

Socialism is the way forward in Malaysia

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The Malaysian political atmosphere has once again been rejuvenated after the release of Anwar. There are many illusions as well as enormous expectations over him from oppositions, reformasi activists and the ordinary peoples who have fought for him against the brutality of Mahathir regime and his government apparatus when he was disgraced, injured and incarcerated. Recently, many of his supporters firmly expressed that he should continue upholding the reformasi struggle and play a role to establish a strong opposition.

On the other hand, the international countries as well as the capitalists with different illusions have also showed much interest and very delighted in this new development. The capital movement into our country and the rising of share prices after Anwar release could be perceived as the counter response from those capitalist. There are also extensive coverage nationally and internationally over his release by capitalist medias which are being the mouthpiece of capitalist regime.

Undoubtedly, after 1970, the reformasi struggle in 1998, had been a great impact in Malaysian politics. There are many lessons could be learned from this uprising and the following events. Comprehensive investigations into these events and government atrocities at that time will generate clear roadmaps to build an effective and genuine mass movement in Malaysia . First of all, we should understand the root cause for this uprising, which is the system we are living in.

Capitalism in Malaysia

Although Malaysia had achieved independence for 47 years but it's still dominated economically by the imperialist (neo-colonial) countries (such as USA, Japan, British). Neo-liberal policies, globalisation and free market strategies have tremendously benefited international capitalists (multinationals companies) to further intensify into Malaysia's economy. On the other hand, the national capitalists have seen the international capitalists as big threat for them to acquire more control over the flow of capitals in Malaysia.

Since 1980, Malaysia are determined to become the new industrial country as realized by South Korea and Taiwan. Its emergence would entirely subject to the strength of the national capitalist and the role of state to build them. Mahathir's industrialisation and privatisation policies in Malaysia had

tremendously helped the National Capitalist to grow rapidly as well benefiting the multinational companies. Until today, National Capitalist still very dependent and their survival are greatly based on state's supports and policies, which have defended their interest all this while.

Whenever there was struggle against government injustices and capitalist exploitations, Mahathir's capitalist regime as well as the previous government had never failed in using government machineries to suppress the resistances. Memali carnage, operasi lalang, attack on judiciary, repression against oppositions and human rights activist, intimidation against union and workers movements, subjugation against students freedom, were the few examples in Malaysia that showed that how inhuman could be the capitalist regime whilst their supremacy and profit at risk.

Anwar-Mahathir conflict and capitalism

In 1997-98 economic turmoil, Mahathir was adamant to safeguard national capitalists which were mostly considered as his cronies. He forced to introduce the currency control as well as the other measures to some extent to control and balance the force of international capitalist. At that time, the International Capitalist had no other option than to support Anwar whom had been seen as the man that could protect their interest.

Anwar's cronies (some of the media and national capitalist whom supported him) at that moment had been undermined by Mahathir's immediate interference which led to changes in their leadership or he had indirectly threatened their businesses if they support Anwar. These occurrences had led Anwar to lean over to the International capitalist agenda (It could be seen by Anwar policy towards IMF). In order to sack Anwar from government and crush his popularity and power, Mahathir formulated corruption and sex charges against him. This had frustrated Al Gore (former deputy president of USA-capitalist regime) whom indirectly expressed the international capitalist discontentment towards Mahathir and his policies during Apec meeting in KL.

Thus, Mahathir-Anwar political disagreements at that time very much determined and influenced by the conflict between national capitalist and international capitalist which was instigated by word financial and economic crisis.

Anwar who had been the advocator of the same system, when seemed to be a threat to Mahathir capitalist regime, cruelly victimised by using the same government apparatus. It clearly justify that, in capitalism friend or foe is not an issue, always the priorities are power and profit.

Why reformasi movement failed ?

On the contrary, the *reformasi* movement in Malaysia (inspired from Anwar-Mahathir conflict) had not been successful (as in Indonesia which led to the resignation of Suharto) because it was solely supported by mostly Malay middle class or students with its demand concentrated over reforms in government's administration (police, judiciary, media and etc). It also had failed to popularise the more general economic (unemployment, low wage, working conditions, union) and social (housing, education, health) demands in order to garner support from the working class regardless of race or religion. The main obstacles for all these failures were racist and religious divergence among Malaysian society or even the opposition political parties. Reformasi or opposition leadership failed to establish a movement to counter these obstacles.

The success of mass movement in overthrowing autocratic regimes had proven in other countries where race or religion was not a prime consent to build a movement.

In Indonesia through 1996-1998, it could be seen that , the students could mobilise the unions and workers with social and economic demands as well to insist for resignation of Suharto and his cronies, which managed to build a strong mass movement comprising the middle class and the working class, and ultimately had pressured Suharto to resign.

Same thing happened in Korea in 1997 (during Kim Young Sam regime in power) where the consolidated students, workers and middle class had demanded social, economic and political change, which had been the driving force for the downfall of the autocratic government.

In previous uprisings and struggles in other countries, there had been 3 main factors which could lead to movement building :

- 1) Internal squabbles within ruling party and cronyism and nepotism practiced by the ruling governments, high level bureaucracy and corruption. This will lead to dissatisfaction and conflict between internal and foreign capitalists. And some capitalist will support for alternative government.
 - 2) Discontentment among majority of middle class and students against government policies.
 - 3) Economic and financial crisis which will definitely create unemployment, inflation and other discontentment among working class . This situation could be capitalised to mobilise and build a revolutionary masses.
- In Malaysia, the abovementioned factors very significant during reformasi, but the third most crucial factor had not been fully capitalised.

Nevertheless, in country like Malaysia where the people are very much divided by racial and religious sentiments, there is a crucial need to unite the different races and religions working class and middle class people under one movement or party.

How effective reforms under capitalism ?

The present BN government under Abdullah Badawi has been perceived to be more tolerance compared to Mahathir after his attempt to make the police, ACA(Anti-Corruption Agency) and the judiciary more credible. He also has launched his slogan Islam Hadahari (Progressive Islam) to portrayed himself as a moderate Islam. Nevertheless, we haven't heard any reforms in the economic and social activities of Malaysian workers and society. Recently, his cabinet minister (Fong Chan Hon) announced that decent minimum wage is not practical in Malaysia demonstrated that the government policies are very much inclined to capitalist agenda even though the workers in Malaysia still living in deplorable conditions and expose to employers exploitations. Meanwhile , the social problems and environment degradation have been uncontrollable phenomenon even though much programs and efforts have been carried out.

Under capitalism reforms only could be done for some extent and its very much depend on how far the capitalist could permit. For instance , if the government want to revamp police force, the capitalist wont loose anything but it would gain benefits if there is a trusted police force which will safeguard theirs property and fortune. On the contrary, when it come to profit (as decent minimum wage) then the capitalist wont agree even though it seems to be rational to the masses.

The past struggles in Malaysia and worldwide for reforms demanded by workers, unions, students, activist or even opposition parties only had been successful with the involvement of mass movement. Because of the pressure from this mass movement and mass revolutionary forces against

government, the capitalist government had no other options than to fulfil the masses demands.

On the other hand, history also has shown that, the concessions which were garnered by mass struggles (such as benefits in education and health services in Britain and Sweden in last decades) under capitalism, now are being taken one by one by the same government after being pressured by capitalist.

In 1973, American government backed by national capitalist, smashed Allende government in Chile when he attempted to make more reforms (he nationalised almost 40 persons of company to safeguards the livelihoods of Chilean workers) without the consent of capitalist. The coup d'état by Pinochet (who was backed by national and international capitalist) had killed almost 50,000 civilians whom resisted against them.

Habibie (Golkar) , Abdul Rahman Wahid (Islamic party) and Megawati (democratic party) government who subsequently have taken over the government after Suharto dictatorial regime, couldn't do much to free the nations from unemployment and poverty. Same thing happened in Philippines (after Marcos) , South Korea (after Kim Young Sam) and in many other countries in the world.

Its irony that, the implementations of reforms agenda in neo-colonial countries will be more complicated in which the national capitalist are weak, and the economy mainly controlled by the imperialist countries.

So it had proven that, whoever or whichever party comes into power with merely reforms agenda under capitalism couldn't do much alteration or at least to sustain the gains for long. In some circumstances, the reforms agenda under capitalism are merely permitted to strengthen the capitalist in the near future or to pacify the revolutionary struggles of the masses.

Opposition and capitalism

In Malaysia , opposition political parties are also seemed to continue to exist in the same mould though they try to propagate difference perspective or ideology.

PAS, with his Islamic country couldn't do much after 9/11 debacles. Presently, Islamphobia has been at high level after more and more Islamic terrorist involvement in the recent abduction and massacres in Russia and Iraq. It wont be either practical for multiracial and multi-religion society to accept Islamic country motion at this juncture.

The so-called Islamic country in world today, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran , have to be backed by capitalism to survive. One of the richest country in middle east, Saudi Arabia, couldn't do much to alleviate the poverty and atrocities of its counterparts in the regions. While, Iran reformist leader, Khatami couldn't fulfil the demand by the working class for better wage and working conditions and have to bow down to its country's capitalist. It showed that , Islamic countries somehow have to adjust with capitalist regime for theirs survival.

While, DAP, which solely backed by Chinese middle class and petit-bourgeoisie unsuccessful in portraying as multiracial party through their slogan "Malaysia for all". On the other hand, theirs programs and demands merely revolve around reforming the current system and rarely we could hear their effort on mobilising the working class.

There is no much different either with Keadilan which are also trying to reform the present

government administration.

In Malaysian history, after 1970, there were two initiatives by opposition parties, which were Gagasan Rakyat (by S46 leadership in 1988) and Barisan Alternative (in 1999). Both failed to overpower the strength of BN.

BN all this while clearly portrayed themselves as advocator of capitalist system with divide and rule strategy shown by the different racial parties in its coalition. Malaysian society whom looking for the alternative to the BN approach, was not determined with the same approach of BN which was emulated by Gagasan Rakyat and BA. On the other hand there were so much internal bickering and merely elections motives inside this opposition coalitions rather than to build a mass movement. Undoubtedly, there were either no mass movement building in these opposition coalitions in which both working class and middle class regardless race and religion played any crucial roles.

After, Anwar release , its seems to be more hope to strengthen oppositions. Anwar is being seen as credible leader who could unite the opposition. There are 2 main possibilities either he join UMNO or build a united opposition. The latter will be a great challenge and it's needed through analysis to materialise or to be effective.

If he still committed, he might be able to unite the opposition , but could or would he build a strong movement consisting of working class and middle class regardless of race and religion in near future to take over BN government ? Or will he mobilise the masses to transform the system that humiliated him and have been exploiting Malaysian and brutalising the world property and human being ?

Is Capitalism relevant?

From the past struggles in Malaysia and the rest of world we could underline that the political squabbling, economic uncertainties and social discontentment are interlinked factors which emerged from the brutality of capitalist system, which are ruling our country and the world.

The cruelty of capitalist system could be seen from much violence and disasters in world today. The American capitalist government and its allied, which were backed by world capitalist companies for oil and other fortunes, had slaughtered and annihilated the people and the property of Afghanistan and Iraq in the name of world justice and freedom. Terrorism and war, which have made the world unsafe, are the product of capitalist atrocities and repression in the respective countries and the world.

Moreover, the exploitations and repressions (low wage, long working hour, attack on union etc), against workers worldwide by international and national capitalist to reap more and more profits has created more social tribulations. In one part of the world , the world capitalist (such as Bill Gates) gain multibillion profit, and on the other part we see million of people are dying of starvation and poverty in Sudan. Apart from that, theirs desire for more profit and power also make the environment, water, air and the nature become more hazardous and produce risk for human being to continue living in harmony and peaceful.

All these cruelties and uncertainties will be imminent as long as there is capitalism to subjugate our country and the world.

Socialism the way forward

Undoubtedly, reforms could be used as an impetus for mobilisation of mass movement to ultimately transform the system. This strategy could only be successful by the revolutionary mass movement regardless race and religious beliefs, with clear revolutionary leadership.

Capitalist system, which conquered the world with unlimited profit and power, has shown Malaysia and the rest of world that, with it there will be more catastrophes and carnages. The political parties or leaders, which are supporting and advocating the dogma of capitalism, are merely the mouthpieces of capitalism.

Socialism which promote genuine democracy at all level and equal distribution of wealth is the only way to unite Malaysian societies whom are still divided by race and religion.

When, Afghanistan and Iraq attacked by capitalist coalition regimes, with the name of terrorism, socialist parties worldwide without race, religion and border mobilise protest and demonstrations to rage against capitalism. When Muslim worldwide humiliated in the name of terrorism, the socialist in many countries protested and demanded to safeguard theirs rights and culture.

Socialist in many countries in world today , have been committed to struggle for liberation from capitalism and at the same time building solidarity with worldwide working and middle class to strengthen the struggle against capitalism and ultimately emancipate human being from atrocities of capitalism.

Undoubtedly, In future, the party and movement, which could champion and propagate these ideas and solidarities, as an alternative to capitalism could emerge in order to build the revolutionary mass movement to defeat capitalism in Malaysia.