

The question of building a new type of communist party

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Introduction:

In general, the term party means a political organisation. But, this much is not enough. Party is a sum-total of ideology, politics, line, tactic, plan and organisation. The outlook to comprehend the society, the strategic goal, the tactic to serve that strategy, the political programme and the organisational method etc create the identity of a party. In a society divided into classes, every political party is relative to a certain class, it cannot be absolute. That is, a political party does not represent both the oppressors and the oppressed in a society but represents only one class, and works in its interest. From this standpoint, a political vanguard of the proletariat, which firstly identifies the entire economic, social and cultural problems and contradictions in the class society, secondly develops political line, policy and plan to resolve those contradictions and thirdly leads the class struggle to make the entire humanity reach to communism is a communist party.

Development of the communist concept

The invention of the steam engine in the second half of the 18th century, about 250 years ago, brought about an industrial revolution in the society. It brought the capitalist class forward in the European and Western countries and consequently bourgeoisie democratic revolutions took place against feudal states. This political change resulted into unprecedented development of the productive forces. Marx and Engels have also said that bourgeois democratic revolution is progressive compared to feudalism. Capitalism on the one hand developed a capitalist class, owner of the means of production, and on the other a proletariat, a huge number of factory workers who sell their labour as a commodity. Marx and Engels deeply studied the class and social contradictions existing in the capitalist society and developed a concept of communist society. They asserted that the proletariat, which is the last and most revolutionary class in the capitalist society, is the one that can accomplish this historical task.

Marx-Engels and party building:

Marx and Engels published the communist manifesto in 1848. It clarified that no class other than the proletariat is capable to accomplish the socialist revolution opening the way forward to communism, a classless society. Marxism has provided many fundamental truths, which act as ideological foundations to build a communist party. The theory of class struggle, the midwife role of violence in the revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat etc. are the basic ideological questions upon which the communist party is founded. Clarifying about the social revolution, in a letter to Wedmeyer by Marx on March 5, 1852, Marx writes, "What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production; 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.

The aforesaid synthesis at which Marx and Engels reached in the course of a long and arduous process of class and ideological struggle provides a fundamental ideological foundation of the proletarian revolution and party building. Struggling against the reformism of Lassalle and Proudhon and ultra-left anarchism of Blanqi and Bakunin, Marx and Engels in their life time reached to this synthesis. Furthermore, they worked hard to help build communist parties in the individual countries and unite the communist revolutionaries the world over by constituting an organisation, The First International. On the one hand they worked hard to develop ideology on the other they paid sufficient attention to build organisations. In a document, 'Fictitious splits in the International' Marx and Engels write, "That this constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to ensure the triumph of the Social Revolution and its ultimate end -- the abolition of classes."

Lenin and Party Building:

Lenin, along with ideology and politics, used to take seriously the question of building organization also. To understand how he perceived the relation of ideology and politics with organisation let us take help of his saying. In page 415, part 7, of his collective work Lenin says, "The Proletariat, in its struggle for power, has no weapon other than organization. The proletariat, disunited by anarchic competition within the bourgeois world, crushed by forced labour at the service of capital, constantly thrown in the abyss of the most complete misery, brutality and degeneration, can only become, and will inevitably become, an invincible force when its ideological union by means of Marxist principles secures itself through the organization's material unity, which gives cohesion to the millions of workers in the army of the working class. Before this army neither the decrepit power of the Russian aristocracy nor the decaying power of international capitalism will be able to sustain itself. Each day this army will extend its ranks farther, despite all the zigzags and steps backwards, despite the opportunist phrases of the puppets of contemporary social democracy, despite the fatuous eulogies of the backward circular spirit, despite the tinsel and the intellectual's own anarchist bankruptcy." Lenin in this quotation has emphasized in three questions. First, organisation is necessary in the struggle for power. Second, in spite of various problems of exploitation and oppression if the proletariat could grasp Marxism as a guiding principal, it brings in invincible energy to defeat imperialism. And third, the organised strength of workers will defeat different forms of contemporary revisionism and also the worthless prattles of anarchist intellectuals.

Lenin very much emphasized on the need to build a revolutionary party in Russia. In the Third Congress of the Russian Party, in 1903, he placed a proposal of three conditions that any individual must fulfill to acquire party membership. Those conditions were, first, one must support party programme, second, one must provide financial support to the party, and third, one must be organized in a committee. However, Martov opposed the third condition in the plea that it was not necessary. Lenin argued that he could not agree with Martov in that issue because it was not an ordinary question but a theoretical one. It is evident that the third proposal placed by Lenin was aimed at building a militant party comprised of disciplined individuals who have concrete responsibilities in the organization but not in favour of a crowd of well-to-do and clever people with no specific duty.

Lenin always linked the issue of building organization with ideology. Whether it was in his own party or the Second International, he did not let the ideological struggle against wrong trends weaken. He waged serious ideological struggle with Mensheviks and the revisionist renegades of the Second International like Kautsky. Thanks to the ideological clarity, the Bolsheviks, who were organizationally weak in the beginning, proved to be a strong party capable to accomplish socialist revolution in Russia. Contrarily, the Communist Party of Germany, which seemed to be stronger than the Bolsheviks, and Karl Kautsky, a renowned leader of the Second International from Germany, failed to accomplish socialist revolution in Germany although the objective situation was favourable. Consequently, Communist Party of Germany and Kautsky proved to be insignificant before the Bolsheviks and Lenin. This again justified the fact that the question of building a communist party is principally a question related with ideology.

Mao and party building:

Chairman Mao had seriously grasped the importance of party building. After 100 years of the publication of Communist Manifesto, in 1948, Mao in Vol. IV, page 248, writes "If there is to be a revolution, there must be a revolutionary Party. Without a revolutionary Party, without a revolutionary Party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and in Marxist-Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and broad masses of the people to defeat imperialism and its running dogs. In the more than one hundred years since the birth of Marxism, it is only through the example of the Russian Bolsheviks in leading the October Revolution, in leading socialist construction and in defeating fascist aggression that revolutionary Parties of the new type were formed and developed in the world. With the birth of revolutionary parties of this type, the face of the world revolution has changed."

Mao had to lead a lot of ideological struggles to build a revolutionary party. The struggle against the right liquidationism of Chhen Tu Shiu in 1927, the struggle against left adventurism of Lili Shan and later the struggle against the ultra-left line of Wang Ming from 1930 to 1935 were the major ideological struggles led by Mao before the new democratic revolution in China. After the success of revolution in 1949, the party majority adopted right revisionist line of Liu Shao Chi in the Eighth Congress, in 1956. According to his line, the contradiction between the increasing material need and the lagging of the productive force was the principal contradiction. This logic was in no sense different from the logic put forward by the revisionists like Bernstein, Kautsky and Bukharin who abandoned class struggle and followed the capitalist road. Subsequent to that Mao had to lead another ideological struggle against the bourgeois line, "No matter whether the cat is red or white till it catches the rat" put forward by Teng Hsiao Ping. Mao insisted on, "Who the bourgeois or the proletariat will win in China is not settled yet, so never forget the class struggle". Mao never dissociated ideology from organisation but placed the ideological and political line in command. Here lies the importance of his saying, "Correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything."

In order to retain the revolutionary character of the CPC, Mao initiated the Cultural Revolution in 1966 against the revisionist renegades who had occupied higher posts in the party and the government. The main slogans of the Cultural Revolution were, "Bombard the bourgeoisie headquarters" and "It is right to rebel." Mao emphatically said, "Continue revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat" and "Class struggle persists all through the period of socialism". All these were the ideological bases to make the party revolutionary. All through his life, Mao never let the struggle against revisionism to lessen and weaken. At the time of Cultural Revolution Mao put forward an important proposition -- "Apply Marxism not revisionism, be open and overboard don't intrigue and conspire, unite don't split. It is an issue of vital theoretical importance in the context of party building. In this way, while arriving at the Cultural Revolution from new democratic revolution and then great debate, Mao not only defended but also developed the then Marxism-Leninism and Mao thought to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and in this process strengthened further the ideological base of building a new type of party.

Added theoretical clarity on the communist party:

Till the classes remain in the society, political parties exist. In a communist party there is a reflection of class struggle in the society and it is expressed in the form of two-line struggle in the party. The struggle between revolutionary and reformist trends in the party is absolute while the unity between them is relative. It is not always true that there will be unity tomorrow between the very issues in which there is unity today. There may not be struggle tomorrow between the issues there is struggle today. Struggle brings about transformation and the higher level of unity follows. Therefore Mao emphasised on unity-struggle-transformation and asserted that every new unity is founded upon a new footing. This is the theoretical base of building a new type of party.

In the development of International Communist Movement comrade Stalin has made great contributions. However, he committed some metaphysical mistakes, Mao said it. While talking about party building, it is relevant here to raise the metaphysical weaknesses that Stalin had in his thinking. Bluntly speaking, apart from the principal contradiction he failed to see a bunch of other contradictions, secondary and friendly in nature, in the socialist country he was leading. Consequently, whenever he noticed dissension in the party he took it as an antagonistic contradiction and at times chose a way to resolve it by the method of class struggle. This problem was the result of his metaphysical weakness by which he failed to see friendly contradictions in the socialist society. Those whoever raised dissensions were enemy agents in his understanding. Thus he demanded to build up, not a party of dialectical unity between various trends, but a party of monolithic unity.

In this way, while talking about building of a communist party, a revolutionary should lay emphasise to understand that the two-line struggle in the party is the reflection class struggle in the society. So the party of the proletariat is the unity and struggle of opposites and a communist must strive to maintain party

unity through a dialectical process of unity, struggle and transformation. Always compromise for the sake of unity or always split for the sake of purity is not a dialectical process but a metaphysical one. Basing upon a correct ideological and political line, the first step of building a new type of communist party is to establish dialectical unity in it, not the monolithic unity. Only by grasping it firmly and applying in practice can the new type of party be built up.

Our own experience of party building:

It is not possible here to explain in detail the entire experience of Nepalese Communist Movement on party building. Three years' experience of the ideological and political struggle, which took place from the Unity Congress in 1992 to the formation of CPN (Maoist) in 1995, is very much important from the viewpoint of party building in Nepal. The inner party struggle that centred on whether or not to prepare for the initiation of people's war at the time of Unity Centre had played a vital role to transform party in a revolutionary way. In 1994 party issued a circular which sharply attacked upon the problem of eclecticism and vacillation noticed in the party. In fact the circular played a vital role to make most of the party members stand on the side of revolutionary line of the party. Our party has been once again entrapped in the same type of vacillating situation now. The importance of those very questions that were raised in the circular issued at that time has further increased. A sharp ideological and political struggle of the higher level has become very much urgent today.

When the party debate had sharpened on whether or not to initiate people's war as decided by the Unity Congress the said circular had become a vital ideological weapon to dissect the internal ideological problems of the party and resolve them in a revolutionary manner. The circular had stressed that till a contradictory situation like, "One needs to organise huge rallies in the cities and at the same time wage guerrilla war in the countryside too", "One needs to fight parliamentary election and at the same time wage guerrilla war too ", "One needs to fight war and at the same time cannot go underground too ", "One needs to chop a goat but must not let a drop of blood fall too" etc. etc. does not end there can be no revolutionary transformation in the party and the initiation of people's war merely becomes a daydream. (Note: the phrases inside the quotes may not tally word by word with the circular because the said circular could not be located at present, but the content does not differ). At that time, party used to instruct the entire committees and party members to demarcate between the principal and secondary tasks, emphasize on the main task and pay attention to the secondary task, emphasize on synthesis and pay attention to analysis etc. In this way, the circulars and party political trainings organised during that period had played a vital role to build a new type of communist party capable to initiate and continue the people's war.

Today's party and people's insurrection:

Our internal party life is very grave and also contradictory at present. There was hardly a situation in the past where there was so much of ambiguity in ideology and politics in our party like today. Today in our party it makes no difference whether one says Maoism or Mao thought, whether one says People's Republic or democratic republic, whether one says the contradiction of the Nepalese people jointly with Indian expansionism and its Nepali puppets is principal or calls for a joint government with those puppets in Indian help, whether one says people's insurrection or proposes to disintegrate PLA and surrender arms beforehand, whether one fights to rectify party or continues with corruption and smuggling, whether one struggles to remove the anti-people elements from the party or brings in yesteryears' criminals inside it, whether one builds party committees small and active or assembles more than 600 members in a district committee etc. All this shows how contradictory and messy is our party now. Not only this, Mao's three dos have now become three donts and three donts have become three dos inside our party now. If this situation continues for long, it is sure to arise a condition in which we should feel ashamed to avow the terminologies like Maoism, Maoist party, people's insurrection, people's federal republic, new democratic revolution, socialism and communism before the people.

Right here a question arises. Does not our main leadership understand that an ideologically disoriented party cannot make revolution? I don't think so. Rather, it seems to be one of the characteristics of

reformism in the 21st century. The reformists of the 20th century used to reveal their right deviation by attacking upon the revolutionary crux of Marxism. Bernstein and Kautsky attacked upon the dictatorship of the proletariat. Khrushchev advocated the peaceful transition into socialism and State of the whole people; Liu Shao Chi and Teng Hsiao Peng opposed class struggle and pleaded to develop productive forces to meet the growing material need of the masses. Madan Bhandari in Nepal emerged with a cover of multiparty democracy.

But our leadership has not said peaceful transition till now nor has openly opposed class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the name of developing revolution and becoming original and creative, our leadership has been gradually distancing from the basic tenets of Marxism. He is pushing the whole party towards class collaboration and national capitulationism in the name of national consensus with the political parties that represent comprador bourgeoisie. In fact, he is pushing the revolution farther in the name of bringing it closer. He takes basically correct decisions to satisfy the revolutionaries in the party but applies reformism in practice to please the rightists. All this is the result of eclecticism, which is making strides towards right revisionism in the thinking of our party leadership. Like the development of Marxism, the development of revisionism is inevitable, because the revisionism also cannot confuse the people with the old arguments. Till the situation of revolution in word but reformism in practice, which has become the identity of our leadership, does not end, formation of a new type of party and revolution under its leadership will become a daydream only.

Then what next?

Mao had said building of a revolutionary party is the first condition to make revolution. Therefore, in order to make revolution in Nepal, need of the day is the revolutionary transformation of our party and its first and the foremost condition is the revolutionary transformation of our main leadership. The goal of the ongoing ideological struggle in our party is in particular the revolutionary transformation of the main leadership, not its replacement. The entire party leaders, cadres and self-esteemed Nepalese people want transformation of the leadership, want party to become revolutionary and want a strong party unity, which is the message of Palungtar expanded meeting too. Nevertheless, whether he comes forward to fulfil the remaining task of revolution through transformation or becomes a frontrunner of the right opportunism in the 21st century is a question that he must answer. It is not a thing that happens in others' request or a call.

The objective situation of our country is getting favourable for revolution. This favourability does not automatically transform into revolution. A heavy responsibility has come upon the shoulder of genuine revolutionaries. The responsibility of helping the whole party including the main leadership to transform, strengthening party unity and pushing the revolution forward goes to the revolutionaries. The reformists don't do this. Revolutionaries must be prepared for every type of sacrifice in this process. However, what to do if the main leadership does not transform? This question also has been answered in an explicit way. What is true is that however challenging the situation is a revolutionary does not turn back from any challenge, rather prepares for that. In fact, a new team of leaders and cadres, which is equipped with the experience of 10 years of people's war and has ideologically sharpened further from the latest two-line struggles waged from Kharipati to Palungtar, is capable and prepared to confront this challenge. The victory of the revolutionaries and revolution is inevitable.

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