

Imperialism and World Revolution

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Imperialism, Bourgeoisie of the client states and world revolution

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Globalisation or capitalist exchange and production relations on an international scale is being carried out by world imperialism with renewed vigour since the downfall of the so-called socialist states and the Soviet Union. But as a development of monopoly capitalism and imperialism this is not a new phenomenon. In fact, the process of globalisation began at a stage of historical development of capitalism when the banker began to be transformed into an industrial capitalist.

When finance capital, in its urge for self-expansion generally begins to play an autonomous role by relinquishing its original role as a helper in production and finally comes to control and dominate not only the national economy of an imperialist state itself, but the economy of the whole world, its role becomes entirely destructive of the social system which it finds at hand and also of environment and leads to massive unemployment, loss of purchasing power by reducing wages, reduction of expenditure on health, education etc. and a thousand other developments which turns hundreds of millions of people into destitutes. In other words, on the one hand, it creates a very small number of nouveau riche, and on the other hand it creates countless number of nouveau poor not only in the countries of what is called the third world, but also in the homelands of world imperialism. This is also accompanied by direct and indirect intervention of expansionist finance capital in the affairs of the economy as a whole, and also in the sphere of politics, administration, education, culture etc.

Historically the development of monopoly capital has been related to war expenditure. Thus imperialism and war becomes inseparable to such an extent that not only the expansion but also the survival of imperialism comes to be largely dependent on war. It is for this reason that even at the present moment, in the absence of any threat from the former Soviet block, war situations are created by imperialism by generating hostilities mostly between neighbouring countries and pushing them into war with each other. Thus in the absence of a world war, local wars have become a new form of imperialist war which are apparently fought by nations in various areas of the globe, though in reality they are nothing but wars waged by imperialism through their agents among nations dependent on them. Since the fall of the Soviet Union there have been other developments. As an unchallenged super power U.S. imperialism is openly and directly unleashing war on other countries on false pretexts for gaining control of their resources. The Anglo-U.S. imperialism's military aggression against Iraq is its latest example. However, this destructive aspect of imperialism is not an entirely new phenomenon.

Since the downfall of the Soviet Union, U.S. imperialism in the name of "new world order" is following a policy of aggressive globalisation through a series of new ventures like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and various other bilateral and multilateral agreements between the imperialist and capitalist countries and blocks and forming new blocks like G8. The new forms of financial aggressions have become actually necessary because the emergence of finance capital as the most dominant factor of capital is inextricably related to an inherent crisis of capitalism itself.

Capitalists appropriate surplus value in the form of profits and invest their capital for further profits. Each capitalist wants to restrict the income of the workers of his own

establishments for maximising profit, and at the same time capitalists as a class need to enlarge and expand consumption in general so that this expanded production, as a consequence of increased investment, may be marketed. But it becomes impossible because workers, and people in general, can buy only limited goods at prices dictated by the market. Thus consumption limits restrict the scale and volume of investment for expanding the capacity to produce more goods which can come to the market for mass consumption. Or, in other words, the contradiction between restriction on private consumption of each individual and the need for expanding production capacity for enlarging profit, forces the capitalists to invest not in production but in financial assets. This is a process of migration of capital from the sphere of real and productive economy to the financial sector.

Workers in the imperialist countries get higher wages even now, compared to the wages received by workers of the third world. But the situation is not the same as before, not as it was when Lenin wrote his thesis on imperialism. This is because financial capital of the imperialist countries are now closing down factories, forcing the workers out of employment and reducing wages in order to maximise profits not by production, but by financial operations. Moreover, transfer of technologies to the less developed countries, and creating jobs for workers of such countries, are factors which are changing the structures of the working forces not only in the U.S. but also in other countries. These developments are creating an objective basis for international working class solidarity by bringing the workers in these countries more than ever to each other, in relation to their class interests, and creating a basis for international working class politics.

The I.M.F. and the World Bank now dictate the industrial, business and fiscal policies in third world countries and in these matters their dictates often override the decisions of the national governments. Or in other words, the international financial organisations act as decision making authorities in those countries and assume much of the functions of a national government, in order to promote the interest not of those nations but of imperialism. Being thus subordinated to the authorities of the I.M.F, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, such national governments endorse and implement policies which not only damage their national interests, but destroy the economic, social and cultural life of great masses of workers and working people in general, and at the same time cause unprecedented damage to the environment in each country. The consequences of these are far-reaching. In the name of minimising losses, increasing efficiency and providing incentives and opportunities to private entrepreneurs, industrial units are shut down one after another or are handed over to private sector from the national sector.

In the name of market economy import, export and taxation policies are formulated in such a manner as to flood those countries with the same type of foreign goods at cheaper prices, which are produced locally, thereby liquidating whole series of industries and throwing an ever-increasing number of workers out of employment.

Agricultural policies are formulated by the I.M.F. and the World Bank with the same objectives and in the near future agricultural economies of these countries are likely to be wholly dependent on external control of machinery, fertilizer, insecticides and such other things and regulated by laws governing patent rights of agricultural inputs like seeds etc., thereby endangering the economic life of the peasants and the rural poor.

Since the fall of the so-called socialist states in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union imperialist propaganda against socialism has reached unprecedented heights. This propaganda has been accompanied by attacks on working people in general, and the industrial workers in particular, not only in the countries generally described today as the third world, but also in the heartland of imperialism, the United States of America, in the imperialist countries of the European Union and Japan.

Attacks on other countries and other peoples by U.S. imperialism have now reached a scale and intensity unprecedented in world history. Being goaded by lust for the resources of other countries, particularly oil, the United States has embarked on a policy of wanton aggression and

national repression in the countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, and inventing pretexts for making war on other countries. Being unable to use land forces they made cowardly air attacks on Afghanistan, totally devastated that country and installed a puppet government so that they could establish their control over that strategically important region, take the oil pipe line from central Asia through Afghanistan to the warm waters of Pakistan. In order to reduce the dependence on Saudi Arabian oil and establish control over the oil of Iraq they are now preparing to make the same type of massive air attacks on that country under the pretext of destroying its weapons of mass destruction. In this their real intention is identified clearly when one considers the fact that Israel, their most aggressive and fascist client state in the Middle East, is supplied by them with the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction which are being used daily against Palestine. This can also be seen in their attitude toward India and Pakistan, both of which possess weapons of mass destruction like the nuclear bomb. The fraudulent character of their talk about weapons of mass destruction is most clearly revealed when one considers the fact that the U.S. itself is the largest possessor of the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction, which they are using for making attacks on other people and for blackmailing the various nations of the world.

After September 11, 2001 aggression against other nations by U.S. imperialism is being carried out under the transparent garb of war against terror. Incidents like the attack on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon are itself nothing but retaliatory attacks against national repressions of the U.S. carried out in various countries and regions of the world, particularly in the Middle East. Since the local governments in these countries are being run by stooges and client states of U.S. imperialism or by states terribly afraid of U.S. attacks, there is no resistance from these governments. There are no broad-based democratic and socialist movements and organised political parties in these countries who can put up strong resistance against imperialist repressions.

In the absence of these forces conditions for the rise of Islamic religious fundamentalism have been created in the vastly Muslim majority areas of the Middle East, Pakistan, some countries of Central and South-East Asia. In spite of their religious character the anti-U.S. terror attacks of the Islamic fundamentalists are deeply rooted in the conditions of imperialist national repressions and these are a form of struggle against national repression carried out by U.S. imperialism. It is for this reason that Islamic fundamentalism will continue to thrive as long as national repression is carried out by imperialism in underdeveloped and backward countries of the world. It is for this reason that the social base and power of the Islamic fundamentalists can be liquidated only by developing and organising democratic and socialist movements throughout the regions where they are active today.

In our region of South Asia conditions have perceptively changed after the 11 September incidents. Islamic fundamentalism has asserted itself powerfully and other non-religious reactionary and fascist forces have also consolidated themselves in Pakistan. U.S. imperialism has made considerable advances into India and it has now openly joined the George Bush bandwagon under the cover of war against terror and Indian reactionary forces have also consolidated themselves with renewed vigour under the leadership of the saffron parties.

The principal partner of India's ruling coalition government, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is now busy re-organising its own houses in order to carry forward the chariot of 'Hindutva' in Indian politics. It is a very critical time for India and the 'Hindutva' of the saffron parties is nothing but a political gimmick of the Hindu upper caste dominated by big capital to manage the crisis. Basically it has nothing to do with the tenets of Hinduism. Wearing the saffron robe and marking the forehead, nose and cheeks with red and white stripes means very little except identifying a person as a Hindu.

It is interesting that while making communal propaganda against other religions, the saffron parties including the BJP, have practically nothing to say about the contents of their

‘Hindutva’. Its principal “ideological” programme is to destroy mosques and churches, to destroy social and cultural life of religious minorities and even to annihilate them physically.

This communalism of the saffron parties is often mentioned as Hindu fundamentalism. This is a gross misunderstanding of what is known as Hinduism. Without religious textual reference there cannot be any religious fundamentalism. The essence of such fundamentalism is strict adherence to scriptures like the Talmud, the Bible, the Tripitak, the Quran or the Grantha Saheb. There is no such Hindu scripture strict adherence to which is essential for being a Hindu. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, including the Geeta, are sacred books of Hinduism, but for being a Hindu one need not strictly adhere to any of them. Not only that. A person may continue to remain a Hindu and belong to the social structure of Hinduism even if he dissociates himself from the holy books and declares himself an atheist. This is the reason why Hinduism remains quite flexible at the ideological level unlike Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam or Sikhism.

In fact, if anybody has to look for the essence of Hinduism he will have to turn to the social structure of Hinduism, the caste system. This is the reason why upper caste Hindus may be liberal at the ideological level and even tolerate atheists, but they are not prepared to tolerate any dent in the caste system.

Though caste and class are not the same thing, yet in India upper caste and upper class historically developed and remained almost inseparable, and even today it is largely so. Business and industry, education, culture, politics etc., in fact, the entire ruling class is dominated by the upper caste.

In India today ethnic, linguistic, regional and communal contradictions have grown sharper and more bitter than they were during the British rule, but it is for the first time that caste contradictions and conflicts have begun to threaten the Hindu social structure. Throughout North India, from Bihar to Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujrat, Rajsthan and other areas the so-called lower caste Hindus, the dalits, are now poised, in varying degrees, to combat the upper caste ruling echelon of the society. The upper caste is not lying low under these circumstances.

They rose to the occasion during the Prime Ministership of V. P. Singh, who published the Mandol Commission report on reservation of opportunities for the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes (OBC) of people and declared his governments' intention to implement the recommendation of that commission.

The upper caste Hindus reacted furiously and the BJP emerged as the greatest political champion of the upper caste Hindus who control the capital and the state machinery in India. The BJP, which was a partner in the V. P. Singh coalition ministry, withdrew its support and the government collapsed. Since then the BJP did not have to look back and soon they surpassed the Congress as the foremost political organisation and representative of the upper caste Hindus and Indian big capital.

The ‘Hindutva’ and renewed aggression of the saffron parties against the religious minorities, especially the Muslims, has to be understood in this perspective. In India ethnic, linguistic, and regional contradictions and conflicts are now very powerful factors which tend to undermine the unitary constitutional system in India, create great internal instability and even to destroy India’s political unity. But, at the present stage, the greatest threat comes from the lower caste Hindus, who are now historically emerging as a power threatening both the upper caste Hindus and the Indian big capital owned by them. In this sense there is no other factor which can deliver a greater and more powerful blow to the structure of Hindu society.

Gandhi tried to contain the upsurge of lower caste Hindus by calling them ‘Harijans’ or the people of God and preaching religion among them. He succeeded greatly in the then situation in British India, though under the leadership of Ambedkar large number of lower caste Hindus embraced Buddhism. The situation in present day India is very different. No Gandhiite formula or

political strategy can divert the resurgence of the so-called lower castes and oppressed classes of the Hindus.

The realisation of this difficulty inspired the upper caste Hindus to formulate other strategy and a different political programme to fight and thwart its development. In India's specific historical conditions nothing is more suitable and efficacious for this than to raise the bogey of religious communalism, particularly a tirade against the Muslims in order to divert the attention of the dalits from caste confrontations. The BJP and its fraternal saffron parties the R.S.S., the V.H.P., Bajrang Dal, the Shibsena and such others combined to work out this strategy and programme. They began their Rathajatra or the march of the chariot, with the objective of demolishing the Babri Masjid, a sixteenth century mosque at Ayodhya and building a Ram Mandir at the same site. It paid them politically, led them to electoral victory and installed them in power at the center and in a number of states. After that, they used the Kargill affair and won greater victory, and now they are preparing to create another suitable situation to win the next general election. For creating this "suitable" situation they organised large-scale killing of Muslims in Gujrat in which the lower caste Hindus also participated. In the name of fighting terrorism in the style of U.S. President Bush they are making attacks on Muslims whenever it is politically practicable for them.

In order to organise and execute anti-minorities aggression the BJP is at present engaged in making changes in the governments as well as in their party organisation. L. K. Advani has been promoted to the position of deputy Prime Minister of India with large powers. Venkaiya Naidu, a protege of Advani and a ferocious communalist has been made the president of BJP. Other changes are in the offing. In the mean time Norendra Modi of Gujrat, with full support of the BJP high command remains installed as the Chief Minister even after all his communal misdeeds.

In spite of these developments and the aggressive policies of the caste Hindu organisations, India is unlikely to remain under the grip of upper caste Hindu communalists like the BJP and other saffron parties in the way they plan it. Because the above mentioned contradictions and conflicts within the structure of Hindu society and the conflicts of the working peoples of India with the ruling classes are not going to remain at rest under the yoke of upper caste, big capital and imperialism for long. The indication of this were there in the recent Indian state elections and in the wide ranging protest against communal riots and the various reactionary and fascist policies of the BJP and their coalition allies.

However, it is interesting to observe that there is little organised resistance against national repression on an all-India scale. India, like Czarist Russia, is now a prison house of nations and nationalities. For some time resistance against national repression are taking place locally, in varying degrees in the Punjab, Kashmir and in the states of North Eastern India. In spite of differences in forms and appearances, the substance of these is the same. Owing to the weakness of progressive and democratic forces, the struggle of the Kashmiri people is being intervened by Pakistan and they have succeeded to some extent in giving it a communal and Islamic fundamentalist character, but the substance of their struggle is basically the same as the substance of the struggle of the different nationalities of North Eastern India. Not only in these regions, but also in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharastra etc. in Northern India and in Orissya, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and other areas of South India various nationalities are oppressed under the yoke of Indian big capital and imperialism.

But it seems that little attention is being paid to this situation and there is no programme on an all-India basis for organising resistance to oppression and repression of nations and nationalities and to coordinate these struggles with the general struggles of the working class, the peasants and other working peoples.

The situation in Bangladesh is very much different from that of India and Pakistan in these respects. In 1971 the Pakistan state was overthrown in the region and a new state emerged. In this new state the basis of ethnic, linguistic, communal and regional contradictions were substantially

liquidated and the influence of these contradictions in the political life of the people and organised politics is now marginal. It is for this reason that no political party exists in Bangladesh on ethnic, linguistic, communal or regional basis. For the ruling classes' need for using religion in politics some Islamic fundamentalist parties like the Jamat-i-Islam function in Bangladesh. The Jamat has even become a partner in the present coalition government with the BNP. Jamat-i-Islam and such other organisations function as Islamic fundamentalist parties and thereby openly make political use of religion. But the BNP and the Awami League also use religion politically whenever it suits them.

As a form of political use of religion communalism plays a marginal role in Bangladeshi politics, but that does not mean that religious minorities including Hindus, are not oppressed. Since 1971 their properties have been grabbed by the Bangladeshi Muslims on a bigger scale than it was in Pakistan. In their drive for acquisition of property, leaders and workers of political parties like the Awami League, the BNP etc. sometimes make attack on Hindus mostly in the rural areas. Discriminations against Hindus in matters of opportunities exist, as it exists also against ethnic, linguistic and other religious minorities.

In Bangladesh ethnic, linguistic, regional and communal factors have been marginalised in politics and they are not in a position to influence in the sphere of class struggles as they did during the British and the Pakistani period and as they still do in India and Pakistan. In this situation it was natural to expect that class struggle would emerge as the main form of political struggle of the working peoples of Bangladesh. But this did not happen and even today the role of class struggle in Bangladeshi politics is marginal. This is so in spite of the fact that exploitation and plunder of the people and terror attacks on them in terms of scale and atrocities have reached unprecedented heights and the lives and livelihood of the people are terribly insecure.

In order to understand this apparently anachronistic situation it may be briefly stated that the new Bangladeshi ruling class was made up of petty bourgeois elements who had little property but throughout their struggle for independence they aspired to own big property and wealth. At the time of independence in 1971 these petty bourgeois elements came to possess political power under the leadership of the Awami League and began to use their new found power for acquisition of property and wealth in whatever form it was available. They did not belong to the productive classes and there was no possibility of their acquiring wealth by appropriating surplus from production. Thus for them there was no way of doing so except by plundering the existing wealth of others. Added to this was the plunder of state properties. In the name of socialism the Awami League nationalised the commanding heights of the economy and it paved the way for plundering the industries and the financial houses. Thievery, corruption, graft and plunder shaped the economic life of the new ruling class and soon terrorism became inextricably related to these activities.

The government imposed a ceiling of 2.5 million takas on private investment, but at the same time huge amount of wealth and liquid money began to accumulate in the hands of leaders and leading workers of the ruling Awami League, their relations, friends and supporters. This could not be invested legally due to the restriction on private investment. But the motive force of capital being profit and maximisation of profit, the newly acquired money began to be invested in domestic trade in the form of hoarding and black marketing and in foreign trade in the form of smuggling. Thus in addition to thievery, corruption, graft and plunder, black marketing and smuggling shaped the character of the new Bengali ruling class and the new rich. In fact a new trading class began to be formed and eventually Bangladesh came to be ruled by traders. All economic activities were subordinated to trading. What followed was nothing new. With reference to the role of merchants' capital Marx said, "Merchants' capital, when it holds a position of dominance, stands everywhere for a system of robbery, so that its development among the trading nations of old and modern times is always directly connected with plundering, piracy, kidnapping slaves, and colonial conquest, as in Carthage, Rome, and later among the Venetians, Portugese, Dutch etc." (Capital,

volume 3, p. 331). In the Bangladeshi version of the rule of merchants or traders all the basic features of character mentioned by Marx was there.

The greatest harm this did to the development of class struggle was by way of vitiating the attitude and habit of the middle class and particularly of its new generation. It imbued in them an insipid opportunism, which paralysed their social perceptions and made them incapable of active participation in political work. Consequently very small number of young persons and students from the middle class come forward and join the revolutionary struggle, but most of them return to the fold of their own class for opportunist reasons. Some of them remain in politics but in spite of their claptrap about revolution, socialism etc. they serve the ruling classes under one pretext or another.

The situation in Bangladesh is deteriorating very fast and this is happening basically due to the totally predatory character of the ruling class. It developed rapidly through plunder, corruption and smuggling, but it was not accompanied by necessary cultural and political attainments and maturity. In fact, the miserably low level of culture of the ruling class and wanton plunder of national resources have led to the rapid criminalisation of the ruling class of Bangladesh. It has created a crisis in the general administration and almost a breakdown situation in police administration. Even the political parties of the ruling class have begun to disintegrate in a significant manner. The situation has now become so serious that in her attempt to control the law and order situation the BNP Prime Minister had to call out the armed forces.

The most significant aspect of this development is the fact that the Prime Minister did not consult either her party or cabinet colleagues before launching the 'Operation Clean Heart' of the armed forces. This she did out of fear that advance knowledge of the operation would alert the criminals who are sheltered not only by the powerful quarters in parties of the opposition, but also by persons belonging to her own party and government. Criminalisation of the ruling class and top echelons of the government in Bangladesh has indeed reached a point where it has become necessary to use the armed forces against important sections of the ruling class itself.

When the leaders of the ruling classes can not repose their confidence on their own parties and governments, the attitude of the people towards such parties and governments can be well imagined. Lenin said that the revolutionary situation in any country begins to mature when the broad masses of the people lose confidence in the ruling class and it becomes impossible for the ruling class to continue its rule in the old way. Considering the situation in Bangladesh one can not fail to observe that objectively the revolutionary situation is developing fast.

As a client state of U.S. imperialism Bangladesh systematically liquidated big industries in all the important sectors and has opened up its market to foreign and imperialist countries to the utter detriment of national interests. All these have led to massive retrenchment and increasing unemployment. There has been no significant land reform and in spite of some changes in the employment structure in the rural areas, there is widespread unemployment. The extent and magnitude of the crisis can be understood from the fact that four hundred thousand people are entering Dhaka city every year in search of employment.

It would seem from these that Bangladesh is actually on the threshold of a democratic revolution. But, as has been said earlier, class struggle of the working people and resistance to the oppressive policies and acts of the ruling class are still vary disorganised and weak. The splintered groups of the old Communist parties have degenerated and they function as auxiliary forces of the ruling parties and the ruling classes in general. Most left intellectuals of Bangladesh are allied to these parties and in spite of their pretensions they act as servitors and flunkies of the ruling class and U.S. imperialism.

Certain extraordinary favourable conditions mentioned above cannot by themselves create a revolutionary political development. For this, active participation of hundreds of thousands of committed workers is a necessary pre-requisite. But the orientation and condition of Bangladeshi middle class are at present a great constraint and impediment to the development of organised

revolutionary activities.

In the absence of organised resistance people in various places and fields of activities often put up spontaneous resistance. They even temporarily paralyse the administration. These are indications that the people are ready to act if they are properly organised and led by proper democratic and revolutionary parties.

The revolutionary forces in Bangladesh are still very weak and disorganised. But at the same time the class enemies and adversaries of the people and the revolutionary forces are perhaps the weakest in the whole world. This equation is very significant and it will go a long way to create conditions for rapid development of the revolution. Bangladesh is a country where important changes have always taken place through mass upsurges and insurrections. It happened in 1952 during the language movement, in 1969 during the movement against Ayub's military rule, during March 1971 on the eve of the war, in 1990 during the movement for overthrow of Ershad's military role. Thus a concrete analysis of the concrete historical development in Bangladesh reveals that the most appropriate way of overthrowing not only a government but even the ruling class is massive popular upsurge. In the past all the massive upsurges were led and contained by this or that section of the ruling class. But the present situation clearly indicates that in future no section of the ruling class will be in a position to contain such popular upsurge and turn it to its own favour. Even if it happens it is not likely to last long.

The task of the revolutionary forces in Bangladesh in this historical situation is to develop rapidly by organising itself on a massive scale on the basis of a properly formulated strategy and by continuously formulating and executing appropriate tactics. To this task we have to address ourselves.

In the world today, the conditions of revolution are not created only by internal developments in the country concerned, but developments in other countries as well, especially in the countries of the region to which it belongs. This is not and cannot be different in our case. In spite of all barriers, the people of South Asia are related, even now, in a hundred ways and they have a common cultural history and common history of political struggles. This aspect of our situation has been neglected for too long, but time has now come when we must renew and establish contact between democratic and revolutionary movements in the countries of this region, exchange our ideas, coordinate our struggles against imperialism and work unitedly for overthrowing their client states. This is also a task to which we must address ourselves.

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