

MAOIST OUTLOOK

Central Organ

The Communist Party of Nepal (Revolutionary Maoist)

No. 4

Vol. 1

September 5, 2020

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Editorial

Two immediate tasks

The world is undergoing an unwarranted crisis of Covid-19. All the countries big or small, imperialist or oppressed are suffering from this horrible pandemic, of which treatment is still unknown, and the vaccine has not been invented yet. Scientists from China, Russia, the United Kingdom, USA, and few other countries have claimed that the testing of their invention of the vaccine has reached the third and final stage. It seems that competition is going on to get registered first in the race so that they can secure the patent right. So far as the WHO is concerned, it admits that people will have to wait for next year to get a reliable vaccine.

Covid-19 has caused a severe economic crisis in different sectors. The problem of unemployment seems to take the central stage worldwide. Millions of people are losing their jobs. It will change the situation more seriously than the economic crisis did in 2008. The economic and political status of many countries is bound to be changed. The world situation will not allow us to be confined to the business as usual. Domestic reactionary states are also facing similar crises, which they cannot come out so easily. It seems that the crises caused by the Covid -19 may be prolonged. Thus, the possibility of crisis to be converted into revolutions is increasing manifold. But definitely, it will not take place on its own. It requires the revolutionaries to play an active and leading role.

The subjective strength of the revolutionary forces is still lagging. Despite rigorous attempts on the part of Maoist revolutionaries, the ICM has not been able to overcome the present state of strategic defensive.

Therefore, genuine communist revolutionaries have twofold tasks right at this moment. First, all the communist parties have a duty to organize the proletariat and all oppressed class people for the class and mass struggle in their respective societies. They should have a mass line and close link with the masses.

We know that subjective strength can and should be created by developing revolutionary plan of actions and executing them. Communist parties and organizations should strive to convert crisis into a revolution in their own countries. They should engage in serious preparations.

The objective condition at the world level is also becoming more favourable for revolution. It requires subjective preparation corresponding to the objective condition. For this, forging of the International Centre of genuine communist revolutionaries is very important. But the state of the international communist movement has been battered with serious setbacks and it is now in a defensive condition. Thus it is not an easy job to rise up again. However, we will not be able to achieve this goal without reinitiating this process. We have accumulated experience of such rise and fall in an international centre. Joint statements of various communist groups on the occasion of May Day are important steps forward to understand each other's' situation and develop a sense of unity among the real communists. Furthermore, collective efforts have to be made to incorporate all such forces in a single centre. Any divisive act may hamper this process to move forward. We should be prudent while taking every step forward. The proletariat of the world must unite!

Thus, genuine communists in the world today have twofold tasks. One, we have to work hard to prepare for revolution in one's own country. Two, we should contribute to the process of forging unity among genuine communist revolutionaries at the international level. Both of these tasks are interrelated. We call upon all the comrades to move forward to fulfil these tasks.

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The need for a new communist international centre

– Com. Kiran

1. Background

According to the historical necessity of the world proletarian revolution, Marx and Engels established the First International. After Marx's death, Engels took the initiative and established the Second International. When the right revisionism became dominant in the Second International, Lenin took up the necessary initiative to build the Third International, and when the socialist revolution succeeded in Russia, the Third International came into being.

At the time of the Second World War, Stalin dissolved the Third International. Following the death of Stalin, the right opportunists ascended the state power. A great debate emerged in the International Communist Movement. The situation was not mature to build a Communist International. Even then, the Communist Party of China, led by Mao, played the role of the international centre. After the death of Mao, counter-revolution took place in China, and no socialist country remained in the world.

In such a complicated situation, many communist parties of the world took up a necessary initiative to build a New International and established the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM). But after a few years, RIM too reached a state of dissolution. In this situation, the need to establish a new communist international centre has been an urgent task, and it is necessary to think of and make an effort to this.

2. Establishment of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM)

In 1980, the communist parties and organizations jointly carried on the necessary initiative to build a new communist international. This initiative moved ahead by producing a joint communiqué. The communist parties and organizations that had taken initiative in 1980 jointly organized a Second Conference in 1984 and founded the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. Subsequent to this, the RIM organized its

Third Conference in 1993. This conference adopted a resolution headed, "Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism." The resolution acknowledged Maoism as a new, third, and higher stage of Marxism and, hence Marxism-Leninism-Maoism became the guiding principle of the revolutionary parties and organizations of the world.

The RIM had not become a unified international centre of all the Maoist parties and organizations of the world for many revolutionary parties and organizations had not joined it. Even then, it was an embryo of the international communist centre, and it accomplished several significant works in the period between 1984 and 2008. Notwithstanding this, some of the parties within RIM suffered grave ideological and political deviations, and the RIM could not move ahead. It reached a defunct condition.

3. Main reasons for the RIM to reach the defunct condition

The main reasons behind RIM to get to the defunct condition are the dominance of right neo-revisionism in the erstwhile CPN (Maoist) and the emergence of right revisionism in the RCP, USA. In this context, a draft proposal, our party has adopted for the ICM, writes, "There may be many reasons behind the present debacle in the RIM, but two main reasons seem to be obvious. One, it was due to the neo-revisionist deviation that emerged in the main leadership of the erstwhile Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), Prachanda-Baburam clique. This clique collaborated with the imperialist and expansionist forces, betrayed the Nepalese revolution, and deliberately played its destructive role to paralyze the RIM. Two, it was due to the "new synthesis" of Bob Avakian, the Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, that intended to introduce it as the guiding line of the RIM." (March Ahead to Prepare for the world Proletarian Revolution! Let's Build an International Centre of the Proletariat!! Draft)

Today, the Prachanda-Baburam clique has, on the one hand, become a shield of bureaucratic bourgeois and feudal state power; and on the other, they have dissolved in different political parties as a servant of imperialist neoliberalism. At present, they have no relation with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, people's war, and revolution.

On the other, the RCP, USA, has proposed a new synthesis of Bob Avakian as a theoretical basis of the socialist revolution. The seven resolutions adopted by the Central Committee of the RCP, USA, writes, "The new synthesis of communism brought forward by Bob Avakian, on the basis of 40 years of revolutionary work, represents a qualitative advance in the scientific approach to making revolution and emancipating humanity. It provides the foundation and point of departure for a new stage of communist revolution that is urgently needed in the world today." The new synthesis put forward by RCP, USA, deviates from Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and represents the post-Marxist deviation. Our party has been firmly and strongly opposing it.

4. The historical necessity of today

A revolutionary party is a must to accomplish revolution. It is true not only for a particular country but also for the international communist movement as a whole. Today's era is the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. In this era, the imperialism stands at one pole and the proletariat at the other. So, in the context of rebuilding new communist international, we must pay attention to the following questions.

First, Marx-Engels had said in the Communist manifesto – Workers of all countries, unite! This slogan is in favour of proletarian internationalism, and it demands an international communist organization. Marx-Engels had played a significant role in realizing this demand.

Second, when the RIM was under formation, the imperialists dressed up with neoliberalism had begun to propel the process of oppression in the world ahead. Since then, during the period between the 2008 crisis to the Covid-19 pandemic at present, neoliberalism has trapped in severe disasters in economic, political, and cultural fields. In recent years, several spontaneous and rebellious types of mass movements that are opposed to inequality, poverty, corruption, and price-hike are on the rise in different countries of the world. The objective condition for revolution is getting favourable, but the subjective condition of the

revolutionary communists is still weak. In this situation, a new communist international has become an inevitable need to strengthen its subjective strength.

Third, although imperialism has been divided, it is organized globally and is getting organized further. The proletariat has been, of course, globalized but it is not organized. In this situation, the founding of an international organization has been an urgent need.

Fourth, the victory of the world proletarian revolution is necessary for the final victory of socialism in any country. Mao says, "From the Leninist point of view, the final victory in one socialist country not only requires the efforts of the proletariat and the broad popular masses at home but also depends on the victory of the world revolution and the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man on this earth so that all mankind will be emancipated." (Mao, Vol. IX, Directive of 15/04/1969)

In the context of rebuilding new communist international, we should comprehensively grasp the idea and concept quoted above regarding today's historical necessity.

5. The initiative, problem and the way to its solution

For the last few years, the revolutionary parties and organizations of several countries have been making efforts of and taking the initiative to building a new communist international. There have been bilateral or multilateral meetings and theoretical and political discussions on different occasions. In this context, there have been shortcomings and limitations, problems, complications, and difficulties as well. Even then, the effort is continuing. Both the initiatives and efforts seem to be inadequate, and they should be increased.

While rebuilding a new communist international, we should unify, in a new way, both types of parties and organizations that remained in and did not join RIM. Our main theoretical and political basis of unity is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and proletarian internationalism. We should oppose imperialism and all sorts of reactions and revisionism on this basis. Apart from this, there can be differences and disputes among us in several issues. We should sit together, mutually respect the questions raised by each other, be inspired by the goal of unity, wage the healthy and comradely two-line struggle, embody the positive issues with necessary restraint and patience, and by doing so go ahead towards a positive direction according to the dialectical concept of unity-struggle-transformation.

There have been not only splits but also unities in the history of the international communist movement. Given the experiences of the history of the international communist movement, a letter from the CPC, led by Mao, to the Communist Party of Soviet Union writes, "Unity, struggle or even splits, and a new unity on a new basis – such is the dialectics of the development of the international working-class movement." (The polemic on the general line of the international communist movement, page 314) The aforesaid meaningful and synthesized opinion on the dialectics of the development of the international communist movement is memorable and ponderable.

6. Conclusion

This is the main concept of our party regarding the formation of a new communist international centre. In this context, we have been clarifying our opinion, views, and conceptions, at times. And, we will be doing so when it necessitates.

In the present context, when the objective condition is getting favourable, the world proletariat and the entire exploited and oppressed masses are demanding a new communist international of the revolutionary communists. We have to be serious about it. Otherwise, the objective situation will go ahead, and we will be unable even to chase it.

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Role of the Patriotic Movement in Nepal

- Com. Gaurav

Nepalese people are proud of never being governed under the rule of a foreign power. It is true in the sense that Nepal was never a colony of any foreign power, in its entire history. But she had to lose a significant part of her land to the colonial and imperialist powers.

In the wake of complete colonization of India for the whole period of 190 years by the British Empire, relatively a small and neighbouring country, Nepal, was able to keep its identity intact. In this sense, this generation expresses sincere gratitude to our predecessors, especially when the issue of foreign domination or aggression comes at the fore. This historical background of Nepal inspires the patriotic forces to rise in safeguarding the territory of Nepal from foreign aggressions.

At the same breath, Nepalese people have to admit that one section of the ruling class capitulated to the foreign powers and signed unequal and disgraceful treaties with them.

Sugauli treaty is the most unpopular among them. This treaty was signed between the then king's envoys and the emissaries of the then East India Company in 1816. Before the treaty, the total area of Nepal was 2,04,917 Sq. Km, whereas its total area had reduced to 1,47,141 Sq. Km after the treaty was signed. Thus, Nepal had to lose about one-third of its territory to the British Empire.

Indian people had to carry out a protracted 'Independence Movement' against the British rule. It was a just struggle, and it gathered sympathy and support from abroad. Many people from different political parties of Nepal not only supported that struggle waged by the Indian people but also participated directly in the movement, in India. They were languished in Indian prisons by the then British government. Finally, the British Empire mainly gave up its colonial rule in India in 1947. It was presumed that the new government of India would be friendly and cooperative with Nepal and Nepalese people. But it ran into the rough weather. Just contrary to that, they imposed various unequal treaties upon Nepal including the '1950 Indo-Nepal treaty of Peace and Friendship', which is considered as the continuation of the Sugauli treaty of 1816. There are many other unequal treaties as well. The mind-set of new rulers of India was something like they were the heirs of the past British rule.

The consecutive Indian governments have further intensified their aggressive policy against Nepal. India has occupied one-third of Nepalese land in the pretext of Article 5 of the Sugauli treaty. Article 5 writes, "The Rajah of Nipal renounces for himself, his heirs, and successors all claim to or connexion with the countries lying to the west of the River Kali and engages never to have any concern with those countries or the inhabitants thereof."

According to the treaty, Nepal was compelled to abandon the territory west to Mahakali River. Nepal sincerely abiding by the treaty gave up the said territory. But India has not displayed sincerity to this treaty and has been occupying the Nepalese territory till now. Nepal, a landlocked country, shares an 1880 km long border with India. India has encroached Nepal's land in 72 different places, including Susta and Maheshpur. It has occupied 372 Sq. Km area of Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, and Lipulekh, east to the Mahakali River. It has permanently stationed its army in Kalapani, since the Indo-China war of 1962.

Modi government annulled Article 370 of the Indian constitution on August 13, 2019, and bifurcated Indian province, Jammu and Kashmir, into two provinces, namely Jammu and Ladakh. The Indian government released a new official map of India on November 2, 2019, according to the decision made by the government and passed by parliament. Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, Lipulekh, the integral parts of Nepal, were incorporated in the political map of India, which provoked and annoyed the patriotic people of Nepal.

The act of interference and aggression of the Indian government did not confine only in releasing the unlawful map. After a few days, the defence minister of Modi government held a virtual press conference

in Delhi that demonstrated how the Indian army had constructed a road from the same area belonging to Nepal and how they were planning to extend the road up to the famous holy Hindu shrine, at Manasarovar, situated in Tibet, China.

All these provocative acts on the part of the Indian government added humiliation and disgrace to the patriotic people of Nepal, who have been swallowing the agony of Indian aggression since long back. Lots of people took to the street in defiance of the coronavirus lockdown imposed by the Oli government. It was evident that a new and explosive situation was emerging in Nepal. All these events compelled the K P Oli government to officially release the new political and administrative map of Nepal on May 21, 2020. According to this map, the total area of Nepal is 1,47,516 Sq. Km. Both the houses of parliament approved this decision unanimously. The Indian government was quick to respond that the release of the Nepali map amounted to interference against the Indian Territory. The success in formally declaring the map of Nepal has boosted the morale of struggling patriotic people in Nepal.

Another important issue of the national concern is the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) agreement. It was an agreement signed between the two consecutive governments of Nepal and officials of the Trump administration in the recent past. Nepal and MCC delegation concluded program negotiations in Washington DC in June 2017. MCC Board of Directors approved in August 2017 to Nepal the Compact Program, which includes USD 500 million.

The Compact between Nepal and MCC was signed on September 14, 2017, in Washington DC. The Finance Minister of Nepal and the MCC Acting CEO signed the agreement. MCC provides USD 500 million, and Nepal bears USD 130 million for this \$630 million project where USD 500 million goes to the Energy sector, and \$130 million goes to the Roads sector. The second agreement was signed by the sitting government of Nepal, through its finance minister in 2019.

Why is the Trump administration expressing so much of the desire to spend USD 500 million in Nepal? Ostensibly, there are two important reasons – first, the Trump administration of the USA has worked out a strategic plan to fight against its international rival China for which Nepal is a very suitable location for the purpose. Second, the US government has planned to usurp some valuable natural resources of Nepal.

MCC is an anti-national project. If implemented, Nepal will be losing its sovereignty, and also it may be used as a battleground. Therefore, patriotic forces and the people of Nepal are struggling hard for its termination. But the two consecutive puppet governments have already signed agreements with MCC, and they already started the project almost five years ago. Only the provision that it should be approved by the sitting parliament has stopped the US government from its full implementation. Because of the protests from the patriotic forces and the people of Nepal, the K P Oli government has failed to pass it from the current session of the parliament at the deadline of May 29, 2020, given by the US government. There were protests around the scheduled deadline. Finally, the MCC agenda did not get space in the business of the parliament at the planned date.

The game plan of the Oli government of Nepal and the US government failed this time. This event has also enhanced the enthusiasm of the struggling patriotic forces. The government is working with the US to set a date for another deadline, it is learned. For the battered patriotic and revolutionary forces, these two events are enthusiastic. We have also gained some experience on how we can carry forward the unified joint activities with the patriotic and left forces in the burning issues. There is a broad assumption in Nepal that an anti-government mass upsurge may break out during or right after the Covid-19 pandemic. It is need of the hour that the left and patriotic forces should take the lead. But one cannot merely claim its leadership. Nobody will hand over the leadership at the silver plate. Thus we are at a great test.

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The Alternative: People's Republic

- Com. Pritam

After wasting almost a decade long period of time and undergoing a prolonged wrangling in the pretext of constitution making process, the four sides, namely, Nepali Congress, the former Communist Party of Nepal (UML), the former Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (Democratic) reached a deal on 08 June 2015 and signed the so-called sixteen points agreement just following the devastating earthquake (that took place on 25 April, 2015) to speed up the process of drafting the new constitution through a fast track system. After all, declaration of the new constitution was made on 20 September, 2015 despite a vehement opposition from the broad sections of the masses of people, specifically, the revolutionary parties and forces including the Communist Party of Nepal (Revolutionary Maoist), indigenous peoples, women, Dalits and Madhesi communities.

After the declaration of the new constitution on 20 September, 2015, the series of the elections for all three levels of governments, that is to say, federal, provincial and local levels took place. The elections for local bodies were held first because the political parties, particularly, the Nepali Congress, the CPN (UML) and the UCPN (Maoist) were eager to observe the ground reality of public support in their favour. As the ruling coalition, Nepali Congress and the UCPN (Maoist) jointly fought the local bodies' elections. Likewise, the CPN (UML) contested the elections by forming a separate coalition with other smaller parties. The outcome of the local level elections became a litmus test for them. It proved that none of the coalitions and parties would be strong enough to garner majority in their own capacity both in federal and provincial elections.

Therefore, both the former CPN (UML) and UCPN (Maoist), taking into account of the outcome of the local level elections, forged a coalition for federal and provincial elections. These two parties published a joint election manifesto and, at the same time, they promised for the merger of their parties into a single political party as well. The UML-UCPN coalition emerged victorious in the elections securing almost a two-third majority in the federal parliament and similarly in six out of seven provincial assemblies. As the leader of the largest party of the coalition, K. P. Sharma Oli, chairman of then CPN (UML), formed new government under his premiership. Later, on 17 May, 2018, the former CPN (UML) and UCPN (Maoist) merged into a single political party as Nepal Communist Party (NCP) with K. P. Sharma Oli as its helmsman.

The (NCP), in its election manifesto, has included each and everything to lure the people through honeyed phrases and sweet promises. But, the (NCP) and Oli government has badly failed to translate its commitments and promises into practice made in the election manifesto and has been converted into a package of false promises and phrase-mongering. In the real sense, the (NCP) and Oli government has gone against the declarations and promises made in their election manifesto. And, the Oli government has continuously pursued the out-dated traditional modality in terms of annual policies, programs and budgets put forwarded by it so far. The (NCP) and Oli government, on the one hand, is adhering to neoliberal capitalism and, at the same time, shamelessly paying lip services towards socialism and communism on the other.

Furthermore, the government has been notoriously indulged in favour of comprador bourgeoisie and commission agents. As a matter of fact the (NCP) and Oli government has been a nice carrier as well as a tool for neoliberal and comprador capitalism. Because the (NCP) is a sham communist party and its first chairman and prime-minister K. P. Oli, time and again, has made it clear that they are using the term communist as a brand name. It is crystal clear that the (NCP) has already fallen into the camp of reactionaries. It is noteworthy that the Communist Party of Nepal (Revolutionary Maoist) had categorized both of the former CPN (UML) and UCPN (Maoist) under reactionary forces in terms of their political character prior to their merger into a single party. Facts and reality have proved it very true.

Mr Oli, in the capacity of prime-minister, has reiterated time and again that he would maintain zero tolerance towards corruption but corruption, nepotism and favouritism has been rampant and business as usual. The cabinet ministers and senior party leaders of his own coterie have been found guilty of several corruption related scandals. Among them, Ishwor Pokharel (deputy minister and minister for defense) Rabindra Adhikari (former minister for tourism and civil aviation), Gokul Baskota (minister for information and communication), Bhanu Bhakta Dhakal (minister for health), Bishnu Poudel (party general secretary), Kumar Regmi (Justice at supreme court) are most notable. The close relationship of the Oli government with some of the notorious business firms and big houses like Yeti Holdings and OMNI Groups is self-evident. Nevertheless, it is a matter of dismay that Mr Oli does not feel anymore disgrace to claim that all of them are innocent people and, at the same time, he is hell bent to protect such corrupt people and redeem them of the charges against them. Thus Corruption has been further institutionalized in the country and Nepal is ranked among one of the most corrupted regimes of the world. Hence, the Oli government has been badly exposed before the eyes of general populace by virtue of its corrupt activities and behaviours.

As the graph of popularity of the Oli government has been coming down almost to zero level and the nation and people have been plagued because of rampant corruption and COVID-19 pandemic as well as nationwide lockdown on the one hand, Mr Oli introduced some ordinances including party defection law through the president on the other. In addition, he deployed some of his confidants (two parliamentarians and former IGP of Nepal police) in order to kidnap a member of parliament of the opposition party (Janta Samajvadi Party). Mr Oli was compelled to face growing criticism both from outside and within his party ranks and he was under heavy pressure to step down from both the party and government leadership. His positions of party chairmanship and premiership were at stake owing to the internal party feuds.

Meanwhile, he opted to utilize the issue of disputed border lands encroached and annexed by Indian side in Kalapani-Lipulek-Limpiyadhura area in the north-western end of Nepal to cover up his failures and weaknesses. He announced that the government would publish an updated new political map of the country including Kalapani-Lipulek-Limpiyadhura. But this phenomenon was an outcome of the compulsion of the given circumstances. It is, however, a positive move but it was not his real interest. Earlier he was against publishing the map and was making high sounding speeches to bring back the lands from the Indian occupation. His notorious anti-national role has already been proven during Integrated Mahakali Treaty. As the treaty was signed between then Nepali Congress government and Indian government he was present as an eye witness during the signing ceremony of Mahakali Treaty at the demand of Mr Pranav Mukharjee, then Indian minister for external affairs. Actually, it was a bizarre act on his part.

He had advocated that Nepal would benefit billions of rupees from the same treaty but nothing has happened as yet. But still he has not dared to realize the anti-national role played by him to approve the treaty in favour of India. That is why he is beating the drums of seasonal nationalism and trying to stand with the crutches of pseudo nationalism. Eventually, he is making another freaky claim that the birth place of Hindu mythological God Rama exists in Nepal and has directed the local representatives to construct a Temple accordingly. This is another eccentric logic in itself. This indicates the accelerated aggravation of Mr Oli, his government and party towards rightist path.

Now-a-days, all of the rightists, revisionists and reactionary elements do not hesitate to state that the present state system is “committed to Socialism” and “socialism oriented”, and they are trying their best to throw ashes into the eyes of the masses of the people. And, the (NCP) has been the harbinger of this rotten campaign. But, in the real sense, it is an anti-people and reactionary state system which has already been experienced by the people. If the present situation persists, the reactionary system will turn into non-functional one and thereby become obsolete soon. Then the right option will be only to supersede it by People’s Republic of Nepal.

The revolutionary parties and forces must come together to lead forward the struggle to make the People's Republic of Nepal a reality and thereby to move forward to the path of scientific socialism. This is the only way forward to salvage the country from the yoke of the reactionaries and emancipate the exploited masses of people from their suppression. So, it has been the urgent task of the revolutionary parties and forces to bolster their strength by rallying the exploited and downtrodden strata of the masses of people under their leadership. At this juncture, the Communist Party of Nepal (Revolutionary Maoist) can and must play the vital role to bring all the revolutionary forces together for the cause of establishing the people's republic of Nepal.

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On the all-round crisis of neoliberal capitalism

– Com. Basanta

Introduction

Neoliberalism is the latest ideology that guides the capitalist system. It is related to monopoly capitalism, which is imperialism. Guided by this principle, the present capitalist system is passing through an all-round crisis. This article will centre on the capitalist system, its recurring crises, in general, and the latest crisis of neoliberal capitalism, in particular.

Capitalism

The economic system that produces and distributes commodities for individual profit based on the relation between labour and wage is capitalism. It has been developing since the 16th century, about 500 years before. In the long history of humanity of about three hundred thousand years, it is a short period. Marx studied and investigated the laws of capitalism, based on dialectical and historical materialism. Large volumes of Capital, written by Marx, are related to this subject.

Characteristics of capitalism

In the capitalist system, an individual owns both the means of production and commodities he produces. The capitalist society is divided into two classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The class which owns the means of production is a bourgeois class whereas the class which does not have anything other than his labour to sell is a proletariat. The exploitation of surplus labour is the essence of capitalism and the bourgeoisie grabs maximum profit out of it. As a result, the economic gap between the bourgeoisie and worker never narrows but goes on widening. The regime sets up legal institutions and administrative structures to protect the exploitative system. The government does not interfere in the market to decide the price of a commodity; the market fixes the price based on supply and demand. These are the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in brief.

Contradictions of capitalism

Capitalism is a matter in motion. It has its contradictions, because of which it is in motion. The contradictions of capitalism are as follows.

One, the commodity is produced collectively in a factory; but an individual owns it. It is known as the capitalist relations of production. The means of production and commodities become his private assets, with the force of state power, its laws, and the economic status of the bourgeoisie. In this way, the

capitalist society divides into two classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The class interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are diametrically opposite. As a result, there is an unceasing conflict between the bourgeoisie and the worker. It is called class struggle, and it is the motive force of the capitalist society.

Two, the commodity is not produced in a planned way and not based on how much society needs but based on grabbing profit out of it. Capitalists invest their capital to produce those commodities, by selling which, they can earn more profit. This anarchy in production creates a problem of over-production and, as a result, capitalism entraps in recurring crises. The bourgeoisie solves the loss caused by the economic crisis by extracting profit from the additional surplus-labour of the worker. In a capitalist system, the profit goes to the pockets of the bourgeoisie, and the workers bear its burden.

Three, the bourgeois class always transforms a part of profit into capital. As a consequence, its wealth goes on increasing. However, the workers can never save even a fraction from his earning because the bourgeoisie gives them a minimum wage necessary to make them survive. Even if their wage increases for some reasons, they cannot save but finish it in buying their daily needs. Labour also becomes a commodity, the supply and the demand of which decides its wage in the market.

Four, the government and market play a special role in the capitalist production system. The price of a commodity is determined based on supply and demand in the market. The regime creates administrative and oppressive mechanisms to manage the market and commodity trade, and by mobilizing them, defends the interest of the bourgeoisie. The working-class people are exploited by the bourgeoisie and suppressed by the state power.

Five, the development of capitalism is uneven. The developed capitalist countries go on expanding their hegemony through political and military intervention upon the underdeveloped countries. Hence, the people of the underdeveloped countries suffer two kinds of oppressions: internal and external.

Six, there is a contradiction between productive forces and relations of production in the society. When the productive forces develop to a certain point, then the existing relations of production cannot withstand it and stand as fetters to the development of productive forces. In this situation, the new productive forces change the old relations of production, and society advances. It is the law of the development of society.

The forms of capitalism

The class struggle uninterruptedly goes on in a capitalist society, and society goes on changing. In history, the proletariats have built up a qualitatively different society by developing class struggle to the struggle for power under the leadership of a communist party. But, all class struggles do not reach up to political struggle and proletarian revolution. In the course of intense class struggle, the bourgeoisie has also been protecting the capitalist system with some cosmetic changes in it. Capitalism has gone through different forms and sub-stages in its struggle for survival. Nevertheless, whatever be the form, there has been no change in the characteristics and contradictions of capitalism mentioned above. The forms or sub-stages of capitalism can be stated in brief as follows.

Mercantile capitalism

Mercantile capitalism is the initial form of capitalism. All of the characteristics of modern capitalism do not exist in it; the commodity is bought to sell and is then sold to earn a profit. The mercantile capitalism had developed in the course of accumulating valuable metals like gold and silver by selling the commodities that countries like Britain and the Netherlands in Europe had produced in an unorganized and unplanned manner. At the beginning of the 16th century, the mercantile capitalists that entered other countries in the name of trade not only earned profit but started establishing political hegemony as well. In this process, the developed nations colonized many underdeveloped countries all across the world. At that time, the sun never sets on the British Empire was a famous saying to eulogize British colonization.

People used to discuss it for long. In this relatively a long period of the colonial era, many European countries, including Britain, economically prospered by grabbing a lot of property from their colonies.

In the course of the development of society, the invention of a steam engine was an important milestone. The proletariat, who entered cities from the countryside, the sufficient wealth grabbed from the colonies, and the machines run by steam-engine altogether brought about a qualitative change in the method of commodity production in the UK. It is known as the industrial revolution. After the industrial revolution, mercantile capitalism was unable to withstand the new productive forces that developed qualitatively in many countries of Europe, including the British and France. As a result, a different kind of capitalism emerged from the womb of mercantile capitalism. It is known as classical capitalism.

Classical capitalism

After the industrial revolution, the anti-feudal bourgeois democratic revolution took place in Britain under the leadership of the bourgeoisie and participation of the proletariat. The capitalist class that owned the means of production led the state power. In this course, bourgeois democratic revolutions took place in many other countries of Europe, and nation-states came into being. The capitalism that developed in this process is called classical capitalism, industrial capitalism, or competitive capitalism. This type of capitalism represented the national character.

After the invention of electricity towards the second half of the 19th century, electromagnetic motors were invented. Many modern machines necessary for the industries were developed and they replaced the steam engines. Vehicles that work with petrol and diesel engines were built. As a result of all this, the capitalist system made another leap, and capitalism developed in an unprecedented manner. However, it brought about another crisis in capitalism. It was the crisis created by the overproduction of commodity and concentration of capital. In other words, the capitalists did not have sufficient market to sell their products and they lacked places to invest their money. The capitalist rulers expanded their colonies to solve this crisis. The process of colonization accelerated.

After the expansion of colonies, it broadened the sources of raw materials and also created markets for the commodities produced. On the other, the bourgeoisie brought up an elite class from amongst the workers by increasing their leader's wages. Engels has said the bourgeoisie bribed the labour leaders. In the given situation, the labour movement started moving around economic demands, not the struggle for state power. The bourgeoisie succeeded to confine the class struggle within the reformist movement by causing to develop reformism in the labour movement. Lenin has strongly criticized it as militant economism and trade unionism.

The weak labour movement was very favourable for the bourgeoisie. The role of capital and the forms of commodity production and its distribution gradually started changing. The finance capital, which is formed of bank capital and industrial capital, occupied the place of commodity export. The colonial powers established industries in their colonies by employing finance capital, and then they captured industrial raw materials and exploited cheap labour. They brought in an ample amount of property earned by selling the commodities to their countries. Finance capital enforced monopoly all over the world. The capitalism that developed in this process is called monopoly capitalism. Thus, towards the last decade of the 19th century, monopoly capitalism took birth from the intercourse between classical capitalism and colonialism.

Monopoly Capitalism

Lenin thoroughly studied and examined the monopoly capitalism. He has said that monopoly capitalism is imperialism and it is the last stage of capitalism. According to Lenin, imperialism has five characteristics. They are: one, over-centralization of capital and production creates monopoly capital. Two, the industrial capital and bank capital make a monopoly capital. Three, the export of capital replaces the export of commodity. Four, a monopoly capitalist union is formed in the world. And five, the world is divided among the big capitalist powers.

Based on the characteristics of imperialism said above, Lenin has pointed out its essence thus. One, it is cut off from production. Two, it survives in bribery. Three, it sharpens contradiction in society. Four, it destroys the proletarian revolution by penetrating in the labour movement. Five, it maintains a close relationship with revisionism. Six, it prepares for war to impose monopoly in the world. Lenin has said that imperialism means war.

Thus, as a result of the expansion of colonies, the emergence of elite class amongst the workers, and the influence of revisionism in the labour movement, the imperialists succeeded to stop the contradiction between capital and labour from being exploded. However, they failed to mitigate the inter-imperialist contradictions; it sharpened further. As a result, the First World War broke out in 1914 and continued till 1918. It was a Europe-centred war in the main. It is roughly estimated that about 70 million army personnel were mobilized all across the world and 9 million soldiers and 7 million general public had died. No reliable data is available for economic loss.

During world war, the October Socialist Revolution succeeded in 1917 in Russia. It was a far-reaching episode in the history of the international communist movement. Following the success of the October Revolution, Lenin has said that the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution has begun.

In the backdrop of the world economy being destroyed during the First World War, the economic crisis started in 1930 and took a form of great depression all across the world. In the midst of this, the fascist rulers like Mussolini from Italy and Hitler from Germany launched military offensives in many countries of Europe and Africa aimed at establishing fascist hegemony all across the world and destroying Socialist Russia. Right at that time, Japan was carrying out a military attack in the East Asian countries including China to expand its empire. In the beginning, the United States of America was not involved in the war. It joined the war when Japan carried out a surprise attack upon the US military camp at Pearl Harbour. In that situation, Russia, Britain, and the US formed a united front and stood against the fascist offensive. It took a form of world war. In the Second World War that took place between 1939 and 1945, the Italian, German and Japanese fascists were defeated at the hands of the anti-fascist front. Stalin's role carries decisive importance in the Second World War. Almost a total of 90 million people have died during this war and the diseases caused by it.

A large amount of property and people were lost in the Second World War. However, the international communist movement succeeded to realize significant achievements as well. One, not only was the Soviet Union secure, but also established internationally. Two, the new democratic revolution was accomplished in China. Three, socialism was established in about a dozen countries in East Europe. Four, people's democratic revolution succeeded in North Korea. And five, Vietnam attained independence as a colony of France. In addition to this, a wave of the national liberation movements liberated colonies and as such ended the colonial era. It was an achievement of far-reaching significance.

Ever since the great depression of the 1930s, a British bourgeois economist John Maynard Keynes had been proposing a new model of capitalism in which the economy is intervened by the state. On the other, people's attraction towards socialism had been a challenge for the imperialist plunderers after the October revolution. By incorporating some of the economic programs of socialism into the bourgeois model put forward by Keynes, the imperialist rulers concocted a new model of capitalism so that the workers could be placed in a dilemma between socialism and capitalism. The very model of capitalism is known as welfare capitalism, Keynesian capitalism, state-administered capitalism, or mixed economy. Thus, after the Second World War, monopoly capitalism came forward in the form of welfare capitalism.

Welfare Capitalism

The bourgeoisie acclaimed welfare capitalism as a weapon that mitigates the cyclic crisis of capitalism; evenly develops productive forces, fairly distributes the national wealth, and protects the society from being polarised between the rich and poor. In the beginning, it had brought about some positive results as well.

A short period of 25 years after the Second World War is known as a golden era for the US economy. As a result of government control on the major economic sectors like industry, agriculture, energy, road, railways, and airlines; tax ranging from 20 to 91 percent based on income; broad expansion of trade union organizations and free education and cheap medical treatment the US welfare economy had boomed. The workers enjoyed relatively better facilities because the strong trade unions had had bargaining power vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie. Besides, the socialist programs of countries like Russia and China had imparted influence on it. During that period, the entire capitalist countries' economy had grown not only that of the US.

In the given situation, the form of external relation and exploitation began to change. The imperialist regimes carried out different treaties with the ruling classes of the oppressed countries and started imposing hegemony through them. In this process, not only the old colonies but also the entire under-developed countries turned into a neo-colony. The difference is that the colonies were under the control of a single imperialist country, but after the end of the colonial era, the oppressed countries have to remain simultaneously under the hegemony of many imperialist countries. Independent in form but dependent in essence is the characteristic of a neo-colony. This specific form of colonial oppression continues till date.

At the beginning of the neo-colonial period, the imperialist countries used to keep the under-developed countries in their influence by way of providing aids and loans. The donors, in consultation with the local regime, used to invest that amount in the projects of national concerns like roads, bridges, and factories along with education, health, and agriculture. After a certain period, the donors used to handover those projects to the related government. It was a process of the development of bureaucratic capitalism formed of the reactionary alliance between imperialism and feudalism. Capitalism so developed seemed to be pro-people in form because not only the foreign powers but the government and the local people also had some role in choosing the project. But, in essence, bureaucratic capitalism was not progressive; it was reactionary because it hindered the development of the national economy. It is true today as well. Mao has brilliantly clarified it.

The sharpening of contradictions and spiralling of crises are the characteristics of capitalism. In line with this, the US economy suffered a severe economic crisis at the beginning of the 1970s. There were mainly three reasons for this crisis to take place. They were – one, unanticipated increase in the demand of US dollars all over the world after Breton Woods Accord; two, an excessive rise in the interest rates by the Federal Bank to hinder outflow of dollars and three, about a four-times increase in the existing price of oil by the OPEC countries. The crisis that erupted from the US spread all over the world via the UK, Canada, Australia, and the countries of Western Europe. As a result, the world economy worsened. While arriving here, the new model of welfare capitalism also did not prevent the economic crisis but it failed by itself. In this situation, the monopoly capitalism, in opposition of mixed economy and from the womb of welfare capitalism, gave rise to its new form. It is known as neoliberal capitalism.

Neoliberal Capitalism

Friedrich Hayek, among others, was an economist who had recommended the ideological aspects of neoliberalism. The erstwhile US president Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher put forward the neoliberal model of capitalism in the pretext of uplifting economy of the underdeveloped countries. At the beginning of the 1980s, the US government, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank reached a consensus. That consensus consisted of conditions the country had to abide by while inviting the foreign investment. Later in 1989, a British economist John Williamson named that agreement as Washington Consensus and formulated those conditions in ten points. Their content is as follows.

One, the country, which receives external investment, should adhere to the financial discipline put forward by institutions like IMF and WB. Two, the concerned regime has to readjust the priority of the public expenditure as the investing company requires. Three, the government has to reform the tax system to expand the market. Four, the market should have the authority to decide the bank interest rates. Five,

the market should have the right to fix the exchange rate. Six, the government should remove all sorts of restrictions to import commodities and decide tariffs to a minimum to expand the market. Seven, the state should resolve all the legal barriers in the country where the investment is to be made. Eight, the entire industries and financial institutions owned by the government should be privatized. Nine, all the rules and regulations that hinder external competition should be withdrawn. Ten, the income tax of the companies should be nominal, and the state should manage the profit to invest in informal sectors. These are the liabilities that a government needs to fulfil for inviting foreign investment.

[Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_Consensus#Original_sense:Williamson's_Ten_Points]

The Washington Consensus, summarised in ten points above, elucidates the reactionary character of neoliberal capitalism. This consensus authorized the market to control the state, and prevented the state to control the market. As of this consensus, the regimes of the oppressed countries became the arbitrating agents of multinational companies that implement conditions the MNCs place and survived on their crumb. Thus, liberalization, privatization, and globalization, which make way for the multinational companies to plunder the world market, are the politico-economic weapons of the imperialist marauders.

2007-2009 Economic Crises

Owing to globalization, the investors earned a lot of money, but that stacked in the banks; it did not reach people. Mainly, it happened so in the US. The more mobile the currency, the more it works. So, the money stacked in the banks is of no use. To make money go to the public, that is to create liquidity, the Federal Bank of America massively decreased the interest rate; as a result, the bank loans became very cheap. Then the real state companies started borrowing cheaper loans from the banks and invested in the construction of residential apartments. Later on, when the bank reserve started declining, the Federal Bank increased the interest rate again. It made the middle class, of which the economic status was waning in America, unable to afford to buy apartments by borrowing costly bank loans. As a result, there were no people to buy the apartments, the real state companies failed to pay back loans and then the banks bankrupted. It created an economic crisis in the US. Later, it spread all over the world and the world economy crashed. It is known as the great depression of 2008.

World economic condition before Covid-19

Although the economic crisis that began in 2007 was declared to have ended in 2009, the world economy had failed to catch momentum. While arriving towards 2015, economists had asserted that the crisis has not ended, and a greater crisis is in the offing shortly. From the very beginning of 2019, the economy of well-off countries started declining and while arriving in February 2020, it was close to a severe crash.

Let us, first of all, talk about the largest economy, the USA. The US economy had already shrunk by 4.8 per cent before Covid-19 had attacked upon American society. Before reaching mid-March, the US had dropped the interest rates to zero and established stimulus economic packages of the first 700 billion dollars and then 3 trillion dollars. They did it before lockdown. Till then, there was no such a big effect of Covid-19 in America; the number of infected persons was only 3,621 all over the country.

The second-largest economy in the world is China. There too, the economy was not sound as before; the GDP growth rate had dropped to 6.1 per cent, the least for the last 30 years. The Japanese economy, the third-largest in the world, had shrunk by 7.1 per cent at the end of 2019 and the interest was below zero for long. In the same manner, the European economy had plummeted by 3.5 per cent in which the economy of German was down by 2 per cent, France by 5.8 per cent, Spain by 5.2 per cent, and the UK by 2 per cent. The European central bank had dropped the interest rate to – 0.5 per cent already in September 2019. Towards the mid-March, Danish bank had reduced the interest rate to – 0.6 per cent and Swiss bank to – 0.75 per cent. It meant the banks had reached such a situation that they had to bribe people to lend their money. The world economy was getting too weak and was nearing a crash.

On the other, the commodity that affects the world economy fast is petroleum products. The price of crude oil that was \$ 56.68 per barrel on February 18, 2020, had plunged to \$ 30.63 per barrel on March 19. It was the least price since 2003. All these data represent the pre-lockdown economic situation.

[Source: <https://www.redspark.nu/en/peoples-war/kobad-ghandy-a-sceptre-is-haunting-the-world/>]

Another characteristic of capitalism is that it widens the gap between rich and poor. After 2008, this trend is on the steep rise. In 2019, 6 billionaires out of the top ten billionaires of the world were US citizens and their total wealth amounted to 512.3 billion dollars. While the total wealth of those six billionaires, in 2010, was only 161.8 billion dollars. It shows they accumulated 350.5 billion dollars only in 9 years, which is a 217 per cent increase. On the other, the remaining four billionaires out of the top ten were from four countries – France, Spain, Mexico, and India. Their total wealth in 2010 was 135 billion dollars while it reached 310.2 billion dollars in 2019, which is a 130 per cent increase. This trend of economic inequality is rising in the world and mostly in the US. In this way, the top ranks of rich people are getting richer day by day while the poor and even the middle-class people are sliding down.

[Source: <https://cnbc.com/2019/12/24/net-worths-of-richest-people-in-the-world-in-2010-and-now.html>]

Thus, the rough sketch drawn up of the pre-pandemic world economy shows that the world was going to face a serious economic crisis whether or not there was a Covid-19. The bourgeois claim that the pandemic has given rise to the economic crisis is false. What it did is it exponentially accelerated the process towards crisis.

Post Covid-19 crisis

At present, the Covid-19 has engulfed the whole world. Lockdown has been adopted as a method to stop the transfer of Covid-19 but it has devastated the economy. In other words, life versus economy has been a contradiction created by Covid-19. A vaccine is the only solution to solve this contradiction and there is no vaccine yet. A few countries have claimed that they have discovered vaccines, but the WHO has not approved them yet. Even if it is approved soon, it is unlikely to reach the people within 2020. Thus, it is sure that people will not get rid of the pandemic until the coming 6 months, at the least. If the vaccine is not discovered, the world will undergo an unimaginable catastrophe. It is an awful reality.

In this context, one of the economic advisors of the CIA and Pentagon has brought out a paper entitled “The great depression of 2020”. In this paper, he has enlightened the post-pandemic situation in five dominos. In an online article published in Redspark, Kobad Ghandy has synthesized those five dominos as mentioned under.

“1st Depression leading to massive unemployment, with more than 50% of those at work at risk. With people locked up and no purchasing ability due to unemployment and isolation there will be no demand for goods. And with the lockdown for the first time in history we have a demand and supply shock. As this crisis does not start with a financial collapse (as 1930 & 2009), cutting interest rates and pumping in money will not have long term effect to revive the economy. 2nd The next domino will be massive bankruptcies as there will be no demand for goods so no sales. 3rd The contagion will spread to Real Estate as people will not be able to pay their mortgages this \$16 trillion market will crash. 4th The fourth domino will be a collapse of the banking industry with a credit crunch, due to the collapse of peoples’ credit and bankruptcies in industry. 5th Complete collapse of our society and rule of law. Already secret talks preparing for martial law are taking place within the military.” The worst effect that the lockdown can bring about has been cited here.

[Source: <https://www.redspark.nu/en/peoples-war/kobad-ghandy-a-sceptre-is-haunting-the-world/>]

None can foresee up to when the pandemic will go and what disasters it will bring about is hard to predict. Nevertheless, the terrible picture Rickards has portrayed after the pandemic is not subjective. There is an objective basis that supports it. Whether there was Covid-19 or not, an economic crash had been smouldering since long before, now the difference is that this pandemic has accidentally increased

the dimension of crisis manifold. It is sure that the post-pandemic crisis is going to be more severe than the people are suffering now.

Conclusion

Ever since capitalism developed, it has arrived at this point amid cycles of severe crises, thanks to its inherent contradictions. The economic crisis that was smouldering before Covid-19 has now made a qualitative and multi-dimensional leap to the all-round worldwide crisis. Until Covid-19 is controlled, the health crisis is certainly going to deepen further. Where will this crisis end, is not sure.

After the lockdown of about six months, the GDP growth has declined all across the world. It has dropped to – 6.1 per cent in America, – 9.1 per cent in Europe, – 2.8 per cent in Asia, and – 2.8 per cent in Africa. IMF had brought out these data taking into account the world economic condition of June 2020. The situation has further deteriorated after June and how long the pandemic will continue cannot be predicted now. It is sure, the longer the pandemic, the more acute the economic crisis; and these data will further plunge. It can be said that if this health crisis continues for about six months, the entire field of production including the service sector will collapse and unemployment and hunger will go beyond imagination.

[Source: <https://epaper.amn.media/annapurnapost-detail/1283>]

As a result, the days ahead will be days of scarcity, starvation, anger, and revolt everywhere in the world. This situation will not only cause to sharpen further the health and economic crisis but also the political crisis. The neoliberal capitalism and the parliamentary democracy will not be able to mitigate the post-Covid-19 crisis with any reforms the imperialists make. It is not the end of communism, as Fukuyama said, but the end of capitalism that is not far now. Scientific socialism is the only alternative to capitalism. Scientific socialism has become an objective necessity of today and its future is bright. Therefore, to unite the entire revolutionaries nationally and internationally and develop revolution in a planned way is the task the genuine communists have to take up so that the all-round crisis of capitalism is transformed into the wave of world proletarian revolution.

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