

# **Basanta on the November 2008 National Convention: Beginning the Great Debate**

*Indra Mohan Sigdel 'Basanta', Red Star, Vol. 1, #19, December 5-15, 2008*

The Nepalese People's Revolution is now at a crucial juncture, full of opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, the possibilities are so great that the party's success to develop a scientific ideological and political line consistent with the present objective condition could lead the Nepalese people's revolution to a victorious accomplishment. And also, it could be a new opening of the world proletarian revolution in the beginning of the twenty-first century. While on the other hand, its failure to do so would lead to a disastrous consequence leading to an extensive demoralisation of the oppressed classes not only in Nepal but the world over. Therefore, in short, the recent National Convention of our party, the CPN (Maoist), has had an international dimension.

Clear to all is that the tactic of Constituent Assembly election and federal democratic republic that our party had taken up in Chunwang Meeting has been successfully concluded. As a result, our party emerged as the largest party in the Constituent Assembly election, the 240 year old monarchical autocratic system has been brought to an end, Nepal has been declared a federal democratic republic and, on top of that, our party the CPN (Maoist) is now leading the government. Without a doubt, it is a significant accomplishment.

On the other, in spite of this achievement there has not been any change in the semi-feudal and semi-colonial socio-economic condition of our country, the comprador bourgeoisie are leaders in the state, imperialist and expansionist intervention is on the rise, national sovereignty and territorial integrity has brought in an added danger and, in short, the basic contradiction between feudalism and imperialism and the broad Nepalese masses has not yet been resolved. These are the challenges facing our party and the revolution at present.

Truly, neither had we any fundamental difference in the past nor do we have at present in assessing and grasping the aforesaid reality and challenges. Our party is principally united on these questions. However, there were some differences. In the history of our party, the CPN (Maoist), November 17 to 26, 2008, the sharpest debates took place over the questions of line. It can also be said that it was the sharpest struggle centred on questions of ideological and political line after the initiation of people's war. Naturally, the struggle was to become sharp because the victory or failure of the Nepalese people's revolution was close and the correctness or otherwise of the political line would decide it.

With this sense of responsibility, Chairman Comrade Prachanda and Comrade Kiran placed their line documents before the CC. In those documents, the main difference was centred on, firstly, how to synthesise the entire experiences acquired ever since the initiation of people's war until now in order to have a deeper grasp of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and Prachanda path. Secondly, it was on how to develop political tactic and tactical slogan so as to help unite all of the allies of the people's revolution and isolate the principal enemy. And, thirdly, it was on how to develop under the leadership of party a coordinated mechanism of the three fronts of struggle, namely the street, constituent assembly and the government and which one to make the principal struggle.

In the history of the communist movement, the line struggle has at large centred mainly on the question of tactics. If it centres on the question of strategy, new democracy or socialism depending upon the socio-economic condition of the given country, the only meaning it gives is that the either faction are not genuine communists. In that case, no unity is possible and the revolutionaries must go ahead even at the expense of splitting to keep the revolution on.

Right here, it is crystal clear that the differences our party had did not have any relation with strategy and the analysis of present national and international objective condition. But, definitely we had diverging views on how to go ahead from the point at which we are at. As mentioned before, the differences were on the question of ideological synthesis, political tactic and the befitting form of struggle corresponding to

it. Of them, the main point was the tactic, because the immediate political programme would either open up the way to uninterruptedly reach to strategy, the new democratic republic in our case, or lead to create a separate stage of bourgeois republic before it. Such was the situation in which our party was to act cautiously so that no separate stage of bourgeois dictatorship could emerge before new democratic revolution. It was the main point at which the line struggle has centred.

As said before, we have golden opportunities now. But the only condition to seize this opportunity is a correct ideological and political line and party's organisational unity based on it. Thus, our central committee meeting had to confront two challenges, first, to develop a correct ideological and political line as to address the present contradiction and, second, to build a strong party based on it. Given the legacy of splits after each two-line struggle in the history of communist movement, it was undoubtedly a very difficult task to maintain organisational unity in our party too. However, the only way to achieve this goal could be nothing other than open and unprejudiced two-line struggle keeping in mind the emancipation of proletariat and oppressed classes the world over. And, nothing other than intra-party democracy could make it happen.

With this understanding, the central committee meeting entered into a thoroughgoing and sharp debate over the documents that Chairman Comrade Prachanda and Comrade Kiran had put forward before the central committee. However, the party did not make either document as the only official document of the party. It was not that CC was unable to reach to a certain conclusion through a democratic process, for example majority and minority. But the CC thought that only a serious debate over two documents in the national convention could develop a higher level of understanding among the entire ranks over the ideological and political questions involved in both of the documents. So, it decided to place both of the documents before the national convention as official documents of the central committee. It was in fact a new and a developed form of democratic practice and an initiation of the great debate in our party history.

Not an exaggeration, but a fact is that it was in this convention that each and every participant took part in discussion more responsibly than before, keeping in mind the future of revolution. In spite of obvious differences in their understanding and grasp of MLM, the whole house was unanimously united on the question that party must develop a revolutionary ideological and political line and strengthen party unity based on it. In the light of spirit from the house, the central committee meeting held in between the convention reached to a unanimous position as mentioned below.

Firstly, taking into account of basically a unanimous position of the house, it decided to bring out a single document in the next CC meeting, organise an internal forum based on the Leninist concept of 'freedom in expression and unity in action' prior to the forthcoming Party Congress and synthesise thereby the experiences and ideological and political positions that we had taken up during ten years of people's war, 19 days mass movement, the ongoing peace process and so forth. So the whole chapter of synthesis was deferred till the upcoming Party Congress.

Secondly, setting aside those which comrade Prachanda and comrade Kiran had placed before the CC and the national convention, the CC meeting developed a skeleton of unanimous immediate political programme. The new political slogan termed as 'People's Federal Democratic National Republic', the People's Republic in short, was in fact, a synthesised expression of the programmes, 'Federal and Competitive Pro-people Republic' and 'National Federal People's Republic' that Chairman Comrade Prachanda and Comrade Kiran had proposed respectively through their documents.

Thirdly, the CC meeting decided to build up a mechanism under party leadership to coordinate all the three fronts of struggle, in which the street struggle would be the principal one.

When these CC decisions were placed before the house for approval the whole house unanimously ratified them and so the entire rank and file was united more strongly than before. The development of political programmes and sorting out of corresponding forms of struggles was of course a matter of joy among the delegates, including the whole CC members. The bitterness that was at times witnessed among the participants in the course of discussion in the house turned into an ideological and political unity and comradely feeling with each other. In short, this national convention became such a platform where the entire participants took part vigorously along the lines placed by two comrades and finally helped reach to a stronger unity and higher sense of responsibility for the New Democratic Revolution in

Nepal under the leadership of Chairman Comrade Prachanda. This is of course a victory of not only the Nepalese proletariat but also the oppressed classes of the entire world.

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