunmerable instances in history when, while keeping away from parliamentary process efforts were made to transform peasants and workers based mass-movements into armed struggle with a view to seize political power. Some of these have succeeded in achieving their objective, while others were crushed by the powers that be. Even in India we have been a witness to two movements of historic significance the Telangana and Naxalbari - growing very rapidly, but were forced to retreat under the pressure of State terror. Inspired by the Naxalbari struggle, Nepali communists organised peasants in Jhapa, but this movement could not achieve enough, due to several reasons and was short-lived.

If we compare the Maoist People's War with that of the Naxalbari struggle we find many significant ramifications worth consideration. There is no denying that the Naxalbari struggle ignited serious repercussions and tremors in political, social and cultural spheres, but almost all Indian political parties had adopted inimical attitude towards it. There was a 'solidarity' among all of them about the ways and means to crush the Naxalites; be it the 'progressive' communist parties, centrist Congress or the then right wing Bhartiya Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party. This is not so in Nepal. There the nine communist parties constituted a Front to support Maoists and the statements- issued by them, from time to time, did help the former. Even the largest Communist Party of Nepal (UML), despite its difference, could not say that the Maoists be suppressed. Its breakaway Communist Party of Nepal (ML) too is a critic, but it continues to be in the nine party united front. So much so that the ruling Nepali Congress also talks about finding 'a political solution of the Maoist problem' ; not with standing its preparations to suppress the movement. Nepali Congress, itself, had constituted a committee under the chairmanship of former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba with the purpose to negotiate with the Maoists and find out a solution to the problem. There has not been a single day, during the last five years, when Nepali newspapers did not carry any news about the Maoists.

Never was such a situation in India. When even the Naxalbari movement was at its height the urban middle class was either afraid of it or was disinterested, while the people in rural areas, specially where feudal exploitation was considerable, were sympathetic to it. Moreover those were days of Mrs. Gandhi's regime, which did not hesitate to adopt

brutal and gruesome repressive measures to suppress it. Undoubtedly, it received support from one of the two international centres of the communist movement. Such communist parties which considered Soviet Union as centre of 'Social Imperialism', and regarded Democratic China as centre of revolution were friendly to it. The world, at that time, was by and large bipolar, of which Soviet Union and USA were two poles. Now there is nothing like it. After the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, American imperialism is the one and only paramount centre of world power. Quite obviously, this is a very difficult situation for the Maoists in Nepal in which they have embarked upon their agenda for a revolution in their country and constitute Nepal into a Democratic Republic. They have shown the courage to swim against the current, in a world where revolutionary forces at the moment are in a state of depression and disarray. In an interview CPN (Maoist) General Secretary Com. Prachand (Pushp Kamal Dahal) had said, "One does not realise the importance of water in the middle of a lake or river but in a desert even one glass of water becomes precious. Where, in the world are people's struggle? In a desert of revolutionary struggles, Nepal's People's War is like a glass of water. We have taken upon the responsibility to carry on the supply of this glass of water to the revolutionary masses."

This book has been written primarily for Indian readers, but is equally useful for the students of Nepalese affairs in other countries. Its first two chapters are rather sketchy; while a larger volume could be expanded on the matter contained in them; but the purpose of their inclusion is to broadly acquaint the readers with the political scenario of Nepal. The need for such a booklet was felt because Nepal is our important neighbor and the Indian media is either totally silent or deliberately trying to misguide about this