

The Indian Bourgeoisie In Its True Colours—I

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THERE has been very little discussion about the role of the Indian bourgeoisie and the history of Indian independence except phrase-mongering. So serious discussion, as in the paper on the Indian bourgeoisie serialised in *Frontier* (March 4, 11 and 18) is welcome.

However, the authors admit that the supporting material was 'more or

less arbitrary'. Lenin pointed out, "in order to depict the objective position one must not take examples or isolated data (in view of the extreme complexity of the phenomena of social life it is always possible to select any number of examples or separate data to prove any proposition) but the *whole* of the data concerning the *basis* of economic life in all bellige-

rent countries and the whole world.' 'The Indian Bourgeoisie' is a striking demonstration of an attempt to prove any proposition' with 'any number of examples or separate data' ignoring the '*basis* of economic life' of India in relation to imperialism.

The authors of the paper all through lumped all the bourgeoisie into a single category and called them 'nation-

alists', thus introducing a geographical concept regarding the bourgeoisie of a particular geographical territory, completely ignoring the political concept and political and economic stratifications. This fundamental departure from the position of Marxism-Leninism led the authors to wrong conclusions. In order to avoid ambiguity and inexplicitness one has to define compradorism and nationalism of the colonial and semi-colonial bourgeoisie. The compradorial character of the bourgeoisie is not determined by its bigness or smallness, nor by its industrial or trading character as some people think. This is determined by whether or not it has strong and inseparable economic and political ties with imperialism and world imperialist economics and politics and whether or not it can retain its independent existence without and in spite of imperialism. The peculiar feature of the compradorial character is that it is not only the victim of imperialism, it is as well imperialism's willing servant, while the national bourgeoisie is only a victim of imperialism, but not a willing servant, though at times it surrenders reluctantly. As a victim, the comprador bourgeoisie of a colonial country 'fights' against imperialism for greater share in exploitation and policy-making administration and as a willing servant its 'fight' sets the limit to semi-colonialism within the framework of imperialism. This is what is called compradorism. The compradors of one country may have more manoeuvrability than the compradors of another, but the limit is semi-colonialism.

Those sections of the bourgeoisie are called national who have got little, weak or no ties with imperialism and international capital and develop more or less with their own national resources and whose interests are commensurate broadly with the national interest and who if necessary can afford a complete break with imperialism in a favourable situation with a favourably, *all but not independently* to build an independent national economy. As it is only a vic-

tim of imperialism, not willing servant, it is capable of fighting imperialism more determinedly and consistently than the compradors. The peculiar feature of the national bourgeoisie is that it vacillates between compromise with imperialism and alliance with the revolutionary people and as such it is sometimes pro-people and at other times pro-imperialist, while the peculiar feature of the comprador is that it does never vacillate between the above two as it is for all time anti-people and pro-imperialist and an instrument of colonial rule.

Misrepresentation of Mao

The authors of the paper failed to distinguish between the two sections of the Indian bourgeoisie and lumped them together. In doing so they have grossly misrepresented and misinterpreted Mao Tse-tung. Mao Tse-tung, quite in accord with the assessment of the Communist International, demarcated the Chinese bourgeoisie into two distinct sections, comprador and national, and then analysed the character of the Chinese national bourgeoisie, not the Chinese bourgeoisie as a whole, as the paper wants us to believe. As such the long quotation from Mao Tse-tung in the paper's last instalment regarding the character and the role of the national bourgeoisie is a gross misrepresentation. Mao said, 'The big local bullies, the big gentry, the big warlords, the big bureaucrats and the big compradors have long made up their minds. They have said and are still saying that revolution (of whatever kind) is after all worse than imperialism. They have formed a camp of traitors; for them such a question as whether or not they are to become slaves of a foreign nation does not exist because they have already obliterated national demarcation and their interests are inseparable from those of imperialism and their chief of chiefs is no other than Chiang Kai-shek. The traitors of this camp are sworn enemies of the people... They are the jackals of imperialism.' After saying so much about the Chinese compradors Mao Tse-tung analysed the character and

role of the Chinese national bourgeoisie. But here too, Mao said, 'Within the national bourgeoisie there is a section of people who have more affiliations with foreign capital and Chinese landed interests, people who constituted the Right wing...' In spite of this clear distinction by Mao the 'Group of Students' says 'Mao Tse-tung in his analysis of the character of the bourgeoisie of colonial and semi-colonial countries points out that' and then quotes Mao, deceitfully avoiding his analysis of the comprador section of the bourgeoisie and the right wing of the national bourgeoisie.

The 'Group of Students' quoting Lenin says that 'imperialism accelerates the development of capitalism in the most backward countries like colonies,' and concludes, on the strength of the above quotation, that if development of capitalism takes place in colonial countries, then the 'possibility of the rise of a nationalist bourgeoisie cannot be denied'. After the formulation of this hypothesis, the authors of the paper establish that the Indian bourgeoisie are nationalist. This is not only misleading but also a wrong conclusion for more than one reason. First, here the indigenous bourgeoisie is called nationalist bourgeoisie. The indigenous bourgeoisie can be nationalist or anti-nationalist or can be both. If it is called national or nationalist bourgeoisie, then the concept will be geographical, not political. Secondly, the possibility of the rise of a nationalist or national bourgeoisie does not necessarily negate the possibility of the rise of a comprador bourgeoisie, as has been seen in China. Thirdly, and which is more important, acceleration of development of capitalism in colonial countries occurred in the era of finance capital. It signalled the fact that the era of industrial capital was ended and the great industrial-finance monopolies were busy slicing up the whole world into colonial spheres of investment and exploitation. It signalled the fact that export of capital to the colonial countries was replacing the export of goods as the typical

feature of world capitalism. As such, the 'acceleration of development of capitalism, on the colonial and semi-colonial soil was the acceleration of development of foreign capitalism, not national capitalism, as the authors of the paper try to impress. Whatever national capitalism developed and develops in colonial and semi-colonial countries in the era of finance capital, it developed and develops as a side current, as an offshoot, not as a national current, not as a principal, predominant trend. It is one of the fundamental differences between the Marxist-Leninists and the Revisionists of all hues.' Lenin did not only write about the acceleration of capitalism in the colonies in the epoch of imperialism, he also said that monopolies in economies are not compatible with non-monopolistic, non-violent, non-annexionist methods in politics. Lenin approvingly quoted Hilferding that 'finance capital does not want liberty, it wants domination'. This is most important. It means capitalism in colonial countries cannot be independent, cannot be national capitalism, independent of the tentacles of world finance-capitalism. It is always controlled by imperialism both politically and economically. As such, the possibility of the rise of a servile bourgeoisie is far greater than the possibility of the rise of a nationalist or national bourgeoisie in colonial countries. 'Finance capital', says Lenin, 'is such a great, it may be said, such a decisive force in all economic and in all international relations that it is capable of subjecting, and actually does subject to itself even states enjoying fullest political independence.' If 'even States enjoying fullest political independence' can be subjected to the power of finance capital, one wonders how the 'Group of Students' can conclude that the Indian bourgeoisie remaining under the direct colonial thumb of imperialism 'from the very beginning' had 'a monopolistic position'.

The authors have played a trick in the name of Mao Tse-tung again! Quoting, rather, misquoting him, they try to establish that the bourgeoisie

of the colonial countries, in the epoch of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution, is capable of establishing an independent bourgeois State. The paper further says that if weak, the independent bourgeois State may degenerate into a semi-colony again and if strong it may turn imperialist. It says, "citing the success of the bourgeois Kemalist revolution in Turkey and the emergence of the country as a weak bourgeois State from the old colonial rule, he [Mao Tse-tung] pointed out, 'eventually Kemalist Turkey had to throw itself more and more into the hands of Anglo-French imperialism, becoming more and more a semi-colony and part of the reactionary imperialist world.'" Unfortunately this is a gross and unpardonable distortion of Mao's quotation. What did Mao Tse-tung actually say and what was its political and historical implications? The section heading of the quotation under reference is 'Refutation of the theory of Bourgeois Dictatorship'. Its meaning is clear. A section of the people, like our 'Group of Students', was advocating that in a semi-colonial country like China, an independent bourgeois State and bourgeois dictatorship was possible and feasible as was in Kemalist Turkey. Mao Tse-tung refuted this theory in this section. He inter alia, says, raising the question whether an independent bourgeois State is possible: 'Judging by the international situation, that road is blocked. In its fundamentals, the present international situation is one of struggle between capitalism and socialism, in which capitalism is on the downgrade and socialism is on the upgrade. In the first place international capitalism will not permit the establishment in China of a capitalist society under bourgeois dictatorship... just because it is dying it is all the more dependent on colonies and semi-colonies for survival and will certainly not allow any colony and semi-colony to establish anything like a capitalist society under the dictatorship of its own bourgeoisie...' Then he says why the working class also will not allow the bourgeoisie to set up dictatorship.

Explaining all these things in detail Mao Tse-tung refutes the theory of a Kemalist type of revolution and the possibility of it in China. Then he says, 'Even though a petty Kemalist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie did emerge in Turkey after the First World War and the October Revolution owing to certain specific conditions (the bourgeoisie's success in repelling Greek aggression and the weakness of the proletariat) there can be no second "Turkey" with a population of 450 million after World War II... Did not some members of the Chinese bourgeoisie clamour for Kemalism after the First Great Revolution failed in 1927? But where is the Chinese Kemal? And where are Chinese bourgeois dictatorship and capitalist society?' After decisively rejecting the possibility of a Kemalist type of revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries Mao Tse-tung says what has been quoted by the authors of the paper. Stalin in 1927, also most decisively demolished the theory of the possibility and feasibility of a Kemalist type of revolution in China and other colonial and semi-colonial countries advocated by Zinoviev, Radek and Trotsky. Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung said unequivocally that in the epoch of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution there was no possibility of emergence of an independent bourgeois State and capitalist society in colonial and semi-colonial countries, let alone an imperialist state. We find in the paper an echo of Trotskyism again! The 'Group of Students' tries to justify the theory of an independent bourgeois state and a capitalist society in colonial and semi-colonial countries and calls India a capitalist society and the Indian State a bourgeois dictatorship in flagrant violation of the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The authors applying their pet theory of the Kemalist revolution in India say that such revolution did not occur merely in India. The same is the situation in all the countries which emerged politically independent from colonial and semi-colonial bondages in the past two decades and

where the rule of the bourgeoisie is established. They further say that 'all these countries and their developments confirm Mao Tse-tung's theses'. While Mao Tse-tung says that especially after World War II, Kemalists type of independent bourgeois State and capitalist society in colonial and semi-colonial countries is definitely an impossibility, the 'Group of Students' finds confirmation of Mao Tse-tung's theses in these more than 130 new neo-colonial products passing off as independent bourgeois States! According to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought, imperialism makes alliance with domestic reaction to extend its social base of support with a view to continuing its rule in disguise which is neo-colonialism. If there is any confirmation it is this. The 'Group of Students' echoes Khrushchev-Brezhnev but chants the name of Mao Tse-tung.

Theory of Imperialist State

The group raises the question of the possibility of independent bourgeois States of colonial countries turning into imperialist States, provided they are strong enough. This question demands attention and refutation because it is no longer an academic question. The erstwhile colonial bourgeoisie, with expansionist desires is attacking neighbouring countries. As a result some confusion is being created in the minds of the people regarding the role of the colonial and semi-colonial bourgeoisie. History provides us with an example. The Tsarist bourgeoisie stood on its feet and threw away its semi-colonial character by taking advantage of the inter-imperialist contradiction and became imperialist. But in today's international context this is not possible. One should be reminded of Lenin's analysis in this regard. He said, 'an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between Great Powers in the striving for hegemony i.e., for the conquest of territory not so much directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine his hegemony.' The erstwhile colonial bourgeoisie acts as an instrument of a

particular imperialist power to weaken its master's adversary. This is attack and conquest by proxy. This very fact sets the limit to the colonial bourgeoisie's bid to be an imperialist power.

The 'Group of Students', when it leaves the arena of politics and economics and enters that of sociology, tells us that a society is known and determined [by its superstructure! No, I am not joking. 'In any country', they write, the ruling classes exercise political power through the State, dominate over other classes and make a society of their own.' Then by applying a simple rule of three they sum up: as India is ruled by the capitalists, Indian society is a capitalist one and the principal contradiction is between the capitalist and proletariat. As such a socialist revolution would be the logical conclusion, but the authors sensing the pulse most intelligently avoided this point and kept themselves busy in a hypothetical attack on the country by imperialism etc. However, can political domination through the State, which is nothing but a superstructure—though very important and pivotal—simply change the basic structure of society? What is the Marxist-Leninist view on this? In contrast to idealism which sees the main and determining force of society in given social ideas, social consciousness or politics, historical materialism sees the main force determining the character of a social system in the mode of production of material values. The mode of production of material values determines the structure of society, its physiognomy, ideas and institutions. Every society is more or less a mixed society but the social structure of a society is determined by the predominant mode of production. The authors of the paper completely ignoring this materialist interpretation adopted the view of the idealists and determined the Indian social structure not from the basis but from the superstructure.

The 'Group of Students' with a

view to maintaining that India is a capitalist society and at the same time a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, again chanted Mao Tse-tung's name. The paper says, 'Mao himself included the bourgeois State of Turkey after the Kemalists revolution in semi-colonial countries'. It does not stop there but says, 'Even Russian Socialist Society (??) just after the October revolution was described as semi-colonial by him' [Mao Tse-tung] - Either the 'Group of Students' has gone crazy or Mao Tse-tung himself. Firstly, Mao did not call Turkey a bourgeois state, as Turkey at that time practically had neither an industrial proletariat nor an industrial bourgeoisie: Mao called it a 'petty Kemalists dictatorship of the bourgeoisie', meaning that 'Kemalists revolution is a revolution of the top stratum, a revolution of national merchant bourgeoisie'. Secondly, with the establishment of the bourgeois dictatorship, Turkey did not become a semi-colony instantly. It 'more and more, became a semi-colony'. This time and space relation is completely ignored by the 'Group of Students'. That there is a process of becoming a thing and that process covers time and space, which, if not counted, leads us to *Mayabad* is not known to the idealists.

The second argument is more queer than the first. Because Mao Tse-tung in course of explaining the principal aspect of the contradiction cited one example of China and the other example of Russia, the 'Group of Students' takes them to be examples of semi-colony, not of principal aspect of contradictions.

(To be continued)

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