

(The following is the English section of the booklet Comrade Irabot and Capitalism. It is being circulated online to felicitate the candidates who are taking part in the Essay Writing Competition in Delhi scheduled for 28 September 2013. Original hard copy of the booklet is available at the IRCC office and in some book shops in Imphal.)

Comrade Irabot and Capitalism

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Comrade Irabot (30 September 1896- 26 September 1951), who had a humble origin as a destitute orphan, was a leading figure of the social reform movement and political agitations in Manipur in the period 1934-1947. He was not lured by the prospect of royal prerogatives and official facilities including the prestigious post of membership to the Sadar Panchayat Court that were being offered to him for having married princess Khomdonsana. He resigned from the government job and fought against the various forms of oppression under feudalism and British colonial rule. He endeavoured towards the promotion of cultural identity, sports, literature and journalism. He was instrumental in the formation of reform organizations, students' federation, peasant union, women's organization and progressive party. By 1943 he was a confirmed communist and during his six years political exile till late 1946 he was politically active in parts of Assam. He was elected to the Manipur Assembly in 1948. Because of the political ideology and mass support he was a threat to the ruling class who subsequently declared him a terrorist on 21 September 1948. He could not attend the inauguration of the Assembly. He subsequently formed Manipur Communist Party, went underground, carried out protracted armed resistance against the Indian State and died in the jungle in 1951. The legacy of comrade Irabot has been continuously survived with the State declaring holiday on 30 September to commemorate his birthday. He has been honoured with different titles such as Lamyamba (Pioneer), Jana-Neta (Leader of the people) by the Cacharis, Simanta Prahari (Sentinel of the Frontier) by Hemango Biswas, Afoji (elder comrade in Burmese or, comrade Ahal to the armed Manipuri red guards) by the then Burmese Communist Party.

We are happy that the Irabot Research and Commemoration Committee (IRCC) and the Campaign for Peace & Democracy (Manipur) had taken up the joint initiatives to publish the present edition entitled *Comrade Irabot and Capitalism* to honour the contribution of Comrade Irabot in the democratic movements. It contains the original work of Comrade Irabot entitled *Capitalism* and a foreword that briefly reviews it and raises certain interrelated questions in the present context of Manipur. We expect that this small publication contributes in making the tradition of constructive debate continuously alive.

Editorial Team
2 September 2013

CAPITALISM

Hijam Irabot

What is capitalism?

We use various goods such as rice, oil, salt, sugar, tea, cigarette, matches, etc for daily consumption; dhoti, shirt, vest, watch, shoes, umbrella, etc for comfort; lantern, utensils, mirror, comb, etc in the family; book, paper, ink, pen, etc. for education. We purchase all these goods from shops. The shop owners purchase it from factories, mines and farmers. Owners of the factories, mines and farmers employ workers to produce all these goods. The factories, machines, farm lands, mines that produce these goods can be known as means / instruments of production. All the useful goods that we use are produced in this way. And since these consumption goods are available in the market they are known as commodities.

In most countries instruments of productions such as mines, factories / industries, farms and everything are privately owned. The machines and factories belong to private owners and government cannot interfere. For instance, if a man owns a mill it is his discretion to operate it or not. He owns the goods produced by operating the mill. It meant goods produced by the mill belong to the mill owner, those produced by factory belong to the factory owner, and those produced from mine belong to the mine owner. Therefore, private ownership of the instruments of production is the factor for the growth of capitalism.

Owners of the factories, mines and farms never keep their machines free, but intensely use it for production. Why are they doing it? They get profit by selling the products in the market. For profit factory owners manufacture goods in their factories. The goods are purchased according to our needs; at times there can be distress to the extent of sensing difficulty to survive when essential goods are not available. However, since factory owners are concerned only with profit they produce goods as long as the goods fetch profit. They stop production when profits decline and they do not have to bother about if it would affect people. Therefore capitalist produce goods for profit; profit is the root of capitalism. They do not consider that certain goods are important and those are needed for economic welfare of people. Having said, we have to thoroughly understand a term that explains a highly rich section and their *modus operandi*. Technically, those who privately own machineries and produce goods for profit are called capitalists. And those machines are known as Capital. It meant Capital for the owner of a factory is his factory; for landlords it is his land and landed properties, for usurer it is his credit money and for mine owner it is his mine.

Result of Capitalism

In order to survive the poor and indigents in the society are in search of work at factories, mines and farms. Since they have no money and land all that they had is their labour. Therefore in order to survive they sell the labour, which is their only wealth. They become workers and are also known as the 'have not' and 'proletariat.' Capitalists purchase the labour to produce goods that are sold in market. Out of the money derived from selling goods certain amount is paid as wage to the workers, and after deducting input costs and other expenditures the rest is the profit of the capitalists.

The capitalist spares certain amount of profit for his children and family, and invests the rest in his business. In this way his factory becomes bigger, richer and he increases profit. The profit becomes constant capital, and from the constant capital profit increases. An increase in the constant capital created more investment opportunities. However, there are many capitalists in the market. They compete with one another in selling goods. The goods of the capitalists who could sell at cheaper price are higher in demand. The capitalists in order to sell or produce goods at cheaper price try to reduce input costs. In this attempt they rely on science and technologies to create new goods producing industries and tools. The objective is to depend on these scientific tools and machines to reduce time cost and capital inputs in the production. Cheaper cost input enables to reduce selling price and cheaper selling price increases market demand. Consumers look forward to purchase cheaper goods. It is natural that the more the goods are sold the higher the profit is. Therefore the capitalists attempt to increase their constant capital since the higher the investment is the higher the profit is. In this way small scale factories suddenly becomes big and additional machineries are installed; number of employed workers increases from 100 to several thousands. New knowledge on production is invented.

When capitalist increases accumulation of wealth in the society the number of poor and impoverished also increases. Those financially weaker and marginal could not compete with the rich capitalists; they become bankrupt and are gradually reduced into workers. In this way the number of working people

increases. On the other hand as vast scale mechanisation takes place machines do most of the production works; works can be done without workers. Relatively the number of job seekers increases and the opportunity of job decreases. In this scenario workers are compelled to work with whatever available job for meagre monthly wage. Capitalists notice it and try to further decrease the wage. Because lowering of the wage and input cost in production increases their profit. As a result only a few in the society are rich and the rest is gradually impoverished. In this manner capitalism enriches few and impoverishes the majority. This is the first result of capitalism.

Capitalism not only impoverishes workers by reducing their wages, at times they reduce thousands of peoples into beggar by complete cutting off of their income sources. We have seen that capitalists accumulate profit by selling goods in the market. Who purchase the goods? The capitalists purchase some of these; but most of these are purchased by the workers, peasants and middle class. However, when their incomes are reduced they could not purchase all the goods. In this way recession occurs and unsold goods are piled up in shops and factories. During recession capitalists loses profit. During recession capitalists had to put on halt their factories. Because, there is no purpose of production when goods are unsold and piled up in the market. Factories are closed down one after another, bankruptcy set in and thousands of workers are jobless. Such crisis of capitalism can be known as business slump. During business slump the workers also faces crisis. Their children and family members live by single meal or at times they are starved. In the current century atleast three business slumps had occurred. The latest slump was in the year 1930. In those days in the United States of America alone 1 crore and 30 lakhs workers could not find job. Account of how they had survived has not been published. Their children loitered around shops and warehouses. When varieties of foods in the warehouse at docks were rotten and were thrown away the children scrapped and vied for it and ate. On the one hand large amount of food got rotten and were thrown out on the other hand thousands died due to starvation; on the one hand unsold clothes were piled up in the warehouses on the other hand hundreds thousands were shivering in the cold for want of clothes. Several big buildings remained empty. Many homeless were loitering on the streets and spending in open spaces. In addition to this the capitalists instead of either selling at cheaper rate for fear of loss in business or distributing it freely, dumped the goods in the sea or burnt them. As a blessing of capitalism the contradiction between over production and under consumption got widened. In this way business slump and joblessness constitutes the second result of capitalism. In order to recover from such business slump the capitalists destroyed surplus products. They dismantled some of the goods manufacturing machines and began to take back some workers at the lowest wages but by exacting maximum workloads on them. In due course of time some amount of profit is regained. However, after short recovery business slump set in again. Such continuation of short recovery and onset of business slump is the character of capitalism.

The third result of capitalism is over-usage above production capacity. The rich factory owners without restraint produce the goods that could fetch them maximum profit. As mentioned, goods are sold in the market for profit. Factory owners are never to produce goods that had no market demand. Factory owners will never produce any goods, even if it is highly important to the extent that without it people may die, unless it is demanded in the market and profit is ensured. On the one hand under the policy of the capitalists working peoples, peasants and lower middle class are impoverishing. They could not afford to purchase essential goods. On the other hand the rich had could afford to purchase essential goods and in addition they demanded luxurious and cosmetic goods. Therefore, the capitalists, instead of producing sufficient amount of the essential goods for survival such as eatables, clothes, etc. invest in producing motor cars, gramophone, radio and other luxurious goods demanded by the rich. The reason is that these goods can be sold to the rich at higher price. These are more profitable than producing crude clothes and eatables. The *modus operandi* of capitalist production is production of luxurious goods to satisfy the demand of the rich instead of producing the basic essential goods of the people. As a result several thousand millions of people do not have food and cloths whereas there is heavy concentration on production of luxurious goods. To cite an example: during the Great Depression of 1931-33 several thousand millions of people across the globe did not have jobs. During this period Austin Motor Car company of Britain showed the most profited account. It happened because all the money at that time was possessed by the rich. Since commerce in other goods was not profiting they could not use the money. Therefore they purchased cars and other luxurious goods to utilise the money. Hence Austin Company produced lots of cars.

The fourth result of capitalism is war. Why wars are fought is being discussed separately.

Imperialism

What we notice is capitalists' thrust to speed up personal income growth. As their money increases they create new goods manufacturing machines and manufacture commodities. However the economy of the workers, peasants and lower middle class do not improve at par with the capitalists. It led to business slump. Gluts of unsold goods in the market are piled up in the warehouses. Unless goods are sold capitalists could not extract profit. The capitalists search for markets in the foreign countries when goods are unsold in their home market. In this search they do not look for countries like their own where goods cannot be sold due

to overproduction and piling up of gluts of unsold goods. Instead they try to export to and sell goods in those countries that had not developed capitalist factories. In this way the capitalists from different developed countries meet together in search of market, they compete in selling and conflict arises. In that circumstance they try to usurp the power of the concerned foreign government. Once the government power is controlled they can enjoy free hand in serving their commercial interest; they can use the power of the government in playing off the commercial interest of the capitalists of other countries. In this manner capitalists conquer weak countries where capitalists have not been developed. They established colonies there. Such subjected countries become colonies of the capitalist countries.

When there is inability to sell goods in the capitalist country markets due to Capital increase the search for colony becomes inevitable. The first importance of colony is to perpetuate it into a market of the capitalist country.

There are other significances as well. Firstly, it provides cheap raw materials for the factories of the capitalist countries. If cheap raw materials are available the input cost is reduced and if input cost is reduced goods can be sold at cheaper price in the market. The higher the sell is the higher the profit. Secondly, colonies provide cheap foods for the consumption of the workers in the capitalist countries. As a result wage of labour can be reduced. The reason being that when prices of essential goods are higher wage rate must also be higher, otherwise there is starvation. When food price is lowered the wage of the workers can be lowered. Thirdly, if Capital increases in the home country opportunity of further investment becomes limited. New factories cannot earn much profit. If Capital share predominates over purchasing power the profit share decreases. To overcome the situation the capitalists search for new places. In the colonies they control they find suitable places of unrestrained investment of with the surplus Capital. There the army of the subjected government with their wealth and properties. Such advantages may not be found in the colonies of other nations. A colony is being created to use it as a place for the investment of the surplus Capital. Fourthly, if there are colonies the problem of joblessness in the capitalist countries is reduced to certain extent. The jobless in their countries could migrate to the colonies and earn money from diverse sources. Fifthly, having colonies could enable them to keep the workers of their countries under control. The reason for this is that earn lots of profit by selling goods in the colonies. A portion of the profit can be distributed to keep the workers under control. Therefore in their country distress and unrest by the workers are reduced and controlled. For all these reasons capitalist countries need to have colonies. If not they can't sell the surplus goods. When goods are not sold factories had to stop functioning. When factories stopped functioning the workers ceased to work. When work is ceased starvation infuriated the workers and they can rise up to usurp the power of the government that is under the control of the capitalists, form their own government and destroy the capitalists. Therefore capitalism cannot survive for long without colony.

From all these account we can make out a rough character of imperialism. When a capitalist country attempt to sell surplus goods, to use surplus capital, to purchase cheap raw material and foods, they colonise non-capitalist weak countries. In that situation the colonising country is called an imperialist country and the country it colonises is called its colony.

The first task of the imperialist is to convert colonies into market of goods manufactured in their country. Therefore, imperialist government does not want the colonies to manufacture the goods manufactured in its country, and they prevented. As a result there is no headway in the colonies towards growth of standard modern large scale factories to manufacture goods. They are encouraged merely to produce foods and raw materials; and allowed establishment of some marginal scale factories. As a result of it and due to population growth the people of the colonised country suffers from acute economic crisis. They become more and more impoverishing. Britain is an imperialist country and India is a colony. Whether this understanding is correct or not can be testified by analysing the Indian context.

However capitalists of an imperialist country cannot remain recklessly sucking from the colonised peoples. Capitalists without colonies dream for colony; being coveted to possess they conspire to siege colonies from the hands of other capitalists. When their preparation is ready they prey on other imperialist countries. War is fought between the imperialist country that possesses colonies and the imperialist country that does not possess colony. Capitalists of both the countries use scientific means and manufacture weapons and plan to kill people. Hundreds and thousands including children and women are killed. They attempt to fulfil respective goals by over-flooding the world with the blood of the innocents.

War does not end after once. The colonies of the defeated capitalists are taken over by those who win. It has been mentioned earlier that capitalism cannot survive without colony. Even after defeated in war the importance of colony has not ceased for the defeated countries. Therefore they try to possess colony and wage war again. In this way wars are carried out and colonies are distributed.

The principle of capitalism is manufacturing of goods for profit. Since goods are manufactured for profit only the general people become impoverishing. The rich increases their Capital. As a result lots of goods are manufactured, however all these are not sold. Goods over-flooded market. Business slump and joblessness become rampant. In that situation capitalists searched for market. Once they created colonies imperialism is

borne. As a result of imperialism, war set in. Therefore the main causes of war are privatisation of the instruments of production and production for profit. Once these two are gone there will no longer be war. Until then war will continue with temporary intervals.

Fascism

Before this big war there was a big war from 1914-1918. The war was basically between Britain and France that had colonies and Germany that had no colony. Presuming the victory of Britain and France, Russia and Italy joined them and Turkey stood on the side of Germany. Towards the end of the war America also stood on the side of Britain and France. Germany lost the war. The colonies of Germany were distributed among Britain and France. Italy did not get much. In Russia people revolted and the workers destroyed the capitalist superstructure. *Ipsa facto* Italy and Germany existed as countries without colony.

After the war there was crisis all over the capitalist countries. They began to decline after the war. Thousands and thousands of workers were jobless. Despite decline countries with colonies tried to recover from the situation. However countries without colonies reached the climax of the crisis. In Italy infuriated workers revolted and they took over the factories by driving out the owners. The capitalists were puzzled with the workers' strike. They tried repression on the workers in order to protect their properties. For this work they discovered a suitable man whose name was Mussolini. Mussolini was at first a leader of the workers. When the war began he took side with the capitalists and insisted the workers to join the war. For that reason he was expelled from the workers' party. After his return from the war he was thinking about what to do. At that point of time the responsibility of defending the capitalists from the workers' movement was entrusted to him. To suppress the workers he formed a party called 'fascist.' The rich people of the country helped the party. As a result in few days time the fascist party became very strong. The workers, however, could not come up with an appropriate plan to subvert the activities of the fascist party. The leaders did not constitute an anti-fascist front of the workers to keep their leaders intact. Their strength was weakened due to several small factions. Therefore the fascist defeated the workers. Workers were expelled from factories, workers organisations were disbanded, their trade unions were destroyed, the leaders were killed, some were jailed and some were forced exiled. The rich were happy as the workers' movement was brutally suppressed, and the rich entrusted the government in their hands to defend their properties. Mussolini along with fascist leaders constituted a council known as "Fascist Grand Council" and became the absolute ruler to govern the country.

To ensure that the workers' movement does not rise and also not to hurt peasants the factory owners and landlords jointly formed a party rechristened as "Corporation". By forming the Corporation" planning was done to handle any popular assertion against the government. The preparation to subdue workers' assertion is the first and foremost task of fascism. The second task of the fascism in the countries without colony is to create colony. It has been discussed that capitalism cannot survive without colony. Commercial activities become difficult if colonies are not available; hundreds and thousands of workers could not find job and workers' movement become stronger. At last workers could become infuriated and may take control of the government and manufacturing machines. Therefore if there is no colony capitalism cannot last long. Even if fascists had suppressed workers' movement the root cause of agitation had not been rooted out. The root cause was capitalism. And the purpose of forming fascist groups was to defend capitalism from the workers. Capitalism could not root out the decline of business due to the impoverishment of the workers and peasants and joblessness of hundreds and thousands of workers. In those situations capitalists looked out for colony. It has been discussed above that if there were colonies there could be temporary solutions. However, are colonies be easily available on the earth? Since countries suitable to be converted into colony were already occupied by Britain and France, there was no other option than waging war. Therefore 'prepare for war' was the slogan of the fascists. Heading the country towards war was their second task.

With this objective war propaganda began. In fact after the 1914-1918 war many were antipathetic to war. Fascists reconcile with it and spread message to condemn those who do not support war. They began to teach even small children in the schools with such propaganda, 'war makes people civilised; peace make man inhuman', 'there is nothing prestigious than dying in the war for colony', etc. In all places youths were taught to fight war. In the factories bullets and medicines, and other war materials were excessively manufactured.

In the manner fascism was formed in Italy in Germany too fascism was formed. The only slight difference being that it was not called fascism but called Nazism. However, there was no substantial difference between fascism and Nazism. Nazism was somewhat more hardliner and merciless than fascism.

After the 1918 war the German workers could not bear war burden and they rose up. However power did not come in the hands of the workers. Instead power had remained with the capitalists as some leaders of the workers secretly took side with the capitalists and there was heavy repression by the capitalists. Since the capitalists retained the power there was an increase in impoverishment of the general mass, business slump, gluts of unsold goods piling up in shops, growth of jobless, etc. In addition to it the economic burden was increased due to extraction of annual war compensation by Britain and France. The crisis could not be resolved even to a little extent since Germany did not have colony. Suffering of the people kept on increasing.

Rubbing salt to the wound the burden on Germany was increased due to economic slump in 1931. Workers demanded an end to capitalism in order to recover from the distress; and the capitalist demanded expansion of colony and suppression of workers' movement. The conflict between the workers and the rich got heightened. Hitler who was defeated in the war formed a party known as 'Nazi' and 'National Socialist.' Until 1931 there was no trace of his name in Germany. However, by 1931 capitalists had realised that the workers were uniting and that unless the movement was suppressed there was no hope of their survival. Thereafter they began to help Hitler's party. There was information about British and French capitalists taking money to Hitler and helped him in order to ensure that workers did not take control of power. With all these support Hitler's Nazi party became stronger. Workers could not foresee the emerging threat. At that point of time the Germany workers had two parties; one was 'Social Democratic' party and the other was 'Communist' party. The Social Democratic party did not want to completely destroy capitalism at one go, but had wanted to work within it and to establish workers' power steps by steps. But the Communist party had wanted to destroy capitalism completely and build workers' rule. For these reasons the two parties were in conflict. The worst result was that the workers were kept divided. On the other hand the capitalists were merging with the Nazi party. Even when thousands were united how big could the capitalists be? They are few. Therefore unless they form alliance with others and unless they play divisive role among the workers they were bound to doom. Therefore, in order to win support Hitler inserted in his party programme certain demands of all the sections. For an example, to please the peasants some demands of the peasants were inserted, to please the workers it inserted that capitalism must be destroyed, etc. In addition, every Germans were humiliated with the Treaty of Versailles (being defeated in the previous war of 1914-1918 the treaty was signed with Britain and France) Hitler began to launch anti Treaty of Versailles agitation. And since the ancient Europeans had treated the Jews indifferently he incorporated that sentiment into his programme. He came to the conclusion that sufferings and economic distress of the country was due to the Treaty of Versailles, the Jews and the communists. In all the federal elections of Germany after 1919 Hitler's Nazi party and the communists were gaining numbers whereas other parties were declining. In this context the conflict between the rich and workers was increasing and the every Germans was affiliated to either of the rich or the workers. When the division among people was heightened the Germany capitalists entrusted the responsibility of ruling the country in the hands of Hitler.

The moment power came in his hands the first task of Hitler was suppression of workers' movement. Worker leaders were arrested and sent to a peculiar jail called 'concentration camp' without trial. Many were killed secretly. Not only the workers' leaders were arrested anyone who expressed slight indifference to Nazi were not spared. Nazi goons ransacked other parties and entered into the families and carried out indiscriminate tortures. Such torture was highest among the Jews. The famous Jew scientist Albert Einstein escaped secretly and was saved from the Nazi. Those who escaped in this way were saved but those who did not were arrested, tortured and killed. In this manner of torture Hitler destroyed all the parties that were against him and expanded the Nazi party and his rule. The first task of fascism to defend uncontested rule of capitalism by suppressing workers' movement was carried out in such merciless manner.

After accomplishing the first task the Nazis made preparation for the second task of scrambling for colony. To scramble for colony war must be waged. Therefore extensive war preparation was taken up. On the other hand there had began manufacturing of war equipments, gun powder, bullets and on the other hand there instigations were underway to make the entire people infuriated. Like the fascists of Italy the Nazi was not only articulating war but also spreading misconceptions. Misconceptions were disseminated to all the Germans that, "the German nation was the biggest nation on earth. The German nation was created to rule over all other nations. Therefore everyone on whose veins the German blood flows must sacrifice life for the victory of the German nation." In simple word, "sacrifice life in waging war and expand colonies for the German capitalists" was the spiritual thrust of the Nazi education. In this manner the entire Germany was prepared for war; the unseen and sensitised nationalism were the features of their spiritual satisfaction. The middle class youth rose up for territorial expansionism by this blind nationalism and became the toy of the rich. What they had failed to notice was that the meaning of nationalism was not colonisation by suppressing the nationalism of others. True nationalists cannot be the toy of the imperialists. True nationalism is sovereignty; the sovereignty of a nation cannot be destruction of the sovereignty of another nation. The one who expand the territory of his country by forced reducing the territorial limit of others, destroying the sovereignty of other nation and unnecessarily oppressing the people of different nation hardly respect sovereignty. It also meant that the sovereignty of his country was merely a rhetoric but practically impossible. However, the German youth had never critically analysed all these. Stimulated by the misconceptions of the unseen nationalism they jumped into the war. As a result they could not achieve sovereignty. The zeal for sovereignty was strangled to utter destruction. The hypocrisy of imperialism was miscalled sovereignty, and by deceiving in the name of nation all the youths were sacrificed.

In Japan too fascism was formed. The three countries that did not have colonies were closely allied. They agreed to help one another in colonial expansion. After preparations they began war. The recent war began in the same way.

So far we have seen that fascism was formed simultaneously for similar goal in Italy, Germany and Japan. Depending on specific conditions there were some modifications but they were one. When the contradiction between the rich and the poor was heightened the rich openly took the form of fascists and tried to suppress workers' movement. If the workers were divided the capitalists could easily suppress them and continue with their rule. Therefore there were two factors of fascism. Firstly there was increasing tendency of sectarianism among the workers. Secondly there was lack of unity among the workers' parties. The objectives of fascism are two. The first is suppression of workers' movement to defend the capitalists from popular unrest. The second is to create colony by waging war. Therefore, it will be difficult to consider fascism as different from capitalism. Capitalism merely incarnates in a new look by taking the form of fascism. Fascism is not anti-capitalism but it is formed to defend capitalism. We can conclude that when capitalism had to take a new form, to suppress worker's movement when workers became certain to revolt and in order to create colonies, it can be called as fascism.

What is the fallout of fascism? If one understands in detail the origin of fascism then the answer will not be difficult. When the capitalist could not make successful planning to overcome the crisis they have created (constraints of business, job cut, etc) they began to adopt fascism. Can fascism completely overcome the crisis? No. Since they could not completely overcome the crisis they began to look for colony. They presumed that everything could be resolved once colonies have been created. In the attempt there were threats from all directions. Firstly, when defeated in war they could not resolve the crisis. On the contrary there was near rooting out of fascism when the workers revolted. War had increased the burden on people beyond limit. As long as the war was continued the people had borne the burden of war on the presumption that it was "for the country and everything will be resolved by creating colony." Once defeated in war it seemed that all presumptions were proven irrational. Those who perceived colonial expansionism as the highest patriotism were falling-off. When the dream was crumbled they could not think to bear with the existing burdens. Taking advantage of the situation the worker parties revolted to take control of the government. Secondly, if in case the fascists win war they could not establish smooth rule for long time and did not had the time to subjugate and exploit the colonies. On the one hand the liberation movement by the peoples in colonies became stronger, and on the other hand in colonial markets the goods of fascist country were piling up. The crisis of capitalist system such as business slump and inability to provide jobs to all began to set in. Since the crisis could not be resolved there began unrest both in the colonies and the fascist countries. Such unrests rendered the survival of fascist rule into difficulties. Therefore fascist rule cannot last long in the society. Although stimulated by its inherent poison it was active for a short period and raised some propaganda the same poison destroyed it very soon.

Socialism and communism

The world is never static. Capitalism that exists in most parts of the world today did not exist before. In the beginning there was no knowledge about what a machine is, who are the owners and the technique to manufacture goods for private profit. In the ancient days people lived in groups. Parents, children and clans and relatives formed a circle and lived in group. These groups are known as clan or tribe. The tools and technologies of the tribes were bows and arrows and spears and swords. Anyone can possess and use bows and arrows and spears and swords. Therefore there were group hunting and the hunt was equally distributed to all. They survived in this way. There was no private property in such economic relation. This kind of economic livelihood is known as primitive communism.

The primitive communism could not last long. New tools and technologies were invented to make living more comfortable. Many began to practice domestication of animals and fowls, agriculture and plantation. The ancient forms of hunting and gathering of food was abandoned. All demands began to be fulfilled in a settled place. Everyone selected suitable place and settled. Villages are formed.

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COMRADE IRABOT AND CAPITALISM

Dr Malem Ningthouja

Comrade Irabot has left with us a booklet entitled *Capitalism*. It is not known accurately as to when it was written and to what extent it was circulated to the people. However, it is likely that the booklet was written without much delay after he had adopted communist ideology while he was at the Sylhet Jail (1940-1943) and after Manipur had experienced disastrous impacts of the Second World War (1939-1945). It is believed that the booklet was used for ideological propaganda among the people when movement was launched after the formation of the Manipur Communist Party in 1948. In order to discuss the historical juncture of Manipur that the book was based on and the agenda of the book it is crucial to analyse ten years time period (1940-1950).

The ten years period may be discussed as follows:

(1) It was a period when Manipur had faced disastrous impacts of capitalism. On the one hand there was colonial oppression till the last moment of 14 August 1947 and on the other hand there were burdens of killings and destructions caused by the Second World War that was fought among the imperialist forces. It was also a period when peoples' movement to establish responsible government was carried out till 1947 against the feudal regime that had been protected by the colonial rule.

(2) It was a period when the Indian rulers were exerting strong pressures to establish rule over the peoples in the Northeast including Manipur. There were attempts to form new political entities such as NEFA and Purbanchal by merging Manipur with other entities with the alleged intension to wipe off the pre-existing *status quo* of Manipur. There was also large scale immigration of monopoly traders from India to control the market and Mayang war refugees from Myanmar.

(3) Despite formal declaration of political independence from British rule in 1947, adoption of Manipur Constitution in 1947 and formation of a responsible government in 1948 the political power was controlled the Imphal Valley rich landlords headed by the king who had supported capitalism. There was also a section that was hatching plots in support of the Indian policy with the intension to fill personal coffer by selling off Manipur. Indian black laws were adopted and there were unrestraint suppressive actions against democratic movements of the Hmar and Mao peoples, and peasants and others.

(4) It was a period when communist movement was sweeping across the globe. In India communist movement was carried out under the guidance of the Soviet Russia. Communist parties were also rising in Burma. All these had catalytic impact on Irabot. Many who supported this goal were also carrying out movement to ensure growth and to protect democratic rights of the peasants. The State indulged in repressive actions to suppress them.

The present booklet shall not deal in length with the history of the peasants and their democratic movements. It is sufficed to say that at the end there was open confrontation between Irabot and those who had supported capitalism. He tried best to sow the seed of revolutionary movement through circulation of literatures. His booklet *Capitalism* is a general outline to explain capitalism, colonialism and fascism. For all these reasons it remains crucial to discuss Irabot's *Capitalism*.

The central issues raised in *Capitalism* are:

(1) Capitalism is a political economy characterised by the capitalists who live by extraction of surplus value from the workers and resources of the peasants establishing themselves firmly and enjoying supreme control over the political power. Because of the exploitative policy of the profit hungry capitalists there developed class contradiction between the rich and the poor and it led to class confrontation. Wastages, destructions and unrests are developed due to the profit motivated over-production and competition among the capitalists.

(2) Capitalism and colonialism went side by side. Fascism is the most brutal form of the capitalist colonial expansion. Due to capitalists propaganda many innocents are misled by blind nationalism and their lives are sacrificed in unjust wars. Unless capitalism is destroyed, despite a country might have overthrown colonial rule there cannot establish a society where equality, collective growth and peace would prevail.

(3) A new social order where equality, collective growth and peace prevail can be possible only by revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist political economy. The new social order cannot be achieved by cosmetic reforms within the capitalist system. The revolution can be successful only by the

movement under the leadership of the workers and peasants guided by the principle of classless society. However the capitalists continuously attempt to keep the workers and peasant parties weak by promoting sectarianism among them through cosmetic reforms and bribing the leaders. In order to overcome these challenges there is in need of a party that adopt correct ideology, farsighted strategy and committed tactics.

Perception on India

Irabot had challenged capitalism and the colonial rule associated with it. On the other hand he drew on a comparison among the capitalists depending on time and situation, and had termed Japanese fascism as more dangerous than British colonial rule. It is said that he had considered the Indian National Army as an enemy for its Japanese fascist connexion despite the fact that it had espoused Indian freedom. A pamphlet circulated on 12 December 1950 condemned the Nehruvian government as a fascist State. It meant that Nehru's rule was adopting capitalism and extending colonial rule under the cloak of blind nationalism. Irabot had wanted an Independent Manipur in an Indian federation under a socialist system in the same manner of the Russian voluntary federation. It would not be an exaggeration to argue that Irabot had supported the proposed federation model since the then Communist Party of India (till 1951 incorporated the right to secession) had supported voluntary federation. He was not inclined towards keeping Manipur under a capitalist colonial system.

Irabot was not alone in opposing Nehru's policy. Internationally, in 1931 Nehru was expelled from the League against Imperialism and for National Independence on the charge of deceiving the revolutionary youth and the working masses and a traitor to the cause of independence and an agent of imperialism. The Constituent Assembly of India debates and the correspondence letter between Nehru and Patel in 1950 would expose their capitalist and expansionist motives. The manner Manipur was forcibly annexed is being mentioned in the eye witness accounts of Nari Rustomji entitled *the Enchanted Frontier* and Anandmohan entitled *Shillong 1949*. Nehru's ambition to create a super-national state stretching from the Middle East to South-East Asia and to exercise an important influence in the Pacific region is discussed in Suniti Kumar Ghosh's book entitled *the Indian Nationality Problem and Ruling Classes*. Neville Maxwell's *India's China War* provides with descriptions about Nehru's territorial ambition that was largely responsible for the war in 1962.

In fact India as we know today is a post-1947 invention. In 1947 the political power of British India was transferred to the monopolistic capitalist groups of Tata, Birla, Dalmia, Singhanian, Bhatt, and comprador section of the Bombay bourgeoisie, capitalists from among Gujaratis and Parsis, Marwari moneylenders, Tamil usurers, etc., who were intimately linked to the princes, landlords and British capital. They adopted a capitalist socio-economic system where social relations were based on commodities for exchange, in particular private ownership of the means of production and on the exploitation of wage labour and resources. The system has been perpetuated through means of suppression, subjective psychological propaganda, and other sectarian and counter-progressive tactics that keep many divided and caught up in a vicious cycle of self-inflicting conflicts along communal and territorial interests.

The capitalist path had necessitated territorial expansion. In other words, capital, which is both a pre-condition and outcome of capitalism, requires a territorial base to thrive on. Although territorial expansionism can be obstructed due to competition, rivalry, and protectionism among the capitalists of different countries, the Indian bourgeoisie took the advantage of imperial interregnum in South Asia in the post Second World War period to expand its territorial base wherever possible. While they selectively used blackmail or bribery or intimidation or military tactics to annex territory, they coined integrity jargons and carried nationhood propaganda to cover up forced annexation and military occupation. Till date the Indian constitution approves territorial annexation but no provisions on the right to secession.

The Northeast, inhabited by economically backward tribal and peasant communities, apart from strategic calculation was important for; (a) labour, resources (water, uranium, oil, coal, precious stones, minerals, plantation, flora and fauna, tourism, carbon credits, and forest products), and market, (b) a buffer vis-à-vis presumed China, and (c) a military stockpile and commodity stocked for commercial expansion in South and South East Asia. They annexed the Northeast, forcibly integrated it into inter-territorial division of labour and subjected it to the restructured economic order as the primary supplier of labour, raw material, market, and military stockpile for Indian capitalist expansionism. Interestingly, whether a territory should be annexed to the extent of using military force as were the cases of Hyderabad, Kashmir, Manipur, etc. or should be kept as a subordinated neighbour as were the cases of Sikkim (now annexed), Bhutan and Nepal or should be shown favourable treatment as was the case of Burma (at the cost of the controversial Kabow Valley claimed by Manipur) was a meticulously worked-out capitalist programme.

Capitalism from the current perspectives

Irabot and the Manipur Communist Party under his leadership had stood against the policy of Nehru. However the rulers of our homeland had treated him as an enemy. In other words those who supported Nehru's capitalism and expansionism became puppets and they launched repressive actions to root out the communist party and peasant movements. To defend the party and the movement Irabot took up arms. In this context the idea of "no internecine bloodshed" was discarded. Because, the internal traitors were several times more dangerous than the external enemy. It was necessary to fight and oust them. On the other hand, for the larger goal of revolutionary internationalism Irabot went to Burma and formed alliance with likeminded parties. However, his life ended as a guerrilla soldier in the jungle on 26 September 1951.

The question that may be raised is if Irabot's perception on capitalism and the movement for an independent and classless society still relevant in the present context of Manipur. The question is being addressed as follows:

(1) The first two decades of the 21st century was remarkable in terms of increasing collaboration of the Indian big bourgeoisie with the imperialist cartels and financial institutions. They were increasingly penetrating into the Southeast Asian underdeveloped countries for markets and resources. They played direct or indirect roles in the US-led imperialist wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere and in extractive investments. Their role in the imperialist international division of labour was visible in the collaborative cum competitive engagement with the Chinese social-imperialists, investments in post-LTTE Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, etc. They were investing in the commercial networks spreading across the extensive Mekong-Ganga Riverbed stretches. In the Northeast, apart from other multinational companies and Indian banks, the ADB finance intrusion was gaining momentum. In tune with militarisation and war pre-emption the US army was permitted to conduct a series of military exercises in the jungles of Mizoram to adapt to guerrilla warfare. US FBI operations in Meghalaya are suspected. Protected Area Permit was lifted from the Northeast in 2011 probably under the pressure of the European Union, largely to promote foreigner strategic analysts in the guise of tourists.

(2) On the other hand the Indian big bourgeoisie had withheld heavy industrialisation in India. India became a warehouse and market for foreign capitalist technologies and commodities, and exporter of assembled commodities. INDIA SHINING was dominantly visible in the tertiary construction sub-sectors and in other secondary manufacturing sectors such as assembling of automobiles, expansion of telecom networks, etc. To maximise extraction of capital millions of tribal and peasants were being forcibly displaced at gunpoint to pave the way for the installation of imperialist assembling units. At the same time a vast number of peasants were deprived of investment and impoverished due to forced extraction in order to fulfil the imperialist quota for food grains and other agrarian products.

(3) In Manipur's context the Indian big bourgeoisie had been closely working in cahoots with the subordinate ruling class composed of landlords, usurers, contractors, commission agents, corrupt officials, petty merchants, etc., who had been dependent on the Indian bourgeoisie for political and economic power. The latter did not directly create capital through investment in constant and variable capitals. They collectively indulged in accumulation of wealth through misappropriation of rent (in the form of central grants) received in return for exploitation of Manipur by the Indian bourgeoisie. They played crucial role in constituting puppet regimes in respectively carved out revenue blocs under the political command of the Indian State who also provided them with military back-up.

(4) Increasing penetration by the State, market forces, immigration and job opportunities could not phase off the structural crisis leading to inequality and unrest. The State invested in cosmetic reformism to divert attention and militarization leading to suppression, repression and insecurity. The situation had a catalytic impact on generating frustration and disillusionment about livelihood. Material conditions of peasant rebellion and labours' democratic assertions have been looming.

(5) Concurrent to the penetration by State and market forces, parallel community formations, the sense of loss of freedom and 'national' identity, there has been armed insurgent groups. However, the insurgents had not been able to propagate the ideology of an independent and classless society to create a collective revolutionary movement across communities. Their politics could not advance much as they concentrated more on creating nationalism markers based on culture and community histories. In this scenario the local ruling class indulged in two way strategies to retain their political and economic power. On the one hand they carried out sectarian and communal propaganda to cover up their exploitative regime. On the one hand they played a leadership role in carving out exclusive revenue blocs for unrestrained control over land, labour, funds and resources. All these were being interwoven into one through communal interpretation of economic grievances and misrule. Most peasants and wage labours were therefore communally organised. They remained sectarian and disunited.

Questions now

Freedom / sovereignty and revolution are universal truth. If on the earth there had been no culture of reconstruction to overcome social regression and economic decline the word revolution would have been non-existent. If the microscopic few that control the State is indifferent to freedom and revolution then it exposes that they do not see beyond self interest and they are the destroyers of democracy. They cannot forever rely on black laws, cosmetic reforms and divisive propaganda to permanently cover up the questions of freedom and revolution that had emerged due to the constraints of their political economy. Their tactics may delay awakening of the mass. However, there is no reason that the poison inherent in their folly administration will not lead to self destruction of the army and divisive propaganda that they rely on to retain their rule.

The polemics that Manipur is an inseparable organic part of India is based on the *statute* framed by the Indian capitalists. It is within the framework of their law that there had developed the exigency to suppress at gun point the freedom question, self-determination movement by communities and movements against destructive projects. On the other hand it is their inherent tendency to impoverish their country and kill, thereby, violating constitutional fundamental rights that are their own making. It does not bring development. But people want peace and development. How to reconcile this contradiction? How long will they defend the country with the paid soldiers? Will the highhanded and hooligan police, army and their relatives remain immune from the unrest and burden of the overall destructions and havocs brought about by the structural crisis? It is highly needed that they change for good the direction of their gun and contribute to the revolutionary cause. Otherwise they will also be drowned along with the people as a whole. History is the testimony; the capitalist must have to change the path ways from the self vested profit agenda and exploitative culture in order that the question of rebellion or insurgency is resolved.

The responsibility of a revolutionary party is to act as the vanguard in leading the people towards revolution. Unless the people as a whole participate a party alone cannot bring revolution. Peoples are awakened by the directions of the party's revolutionary political and economic programmes. The questions, pertaining to freedom for what and whose freedoms, are automatically responded by the political and economic programmes. The party should be able to explain clearly to the people who the enemies of revolution are and who the revolutionaries are. All these are constructed on the basis of revolutionary ideology. However, in my homeland despite an increase in the number of parties formed in the name of freedom, it seems distinctive strategy and tactics to be based on revolutionary ideology are still confusing. There is widespread rumour about the insurgents are working in cahoots with the State. The number of those who want to know the differences and commonalities among the insurgent parties has been increasing. Many are today curious to make sharp distinction between those parties that merely use the cloak of freedom under the instigation of the capitalists to misguide people and those parties that genuinely stand for the revolutionary cause. Those parties that could propagate a matured revolutionary ideology, exhibit farsighted revolutionary strategy and carry out committed revolutionary tactics will enjoy long lasting comradeship with the people.

Finally

Today in Manipur Irabot Day has been widespreadly organised by the State and several other organisations and individuals. They have converted Irabot into a festival / ritual. They have also converted Irabot's photograph and other related publications into commodities. Most does not discuss Irabot's *Capitalism* and other revolutionary voices and they have distanced away from the revolutionary path. It is common sight that leaders are at the forefront in offering floral tribute to Irabot's statue; bourgeoisie intellectuals hurriedly arrived and returned hurriedly after delivering public lectures using difficult technical jargons that are difficult to be grasped by the laypersons. Most of them do not bother to play roles in the revolutionary movement. The merit is some hotels and shops near the programme venue could increase their sell and benefitted. Every year Irabot Day is organised. When elections came after every five years interval most people took money from candidates and the rich were always elected. Is this patriotism, is this civilisation, and is this democracy?