

Editorial

Imphal, Saturday June 10, 2017

To each his own

The state is gearing up to observe the Great June Uprising on the 18th of June, and the massive turnout at Kekrupat attending the memorial service and paying floral tributes by people from different walks of life from various communities in the preceding years reinforced the fact that the people of Manipur, with its diverse inhabitants and cultural mix, still believes in the spirit of unity, and despite setbacks and disappointments, are ready to go to lengths to preserve and protect its unique identity as portrayed by the variety of cultures, traditions, customs and beliefs. But then again, this intrinsic protective feeling is certainly not something unique to the people of this state.

It is rather a universal phenomena; one that has caused many a great epic battles and induced acts of heroism and sacrifices. The threat to one's own space and liberty, whether personal or social, has always evoked reactions ranging from the passively defensive to the more aggressive and violent. The spontaneous reaction of the collective society on that eventful day in 2001 which saw the unrestrained outpouring of the frustrations of the Manipuris is no different. It would be prudent for us all to ponder over the issue without preconceived notions or personal feelings, and to try and understand the facts as they are.

The aspirations of the different communities to better their own kinds is understandable, but if and when that aspiration starts to infringe on the right and liberty of another community or the rest of the communities as the case may be, then differences and suspicions are bound to develop amongst the communities. There is also the bigger threat of the political system feeding on the concerns of these different groups to its advantage, and what was at first a credible issue, even if only from the point of view of a particular community without delving further into the legality or the practical aspect and its impact on the entire social setup, such genuine concerns almost always gets tainted with political overtures, making the whole process a farce and drama, played out to the interest of the very few who are orchestrating such social disruptions. Ultimately, the issue gets sidelined, or more seriously, gets diverted, eventually betraying the hopes and support of the very people who are made to suffer the consequences. The final step- resorting to brute force and irrational violence to subdue and suffocate the rational curiosity and dissenting voice of the society. The only way out of such undesirable situations, and indeed the most effective means of preventing the very fomentation of such divisive ideas is for the people to put a decisive, just and impartial Government which have the political will and the guts to implement even the most unpopular and drastic measures for the good of the society, state or the country- an impossible expectation?

Socio-economic conditions leading to the birth of Marxism

By : CL Meitei

Marxism teaches us that any ideas or theory are always the product of some material conditions. Whenever new material conditions come into being, new ideas and theories too are bound to emerge. This same truth applies also to Marxism itself. Thus, in order to understand Marxism better we should try to know the material conditions, i.e. the socioeconomic conditions, within which Marx and Engels first gave birth to Marxism. Marxism was established over 150 years ago, during the 1840s. It was established first in Europe, which at that time dominated the whole world economically, politically and militarily. This world domination was such that almost all earlier advanced civilizations like India, China and Persia had been subordinated to it. Marx and Engels were born and lived in some of the most economically advanced parts of Europe while developing the ideas of Marxism. They observed, participated in and were influenced by all the major political events of that time. Thus in order to understand how Marxism was born we will first have to take a look at the Europe of that time and see the principal factors in the socioeconomic situation then.

1) The most important factor was the Industrial Revolution, which lasted approximately from 1760 to 1830 and though it was centred in England, influenced the whole world. The Industrial Revolution was named as such because it was during these seventy years that the world first saw an explosive of the world market, which sent England. Along with this was the tremendous expansion of the world market, which sent English manufactured goods to all parts of the world. Though other countries like France, Holland and parts of Germany and the USA also set up large factories, this period was heavily dominated by England. Its domination was such that it came to be called the 'workshop of the world' which supplied manufactured goods to all countries.

The Industrial Revolution transformed the capitalist class. This class was earlier economically not so strong and was a middle class (it was called the bourgeoisie because bourgeois in French means middle class). But, with the Industrial Revolution, this middle class was transformed into a class

of industrial millionaires – the modern industrial bourgeoisie. The untold riches of this new class gave it the strength to more powerfully challenge the feudal classes which were till then still the ruling classes. Alongside the modern industrial bourgeoisie the Industrial Revolution also gave birth to another class – the modern industrial working class, or proletariat. This class consisting of workers working together in thousands in large factories was also far different from the earlier workers working in small groups in tiny workshops. The modern proletarians nothing else except their labouring power and had a strength and confidence not known to earlier generations of workers and toilers. This strength came from their contact with modern industry their discipline learnt from the factory system and their superior organisation due to their large numbers assembled together in single factories under one roof. Their position within society made them the potentially most revolutionary force in history.

2) The other important factor was that which dominated the political situation in Europe at that time. It was the spate of bourgeois democratic revolutions led by the rising capitalist class of which the most important was the France. It also led to the Napoleonic wars where the armies of the French bourgeoisie conquered almost the whole of Europe and introduced bourgeois reforms abolishing feudalism wherever they went. They thus dealt a deathblow to the kings and old feudal classes. Though the French armies were later defeated the old ruling classes could never recover their old position. The modern bourgeoisie continued its revolutionary wave with numerous other bourgeois revolutions, which resulted in the conclusive defeat of the feudal classes and the victory of capitalism as a world system. Thus both at the economic and political levels the period of the birth of Marxism was a period of great advances and victories for the capitalist class when it was conclusively establishing its rule in the most advanced and dominant countries of the world.

3) Though this was the period of the greatest advancement of the bourgeoisie, the principal factor that gave birth to Marxism during this period was the rise of working class consciousness and proletarian

organisations and movements thus signalling and self-conscious force. This rise of a class-conscious proletariat first took place in England and France. This was primarily because of the early spread of modern industry in these two countries. The spread of modern industry though it brought great wealth to the bourgeoisie at the same time meant the most inhumane working and living conditions for the working class. Almost three quarter of the workforce was composed of women and children because they provided cheaper and more easily controllable workers for the capitalists. Children from the age of six onwards were forced to work fourteen and sixteen hours in the spinning mills. As the bourgeoisie amassed greater and greater wealth the workers fell into greater and greater misery. While the cloth mill owners multiplied their capital many 16 times over, their weavers' wages reduced to one eighth of what they earlier obtained.

Thus the conditions of the proletariat were such that rebellion was not merely possible but almost compulsory. The first such outbursts were spontaneous, without clear direction. An example was the machine-breaking agitation of 1810-11 in England where groups of weavers would attack the textile mills and smash whatever machinery they could lay their hands on. This was their method of protesting against the modern industry that was destroying their very livelihood. Such protests having no clear direction and being severely repressed, quickly died out.

What followed was the spread and growth of the labour movement and labour organisations that provided the answer and direction to the fighting proletariat. Earlier unions, which had been restricted to skilled men together in what were then called 'general trades' union. As these unions in England started growing a movement to start a national level union started building up. This was formed and by 1833-34 reached a membership of 500,000. Along with the unions workers also started organising themselves in cooperatives and mutual benefit societies. In other countries and mutual benefit societies. In other countries where unions were largely banned these were the main forms of organisations of the working class which also grew in numbers and strength.

As the workers organisations

started growing the workers in Britain launched the Chartist movement in 1837 demanding electoral rights for workers. This was the first broad, truly mass and politically organised proletarian revolutionary movement. It used the method of mass petitions to Parliament somewhat similar to the signature campaigns sometimes organised today. These petitions gathered upto 5 million signatures. Some of the Chartist demonstrations had 350,000 participants showing the organised strength of the working class. However as the movement grew in strength and militancy it faced severe repression and was suppressed by 1850. During the early 1850s while Engels was staying in Manchester (in England) he was in close contact with revolutionary Chartist leaders as well as its weekly, The Northern Star and was influenced by the Chartist movement.

The growing militancy of the workers movement also often in this period led to the first worker uprisings which were suppressed brutally. Examples of these were the uprisings of the silk-workers of Lyons (France) in 1819 and 1834 and the uprising of the handloom linen-weavers of Silesia in Prussian Germany (today part of Poland) in 1844. The last named struggle had a strong impact throughout Germany as well as on the young Marx.

Thus, by the time of the 1840s, the proletarian 18 movement was growing rapidly in strength and intensity in many industrial countries. However, it was still very weak and in no position to yet pose a threat to either the dominant big bourgeoisie or the old feudal ruling classes. Nevertheless the emergence of the proletariat as an independent class force was an event of world historical significance. The coming into material existence of the proletariat also meant at the same time the birth of the ideas representing this new revolutionary class. Many ideas and theories claiming to represent working class interests thus came into being. Marxism, when it was first formulated in the 1840s was only one among these. However, though many theories had emerged from the same economic conditions, Marxism alone provided the tools to properly understand these conditions and also to change them. Therefore in the years to come it was Marxism alone that would prove to be the true proletarian ideology.

National and International News

Stop Funding terrorism, Donald Trump Tells Qatar, US' Key Ally

Agency
Washington: U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday called on Qatar to stop funding terrorism as his state department urged Arab states to ease their blockade on the country and calm tensions that intensified with a Turkish offer to send military forces to aid its Qatari ally. Trump said he spoke with regional leaders in the wake of a recent meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and he had decided it was time to

call on Qatar to end its support of terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt and Bahrain severed ties with Qatar on Monday over long-standing allegations that Doha was courting Iran and fomenting instability in the region. "The nation of Qatar unfortunately has historically been a funder of terrorism at a very high level," Trump told reporters at the White House. "We had a decision to make, do we

take the easy road or do we finally take a hard but necessary action. We have to stop the funding of terrorism. I decided ... the time had come to call on Qatar to end its funding." Gulf allies tightened their squeeze on Qatar on Friday by putting dozens of figures with links to the tiny, wealthy nation on terrorism blacklists. Taking what appeared to be a different position to Trump's hard line, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson made clear on Friday he expected all parties to end the crisis. "We call on the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates,

Bahrain and Egypt to ease the blockade against Qatar," he said in Washington. Tillerson told reporters at the State Department that the crisis, which has cut transportation links and trade, had begun to hurt ordinary people in Qatar, impaired business dealings and harmed the U.S. battle against the Islamic State militant group. Qatar is home to a vital U.S. military base. Shortly after Tillerson's remarks, the Pentagon said that while the Qatar blockade was not affecting current operations against Islamic State, it was "hindering" the ability to plan for long-term operations.

Crew member dead as chopper crashes in Badrinath

Agency
Dehradun, June 10: A helicopter with eight persons on board met with an accident while taking off from Badrinath on Saturday morning. A 35-year-old crew member was hit by the rotor blades and died on the spot while the two pilots suffered minor injuries as the Haridwar-bound chopper hit the ground shortly after take off at around 7.35am. Five passengers aboard the chopper - Ramesh Bhai Patel, Navin Bhai Patel, Harish Bhai Daswad, Jyotsana Patel and Leela Daswad

- hailing from Vadodara in Gujarat had a narrow escape as none of them suffered injuries in the mishap. Superintendent of Police (Chamoli) Tripti Bhatt told TOI that the chopper lost balance while taking off and crashed at 100 metres toward Govind Ghat from the helipad. "The deceased was Vikam Lamba, who was the engineer of the helicopter." Lamba belonged to Assam and his family members have been contacted by Chamoli police. Pilot Sanjay Wasi (39) complained of back pain and co-pilot Alka Shukla suffered minor injury.

13 Philippine marines killed in fighting with militants

Agency
ILIGAN, Philippines: Thirteen Philippine marines were killed in fierce fighting with Muslim militants who have laid siege to southern Marawi city for nearly a month in the biggest single-day loss for government forces, the military said Saturday. The marines were conducting a house-to-house search for militants

allied with the Islamic State group who are still occupying parts of Marawi when the battle erupted Friday, said Lt. Col. Jo-arr Herrera, spokesman for the Philippine army's 1st Infantry Division. He said that about 30-40 militants used civilians as human shields, making it hard for troops to operate, and also positioned themselves in the city's many mosques.

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