

CPN-Biplab Group: A Brief Study

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1. Preamble:

Having separated from the erstwhile Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist, Biplab group had formed the CPN Maoist after presenting dissension when the expanded meeting of party's central committee was being held in November 2014. It is going to be about three years since then.

The document adopted by the first national convention of our party organized in December 2014 had written, "We should name the thinking and trend seen in Biplab group as right deviation manifested in left form." The resolution had said that Biplab group has drowned in to the quagmire of negative dialectics, empiricism and eclecticism in the sphere of philosophy, that it has laid special emphasis on the role of middle class by pushing aside the role of workers and peasants to secondary position in the arena of political economy and that it has shown symptoms of pro-imperialist and pro-expansionist trends in it and that it has embraced a concept of power sharing with the regressive forces in the field of scientific socialism.

This group has already convened its eighth congress in February 2017. It has removed Maoism from its party name and writes Communist Party of Nepal only. The congress has adopted a political report and has synthesized party's ideology, outlook, line, policy and programme in it. The main objective of this article is in brief to study and synthesize the main aspects of ideology, outlook and general line put forward by the political report, not the whole document.

2. International and National context:

Biplab group has drawn up a necessary conclusion on the fundamental and principal contradictions and various issues of the national and international level by assessing the national and international situation. The conclusion, which looks strikingly new in form but has the same old essence when studied deeply.

While discussing the present world, capitalist world-order, post-imperialism, neo-colonial condition, postmodern culture etc. have been mentioned in the political report. Nevertheless, the terminologies like neoliberalism, financialisation of capital, monopoly capitalism etc. have not been used in it. The report writes, "Following the dissolution of previous Soviet Union, capitalism has prevailed in the world, though temporarily. The post-imperialism has been prevailing under the leadership of the US." (Political report page 12). The way how the terminology post-imperialism has been used here is an indication of very serious political deviation emerged in Biplab group.

The report has mentioned about the international political contradictions. They are of five kinds: 1) the struggle between power centres, 2) the contradiction between powerful nations and Muslim countries, 3) the contradiction between post-imperialism and socialist forces, 4) the contradiction between comprador elements and people and 5) the contradiction between post imperialism and oppressed nations. Two of the contradictions placed in number 3 and number 5 have provided strong basis for this group to make a shift towards other side. None of the revolutionary communist parties accepts the contradiction placed in the third and fifth number as basic or principal contradiction in the world today. On the one hand, there is no any socialist force in the state power today. And, on the other, the usage of the term post-imperialism in place of imperialism is the declaration of the end of imperialism itself.

In the same manner, the report has assessed about the national situation and the contradictions in it. It says there four contradictions namely a) the struggle between the comprador state power and the revolutionary forces, b) the struggle between comprador elements and patriotic forces, c) the struggle among the parliamentary comprador forces and 4) the struggle between comprador state power and the entire masses of the oppressed classes, nations, regions and sex. It says that the first contradiction is the principal contradiction. (Ibid page 24). Here, on the one hand, peculiar terminologies like comprador state power have been used and on the other the terminologies like comprador bourgeoisie, bureaucratic bourgeoisie and feudal class have not been used in the respective places. Perhaps, it has been done so in their whim to becoming new.

What is the new state of affairs of the country? The document writes, "Nepal, which was in the semi-colonial condition after Nepal-British war and in semi-feudal condition after the end of Rana regime, has now changed into a neo-colony as a result of Indian imperialist intervention and into comprador capitalism after the launching of people's war and the establishment of republic. It is a new situation as regards the politico-economic relation." (Ibid page 50).

Mainly four things draw attention here. First, what has been categorically stated here is that Nepal is not in semi-feudal condition. Second, the neo-colonial oppression has been so mentioned that it has begun lately. In fact, the imperialism has been following the path of neo-colonialist oppression since the Second World War. Third, only comprador capitalism has been stated here, not the bureaucratic capitalism. Fourth, India has been termed as imperialism, not expansionism. Which terms have been used here and which ones should have been used is a question of debate. Let us not go towards that now. Their position that Nepal has already undergone the capitalist development is the main question here.

In the context of class analysis of the country, this group has presented a peculiar type of conception, that is: "New working class (middle class)." (Ibid page 54). According to the Marxist point of view, the middle class in general is national bourgeoisie. However, it can never be a working class. Notably this group has introduced in their document a concept that middle class is a working class under the heading: "Some important theoretical questions" as if it is a newly developed concept. It is a right deviation of serious nature witnessed in the context of class analysis.

3. Questions relating to philosophy:

In the report, some important questions of philosophy have been revised. They are related with the basic propositions established and developed by Marx, Lenin and Mao.

The report writes, "It is a question of developing the notion synthesized by Marx that 'philosophers have only interpreted the world, but the point is to change it'. The notion Marx has said is correct, but what has the failure of socialism proved is that only to change the object is not all but to defend and develop the changed object is the main." (Ibid page 39).

Here, the main aspect and essence regarding Marxist philosophy have been distorted. In the name of developing Marxism, Biplab group has attempted to replace change by defence and development. It is an opposite step in the philosophical front.

Same report writes, "The question of philosophy is related to developing the law of unity of opposites in dialectical materialism. Philosophically, the unity of opposites is the life of an object. This concept is correct. But, it is mechanical to understand that the law of unity of opposites is applied in nature and society in the same manner. ... The opposite elements which are required for the existence of non-living things may not be necessarily required for the living beings, it is necessary to figure out which opposite is necessary and which is not for the given living being because the quantity and characteristics of opposites in the society and party are multidimensional." (Ibid page 39). Here the report says that the law of unity of opposites does not apply in party and by so saying it has attempted to revise Marxism in the philosophical front.

The protracted nature of two-line struggle in the party is decided by the protracted nature of class struggle in the society. The political training material prepared by the CPC, writes, "The protracted nature of the class struggle in the society determines the protracted nature of the two-line struggle within the Party. As long as there are classes, class contradictions and class struggle ... the two-line struggle within the Party, which is the reflection of these contradictions, will also carry on." (The basic understanding of the CPC page 52). Here, it has shed light on the protracted nature of interrelation between class struggle in the society and two-line struggle in the party.

In the same manner, it further writes, "Only if we firmly grasp the protracted nature of the class struggle and the two-line struggle will we be able to understand the laws which govern their ebb and flow, their high tides and low tides, and the twists and turns of these struggles. Only then will we be fully prepared, will we be in a position to take the initiative in the class struggle and in the struggle between the two lines." (Ibid). Special emphasis has been laid here in correctly understanding the

nature of class struggle and two-line struggle and accordingly in taking initiative of and preparing for their resolution.

In the same manner, the report says that there is a need to wage struggle on the possible deviation and wrong thinking that can arise in the course of development of and new inventions in the natural science and on the need to develop dialectical and historical materialism as well. It is correct; but, when the main proposition and essence of Marxist philosophy has been attacked, to talk about the development of philosophy does not have any sense, rather it is ridiculous.

Evidently, Biplab group has, on the one hand, hammered out in the essence of unity of opposites developed as a basic law of materialist dialectics and on the other, has given up the importance of intra-party two-line struggle reflected as the protracted nature of class struggle in the society. In this way, monolithism and right opportunism both are going to prevail simultaneously in this group.

4. Questions related to post-imperialism:

One of the main questions put forward by Biplab group is post-imperialism. This group has made the post-imperialism a central question in their documents and other reference matters. It is a thing that needs to pay serious attention.

The political report adopted in their eighth congress writes, "Instead of using the terminology imperialism only in the old fashion, it seems objective to use the term post-imperialism by adding the appropriate term post, which means altered, latest and approaching to its extreme, before the term imperialism." (Political report, page 41).

The logic which has been placed here to denote the new characteristics of imperialism – altered, latest and approaching to its extreme – is completely wrong. Because, post-imperialism means after imperialism and it means imperialism does not exist anymore. Therefore, it is a serious deviation in their using of the term post-imperialism.

Imperialism has changed to a certain extent. However, has it qualitatively changed than what Lenin had defined? No, certainly not. Lenin had said, "Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is (1) monopoly capitalism (2) parasitic, or decaying capitalism (3), moribund capitalism. The supplanting of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the quintessence of imperialism." The aforesaid questions Lenin had said about imperialism are equally true even today. In real sense, the imperialism is monopoly capitalism and the monopolistic form of capitalism is imperialism.

However Biplab group says, "Now we are ahead of Lenin by 100 years. It is the period of intensive industrial development. It is the stage of fourth industrial revolution according to economic analysts. The development of internet, digital and cyber technology is its characteristics. This development has reached to a very new situation than what Lenin had analysed and synthesised." (Ibid page 41). Here, it gives a sense that imperialism has been different than what Lenin had defined. Also, the industrial development and revolution which has been talked here is technologism. Hence, imperialism has not been defined in terms of economic and political content but has been imprisoned in technology.

Biplab group while discussing imperialism defined by Lenin has used the terminology monopoly, but while discussing about the characteristics of post-imperialism, they have nowhere mentioned about monopoly. Thus, Biplab group has not used the term post-imperialism unknowingly or mistakenly. Evidently, 'monopoly' becomes principal aspect in the imperialism defined by Lenin but it is not so in post-imperialism. Because, post-imperialism is the state of affairs after imperialism.

How much correct is the usage of the terminology, post-modernism, a left intellectual says, "The world system has not entered into a new "non-imperialist" phase that is sometimes characterised as "post-imperialist." On the contrary, it is by nature an imperialist system exacerbated to the extreme." (The liberal virus, p. 22, Aakar books, 2005). Samir Amin had expressed this while opposing the authors of the book "Empire" Hardt and Negri who have come with a proposition that imperialism has vanished and what is left is only empire. Hardt and Negri are also known as post-Marxists.

Hardt and Negri had said, "Empire manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command. The distinct national colours of the imperialist map of the world have merged and blended in the imperialist global rainbow." (Preface: Empire Harvard University Press London, 2001). According to Hardt and Negri, the imperialism is no more an exploitative and oppressive system and the borders of nation states have disappeared. Therefore, they use the term empire in place of imperialism.

5. Line, policy and programme

After split, Biplab group has been talking about many things on line, policy and programme, which look like a new. In the context of mentioning line, policy and programme, there is ambiguity in both comprehending and conceptualising them and in determining them as well. It is eclecticism in the philosophical language.

In this context, it is appropriate to study their few positions adopted in the eighth congress by quoting them. On unified people's revolution, the report says, "After imperialism has reached to its new characteristics, its solution is not possible by the lines developed by Lenin and Mao. Revolution is not possible only by insurrection from cities or by protracted people's war from the countryside. Therefore, the revolutionaries must develop line in view of today's political characteristics and contradictions. Based on this stance and study, we have synthesised the line of Nepalese political revolution to be unified people's revolution. (Political report, page 43).

In the context of discussing line, the political report has presented unified people's revolution as a military line arguing that the armed insurrection and protracted people's war developed by Lenin and Mao are insufficient. However, right after this, the questions like development of urban society, new working class and science and technology have been mentioned as the characteristics of unified people's revolution. Then again the report writes, "The line of 'Unified People's Revolution' which has been synthesised in view of the said specificities is new and important not only politically but militarily as well." (Ibid page 44).

In these excerpts, the unified people's revolution has been mentioned on the one hand as a military line only and on the other as political and military line both. Hence, unified people's revolution has not been presented in a clear manner.

Right in this backdrop, this group has talked of military line as well. The same political report writes, "The military line of unified people's revolution is not necessary and appropriate to discuss here because we have already adopted it from a special convention." (Ibid page 44). What is understood from this is that this group has also adopted a military line. Trying to know more about the distinct policy, plan and the technical aspect of that line is not right. But, what is the basic aspect of military line? Is it mainly people's insurrection or protracted people's war or any other or none? It is not right to keep people in dark on these questions. It can be said as mysticism witnessed in military line. The revolutionary communists do not cultivate mysticism on the important questions like military line.

Then what is the political programme or line of this group? The report writes, "Previously we had built up a line of new democracy, for our country was in semi-feudal and semi-colonial condition. But, on account of ten years of people's war, establishment of republic, introduction of comprador capitalism, rise of neo-colonial condition etc., merely the political programme of new democracy is inadequate and lags behind the situation. On the other, new democracy is not a long and permanent stage also. It is only a step to enter into socialism. The fundamental system of state power for the communists is scientific socialism. Taking example of Mao, he accomplished revolution in 1949 and applied new democracy but did not let it go for long. He proposed to go to socialism soon. In this sense, it is not objective to make the political programme to be new democracy only, to make it scientific socialism is correct and objective. Only by building up an objective programme can the new friends and associate forces be polarised and unified around revolution. So, the scientific socialism should be adopted as an upcoming political programme." (Ibid page 47).

A long quotation has been presented here. But even then the thing is not clear yet. Whether the present stage of revolution is bourgeois democratic or socialist and whether the present political programme is new democracy or socialism, is very much confusing. On the one hand, the report says,

"Only new democracy is insufficient" and on the other it writes, "Scientific socialism should be the upcoming programme for Nepal." Biplab group, having been reluctant to put their position in the straightforward way, has attempted here to create confusion by making use of ambiguous and fascinating language. Here eclecticism has been utilised very much "skilfully."

After all, what is the fact? In the context of discussing entire party policies, the following position has been placed as party's political policy: "After smashing the comprador bourgeois parliamentary state in Nepal, people's political system will be the establishment of new democracy and socialism. (Ibid page 55). Here the quote says that party's political line, programme or strategy is said to be new democracy and scientific socialism both at a time. It is an ugly example of eclecticism and pluralism as well.

The new democratic revolution and socialist revolution are two different processes and distinct stages that are accomplished in a certain historical context of the certain country. One must not present them in an eclectic way. For example Mao says, "Every Communist ought to know that, taken as a whole, the Chinese revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party embraces the two stages, *i.e.*, the democratic and the socialist revolutions, which are two essentially different revolutionary processes, and that the second process can be carried through only after the first has been completed. The democratic revolution is the necessary preparation for the socialist revolution, and the socialist revolution is the inevitable sequel to the democratic revolution." (Selected works of Mao Tse-tung Vol. II, 330/331). Here, Mao has very correctly and explicitly mentioned about two different stages and processes of new democratic revolution and socialist revolution and the mutual relation between them. This excerpt by Mao deserves paying necessary attention.

Likewise, "On Coalition Government" Mao says, "Our Party must also have a specific programme for each period based on this general programme. Our general programme of New Democracy will remain unchanged throughout the stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, that is, for several decades. But from phase to phase during this stage, conditions have changed or are changing and it is only natural that we have to change our specific programme accordingly. For example, our general programme of New Democracy has remained the same throughout the periods of the Northern Expedition, the Agrarian Revolutionary War and the War of Resistance against Japan, but there have been changes in our specific programme because our friends and enemies have not remained the same in the three periods." (Mao Tse-tung Vol. 3 page 285).

According to Mao's aforesaid excerpt, the revolutions to be accomplished in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country are new democracy, a minimum programme and socialism, a maximum programme. In the semi-feudal, semi-colonial or neo-colonial country like Nepal, we too regard new democracy as the minimum and socialism as the maximum programme. So long as our ultimate goal, target or destination is concerned, undoubtedly it is communism.

Similarly, Mao has talked of programme and policy in terms of line also. In this context, he has stated about general line and general policy, specific line and specific policy. From this angle, the terms like general line and general policy, and specific line and specific policy of new democratic revolution have been used.

If Biplab group wants to say that social and economic condition of Nepalese society has completely changed, and the revolution does not take place in the old fashion, then it should come clearly. While talking about programme and line, they must not concoct a hodgepodge of new democracy and socialism at one place. Eclecticism and pluralism are both harmful for revolution.

6. Strong and weak aspects

While studying Biplab group ideologically and politically, it is better to discuss their strong and weak aspects by putting them side by side. Biplab group's strong aspects are as follows.

First, this group has regarded the first, second and the third international positively while discussing the international communist movement. It has said that the period from October revolution of 1917 to new democratic revolution of 1949 is very much popular period. Following the death of Stalin, the twentieth congress led by Khrushchev and the modern revisionism has been opposed. Stalin has been

highly valued but in doing so, Mao's evaluation of Stalin has been minimised. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has been positively assessed. RIM's initiative has been slightly touched.

Second, while talking about Nepalese communist movement, this group regards not to elect Puspahal as general secretary of the CC in the first and second congresses was a mistake. Peasants rebellion led by Bhim Dutta Panta and Jhapa rebellion has been acknowledged in a positive sense. Upholding the initiation of people's war in 1952 positively, the right deviation emerged in Prachanda-Baburam in the later part of time has been opposed.

Third, while discussing national situation, they say new democratic revolution has not yet completed, the country is in the neo-colonial condition and the need to accomplish new democratic revolution has not been negated.

Fourth, Biplab group has been waging struggles centring on the questions of national independence, democracy and people's livelihood. Basing on the common issues like national independence and the centenary of October Revolution we have carried out joint activities through tactical unity.

Weak aspects present in Biplab group are as follows:

First, the report, which was adopted in the eighth congress on world outlook and philosophy, is very much wrong. It is a serious attack and revision on the philosophical principle developed by Marx, Lenin and Mao. On the one hand, it has stood against the proposition put forward by Marx and Engels based on the concept of changing the world and, on the other, it has targeted against the basic law of materialist dialectics developed further by Lenin and Mao. It has tried to change dialectics into metaphysics.

Second, the way how this group has introduced the concept of post-imperialism, it has completely negated both the analysis of imperialism carried out by Lenin and the assessment put forward by Stalin that this era is the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. Right at this point, this group has drowned in to a formidable quagmire of post-modernism and post-Marxism.

Third, while discussing the fundamental contradictions of the world, this group has talked about the contradiction between post-imperialism and socialist forces. Based on this position of Biplab group, it shows that there are even now some socialist forces in state power somewhere in the world.

Fourth, while assessing the national situation, this group has analysed the classes, the political forces and the streams of Nepalese communist movement in a peculiar way. In analysing classes, they have presented 'middle' class as a new working class and the proletarian class is being displaced. This group seems attempting to escape from the discussion of political forces and the various streams of the communist movement.

Fifth, in the course of determining party's line, policy and programme, this group has been victimised of ambiguity, abstraction and eclecticism. To place new democracy and socialism at par is an ugly example of ambiguity, abstraction and eclecticism.

Sixth, although this group has been carrying out militant struggles in their independent initiative, but it is not connected with revolutionary goal and it seems to have been trapped in militant economism.

In their whim to become new, to revise the Marxist concept that changing of the world is main task, to state that the law of unity of opposites is not relevant to party life, to discard Lenin's analysis of imperialism in the pretext of it being old and to accept post-imperialism, to evaluate Stalin in extreme and very much minimise Mao, to take help of eclecticism in defining line, policy and programme, to say Marx, Lenin and Mao have been far in time context etc. are the main characteristics of Biplab group. For quite a long time in the past, Biplab group used to talk about power-sharing and it is heard sometimes even today. They have not clarified it yet. Taking into account of all these things deeply, what can be speculated is that there is a possibility of this group sliding towards post-Marxism by giving up Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Hopefully, it will not happen so. Biplab group itself must be conscious and cautious on it.

Thus in total, the strong aspects of this group seem to have been weakening and the weak aspects seem to have been strengthening. In the past we had evaluated that this group is entangled in left in

form but right in essence. Now this group seems to have been going faster than before towards right deviation both in form and essence.

7. Conclusion

We discussed in brief about some of the questions of political report adopted by eighth congress of Biplab group. Also we discussed about strong and weak aspects present in them. Now as conclusion we have to clarify our opinion about this group.

First of all, the imperialism and all sorts of reactionary forces have been intensifying exploitation, oppression and repression upon the proletariat, oppressed masses of the people and the country as well. Right opportunism has been prevailing in the international and Nepalese communist movement too. In this situation, to unify revolutionary communists at one centre has been a historical necessity at present.

Second, paying attention to the interest of entire communist movement and revolution, we must think dialectically towards Communist Party of Nepal. On the one hand we must wage ideological struggle against the weak points present in this group while on the other, taking the strong points positively, we must also try to find possibility of and basis for unity with this group.

Finally, the entire comrades including the main leadership of the CPN should make special effort to struggle against weak aspects present in them and further develop the positive aspects. History does not wait anybody for long. Now, specially remembering the country, people, revolution, proletarian internationalism and Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and striving for revolutionary transformation by correcting respective shortcomings and mistakes, it has been urgent on our part to think it seriously and take steps towards unity.

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