

Editorial

Glorious Eight Years

On February 13 the historic People's War (PW) has completed its glorious eight years and entered the ninth. The ninth anniversary was celebrated with enthusiasm and gusto throughout the country and abroad. We congratulate all the heroic fighters and general masses and pay our revolutionary homage to thousands of great martyrs on this solemn occasion.

This is also an occasion to take stock of the revolutionary achievements and challenges of the past and foresee the prospects for the future.

As various formal resolutions and public statements of the Party have already proclaimed, the Nepalese PW is now at the preparatory stage of transition from strategic equilibrium to strategic offensive. It is now universally acknowledged that the revolutionary forces control more than eighty percent (according to the International Crisis Group's report it is more than seventy percent) of the country reducing the old monarchical state's authority to mere district headquarters and big urban areas. The formation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been upgraded to the division level, with two Divisions, seven Brigades and nineteen Battalions and many more Companies in active operation. Similarly, whole country has been divided into nine Autonomous Regions, and eight Autonomous Region level People's Governments have been formed and publicly declared, except in the Kathmandu Valley. The Party has now concentrated all efforts to prepare for mounting an offensive against the reactionary monarchist state embroiled in acute systemic crisis.

As Mao has said, this "transitional stage of entire war" is going to be "the most trying period" and also "the pivotal one". This is perhaps the most complex and challenging phase of the PW, as it marks a qualitative transition in many aspects of the revolutionary process. Firstly, in this phase of the revolution there will be direct collision with imperialism and now the contradictions will have to be handled at the international level. In the present global context of 'wounded tiger' syndrome madly displayed by the sole super power U.S. imperialism after September 11 and the sensitive geo-strategic positioning of Nepal between two super states of India and China, the international question is bound to be all the more complex and significant. Secondly, whereas the main task of PW so far was destruction of the old state power, henceforth the task would be almost equally divided between the 'destruction' of the old and 'construction' of the new state power in the vast liberated areas. For, even though the destruction of the old would still remain the principal task until the central power is captured, it would be just impossible to mobilize the tens of millions of masses for the final offensive unless the liberated base areas are consolidated enough. Thirdly, and perhaps the most importantly, the nature of war itself would now transform from the 'defensive' to the 'offensive', which would demand a great leap in both quantity and quality of the army and logistics and in the battle techniques. Instead of guerilla warfare now mobile and positional warfare would play a dominant role and the theatre of operation itself would shift to urban and more accessible areas from the hitherto rural areas. Moreover, as synthesized by the Second National Conference of the Party, in the particularity of

the changed world situation and the given situation of Nepal techniques of general insurrection would have to be integrated with the protracted PW.

Keeping in mind these and other complexities of the new stage of PW, the Party practiced new tactical moves with significant finesse in the past one year. Of these, the move of ceasefire and negotiations with the old state power was the prominent one. From January 29 (2003) to August 27, a mutual ceasefire was observed and three rounds of negotiations held between the official negotiation teams of the two sides. Though the talks ultimately broke down because of the intransigence of the autocratic monarchical forces principally backed by U.S. imperialism, the politics of negotiations provided a good opportunity for the revolutionary forces to build and expand the bond with the masses and cultivate diplomatic and political relations with different international forces. Also, the political exposure of the monarchy-imperialism nexus and the militarist nature of the monarchical regime, has increasingly transformed the triangular contention among monarchist, parliamentary and revolutionary forces into a bipolar contention between the monarchist and democratic forces. On the military front, a calculated change of tactics to countrywide decentralized actions and more focus on southern plains (Terai) and urban areas has led to constant bleeding of the royal mercenary army and increasingly put them in the defensive. In sum, the political and military moves of the past one-year have contributed significantly for the preparation of the strategic offensive.

Looking back at the tremendous strides in the revolutionary process of the last eight years, apart from the great sacrifices of the masses and the immortal martyrs, the ideological development of the movement based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) is definitely the principal factor for the great achievement. And the key to future prospects, too, would largely rest on how much this ideological development can be carried forward. Starting with the initial thrust on great leap, rupture with the past and all round rebellion inherent in revolutionary dialectics, the proletarian science of revolution was constantly sought to develop through concrete practice. In this process 'Prachanda Path' was synthesized as a new set of ideas developed through the practice of MLM in the concrete conditions of Nepal during the first five years of PW. The new development since then have definitely raised new questions on the ideological front and we have to grapple with them in the proper MLM spirit. The question of development of democracy has been identified as one of the key issues in this context and the Party Central Committee has passed a resolution on this (see "**Present Situation and Our Historical Task**" in this issue). We expect that an enlightened and solemn debate on the question among the international revolutionary forces would help us to reach a conscientious decision at the appropriate moment.

Even though Mao said, "nobody can predict exactly how many months or years it will last as this depends entirely upon the degree of the change in the balance of forces", in the case of Nepal the transition from strategic equilibrium to strategic offensive may not be too prolonged. However, we must guard against both the Right and 'Left' tendencies of complacency and revolutionary impetuosity. •

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