

Basanta Interview: Possible Victory or Collapse of the Revolution

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WPRM: *Can you explain the current situation in Nepal since the resignation of Prachanda from the government?*

Basanta: First of all I would like to say something about the situation in which we had to enter into this process.

When Gyanendra usurped the whole political power, the contradiction of the Nepalese people with monarchy became the principal political contradiction. It created a situation in which all the political forces that had a certain level of contradiction with the king could come tactically together to fight absolute rule of the monarchy. It was in the Chunwang meeting held in 2005 that we adopted a new tactic of democratic republic, which became a basis for 12-point understanding between our party and other 7 parliamentary parties.

Everyone in the world knows the result, the unprecedented mass uprising in April 2006. After that the king, relinquished his absolute power and reinstated the parliament. In the Constituent Assembly election, we emerged as the largest party and the king was removed and the country was declared Federal Democratic Republic from the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly.

In fact, it was basically the end of the tactics adopted from the Chunwang meeting.

We were in the Constituent Assembly and at the same time, we were the largest party, so we had a responsibility to form government. The reactionaries the world over were expecting our party to disappear in the so-called political main stream. It was logical because in the history any party that had participated in the government before completing the revolution had never returned to revolution again. But we were consciously utilising this political tactic to make our revolution go forward.

That was our understanding when we were in the government where we struggled to the extent possible in favour of revolution.

It had been a long-running practice in our history that whichever party comes into the government takes to the dictates of Indian expansionism and at the same time the US imperialism. The reactionaries expected the Maoists to act on this same basis, but we didn't, we have a goal of making revolution and we cannot deviate from this.

However, we have to follow a different course as the new contradictions emerge in the society.

When we were in the government, we tried to implement some political programs but did not follow dictates mainly from the Indian expansionism. The reactionaries clearly understood that Maoists were not abandoning revolution but familiarizing their programmes within the masses.

They decided to topple the government. We had either to follow expansionist dictates or we had to go with the masses. We chose the later because we could not exchange government with revolution. The resignation has become a very big political attack upon the imperialist and expansionists. They wanted us to surrender, but we didn't. Rather we exposed the conspiracy on how they were trying to make us surrender and how they are forcing us to cede our sovereignty. When we exposed this among the masses, it has influenced a large section of the masses in favour of our party and revolution. Now a situation has

come where section of compradors, which are basically pro-India and pro-America and act as puppets, are getting united against our party but a broad masses are rallying around us.

Now the sovereignty is in a real danger. We, after resigning from the government, are taking up this issue. Also, the class oppression is still unresolved, because no revolution has been accomplished. The whole country is now going towards a new polarisation, the reactionaries, mainly comprador-bourgeoisie, bureaucrats and feudal and their allies is trying to take the country in their direction, but we are trying to take the country in our own direction. Without complete polarisation amongst the masses, no revolution can take place. That's how the country is going towards a new polarisation after our resignation from the government.

WPRM: After the recent party conference what are the strategy and tactics of the UCPN(M)?

Basanta: As a communist our overall strategy is socialism and communism, but if we analyse the strategy then we can find that we have a maximum strategy and the minimum strategy. Because ours is a country that is semi-feudal and semi-colonial, and therefore the basic contradiction is the outcomes of this socio-economic condition. The contradictions we have in this country such as class contradiction, which is principal, and the gender, national, regional and many other contradictions, all these contradictions are the outcome of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial socio-economic condition. Our immediate strategy is to resolve this basic contradiction. That's why our immediate strategy is to abolish feudalism and imperialist domination from our country and in so doing accomplish new democratic revolution.

In fact, it is the New Democratic Revolution that resolves the basic contradictions arisen out of semi-colonial and semi-feudal socio-economic condition. That's why our immediate strategy is to move to New Democratic Revolution against semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism. But our overall strategy is socialism and communism. This is one thing. But to reach strategy we have to take up various tactics. That was why previously we used the tactics of democratic republic, which we decided at the Chunwang Meeting. This tactic is now over because the monarchy has been abolished from Nepal. Now we have taken up a new tactic to reach our immediate strategic goal. The new tactic is the People's Federal Democratic National Republic or People's Republic in short. Now we will fight for a People's Republic which will resolve the problems related with class, national, regional and gender oppression.

Now comes the question of civilian supremacy. This is a bourgeois question, no doubt. But never in the history has there been civilian supremacy in our country. In the past the military was never kept under civilian control it was under the control of king all the time. That's why every time they have taken up their advantage and seized the government, as a coup, by sacking the government and dissolving the parliament. Twice in the history it happened so. First, it was in 1961, king Mahendra staged a political coup with the help of Nepali army and sacked the government and the parliament both. In the same manner in 2002 Gyanendra did the same. Therefore, to keep army under civilian control has been the minimum condition to protect the achievements of people's war and the mass movement. That's why to establish civilian supremacy has become an important issue among the masses.

Nepalese people want a new setup, a new society. People want peace and prosperity. It is people's constitution that can lead Nepal to peace and prosperity by doing away with all kinds of oppression. The new constitution must be written in such a way that it brings feudalism to an end, does away with imperialist and expansionist oppression, brings about peace and prosperity, and defends national sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is the content of the People's Republic, which will lead to the completion of new democratic revolution.

WPRM: We understand there are a number of tendencies within the party could you explain to us how these struggles are taking place?

Basanta: In class society the class struggle continues. As long as there are classes and class struggle in the society there exists two line struggle in the party of the proletariat. That's why in the party there are always different kinds of ideas coming up from different leaders, because the leaders also come from the same society. They make up their ideas from the society and the class struggles. Their way of thinking is different and therefore different kinds of ideas penetrate in the party through different leaders. That's why different kinds of trends and tendencies come within the party. And there is always struggle among these trends.

That's why it is very obvious that in any party there is always line struggle between different trends, but the question is how we handle the line struggle in the party. In the communist movement we have seen two wrong tendencies. One is that in the name of maintaining unity in ideology, the organisation keeps on splitting and splitting, just like an amoeba. It is a purist thinking and does not grasp the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist understanding that party is a unity of opposites. It has very much weakened our communist movement. It is one wrong trend. There is another trend that encourages, in the name of maintaining unity, to go for a compromise all the time. This also is very much wrong because compromise with wrong trends will not help one reach to a correct line. And that party which is based on compromise cannot lead any revolution. That's why in dealing with different wrong trends and tendencies in the party, we have to refrain from these two wrong trends: in the name of maintaining purity to go into split again and again and, in the name of maintaining unity to make a compromise.

WPRM: *Can you tell us more about the two line struggle between Comrade Prachanda and Comrade Kiran?*

Basanta: First of all I would like to say it was not a struggle between two individual leaders. Comrade Prachanda is our Chairman; he has been leading our party and revolution for a long time. Comrade Kiran is a senior leader, even senior to Comrade Prachanda. Sometimes in the outside world it is said that it is a struggle between Prachanda and Kiran, but this is a wrong way of looking at. Definitely lines come from certain comrades and in our case comrade Prachanda and comrade Kiran are such leaders who have stood as unity and struggle of opposites i.e. they have dialectical relationship.

The way this has been reported in the external media is wrong and is aimed at dividing our party.

They projected that Comrade Prachanda was a soft-liner and Comrade Kiran was a hard-liner. This kind of projection was always there because the reactionaries do not want our party to remain united. They want to destroy it. The reality is that the principal aspect between them is unity. If they did not have unity how could they lead our party together for so long years?

But because they are the products of our society they have different ways of thinking so the differences in certain issues arise.

WPRM: *Can you explain the various aspects of this particular Line Struggle?*

Basanta: The tactics we adopted from the Chunwang Central Committee meeting was Democratic Republic. When this Democratic Republic was established from the Constituent Assembly this tactic was over.

Now the previous tactic we adopted was over and we had to adopt a new tactic. It demanded to have a thorough analysis of democratic republic, its class nature etc. We had to analysis class contradictions that existed in the society. We had to look at class relations to develop a united front. In that situation comrades did have different ways of thinking but not diagonally opposite.

But once we had our sharp discussion we reached to the conclusion that the Democratic Republic in place is a bourgeois republic. The whole organs of the state power including the army is in the control of the reactionaries. To comprehend this system we had to have a deeper discussion, which demanded open and sharp debate in the central committee.

Debate had occurred all through the party and many different opinions were expressed.

We wanted to understand the current situation deeply, and we found that the common concern of every comrade was how to develop a revolutionary line and preserve party unity. Now we have developed a correct political line tactic and achieved unity, which is conditional and time-bound.

Unity is always relative while struggle is absolute. Having unity now does not mean we will have unity forever.

WPRM: Now the UCPN(M) is in the Constituent Assembly, how is the party carrying out the mass line?

Basanta: Now we are in the Constituent Assembly, we have to make a constitution to resolve the problems of the country and people.

Basically we have two problems:

We are still a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country. We have to destroy feudalism and imperialism and establish New Democratic Republic to facilitate national capital to flourish. At the same time we have to defend our sovereignty. These are the basic things we are fighting for in the Constituent Assembly. But this is not like the parliament which we had in Nepal before, nor is it like any parliament in any country of the world. It works to draft a new constitution and open the way to resolve the contradictions of the country. That's why CA members are fighting in the Constituent Assembly for the rights of all people and the whole party is mobilising masses in support of the people's constitution, whether it be urban or rural areas, plains or hilly regions everywhere. We are mobilising not only the CA members but the whole people to make them write people's constitution.

We are in the Constituent Assembly; we are raising the issues of the whole country, the whole masses of the people. It may seem that as we are in the Constituent Assembly we don't have a relationship with the masses, but it is wrong. What we are raising in the Constituent Assembly are the issues from society. Our party is present all across the country, in every district, every village, we have party committees. In every Village Development Committee we have party committees, and those members are among the masses. They are raising the issues of the masses and they are leading the masses. It is true that a section of the leadership is working in the constituent assembly and they don't have time to regularly visit the masses, but the whole party structure is working throughout the countryside and the cities, the Terai and the Himalayas.

For example in the Terai, the class aspect is the principal aspect because we are making new democratic revolution of which the axis is land to the tiller. But along with this there are other aspects for example nationality question for the Madhesi peoples. No doubt they there are oppressed classes in Madhesh, but the whole Madhesi people are also an oppressed nation. They have been devoid of their national identity, and we have to let them establish themselves as a nation. They want them to establish their own identity but they have been isolated from the central power. That's why our party in Madhesh addresses their issues. Likewise, we raise gender issues and oppressed region issues apart from the class issues all across the country.

Now we are in a transitional period and we need to go for New Democratic Revolution. We have not reached New Democratic Revolution yet. We have a bourgeois democracy now, but we think we are very close to new democratic revolution. The objective situation is ripe for New Democratic Revolution. There is a wide polarisation among the people; and the people and the whole country is basically united for the cause of revolution. People know that if they want anything done it has to be done by the Maoists. Certainly, we have weaknesses and limitations, that is one thing; but people understand that there is no other force except the UCPN (Maoist) in this country that can take things forward for revolution.

The future is very bright but at the same time the challenges are very serious. For, imperialism, mainly the US imperialism does not want any communist power in the world to emerge. The way we traverse cannot be straight forward as we wish. Communists never find a straight road they have to go through twists and turns, and take different kinds of tactics before the completion of revolution.

WPRM: What role do India and the US play in Nepali politics at this time?

Basanta: The US and India want a state in Nepal that is favourable to them.

But the people who are oppressed are supporting our revolution and our cause.

Now the reactionaries are trying to unite their own sections and establish a puppet government in Nepal to suppress the revolutionaries. At the same time the working class and oppressed peoples want this revolution to go ahead. Both these ideas are contending in our country.

First of all, what should one understand is that Indian expansionism and the US imperialism are doing all they can to sabotage the revolution in Nepal. As regards the new democratic revolution in Nepal under the leadership of the proletariat they have unity, which is the principal aspect. But in their strategic interest they have some differences too. India wants to control the entire natural resources and market to fulfil their expansionist ambition.

They want to expand their border up to Himalayas so that they can exploit resources in an unhindered way.

However, the US wants to establish a base in Nepal so that it can control the entire South Asia and encircle China, the contending economic superpower in the 21st century.

WPRM: How does the UCPN(M) view the CPN(UML) and Nepali Congress at the present time?

Basanta: We have to say that Nepali Congress principally represents the comprador bourgeoisie and secondarily feudalism in Nepal.

They are a status quo party; they do not want revolution. Rather they want to maintain the status quo. The present state is a reactionary state. They do not want to go ahead of this, so they are reactionaries. UML is basically the same, there is no basic difference. But they call themselves communist, so they still have some influence among the revolutionary masses. But their line cannot lead the country to revolution because they basically represent the comprador bourgeoisie and feudalism. Also, as a class, the UML mainly represents the petit bourgeoisie. Both these parties are against the revolution.

But within the UML there is a section, the petit-bourgeois, which is oppressed but cannot lead revolution on its own. This section has a tendency towards radicalism.

UML is therefore basically divided. One section represents the comprador bourgeoisie, and one section the petit bourgeoisie. One section fully supports whatever the US and India dictates them to do. It is

crystal clear that one of their leaders, Madhav Kumar Nepal, has become the Prime Minister of Nepal with the blessing of the US and India. At the same time the other section opposes to some extent the US and India as they have some patriotic aspirations.

In short Nepali Congress and UML are reactionary parties.

Nepali Congress represents the comprador bourgeoisie and UML the petit bourgeoisie. UML is divided, that is why we cannot go forward with the whole party to make a New Democratic Revolution. They will obstruct this. But within these parties, mainly UML, there are revolutionary minded people, primarily in the lower strata, and some democratic people even in the upper strata. So in the days to come, there can be a kind of frontal unity with a section of the UML, but not with the party as a whole.

WPRM: *We understand there have recently been defections from the UML to the Maoists, is this part of a wider trend?*

Basanta: There is not yet any organisational defection.

I just talked about the two trends in the UML, and now there is no political party in Nepal which is not divided in the present political issues.

One trend is in support of the status quo and supports US imperialism and Indian expansionism and the other trend fights for independence and national sovereignty. Some months ago there was a vertical split in 'Forum' (a Terai party). The issue was the same, to surrender to US and Indian interests or take an independent stand. One section, the comprador bourgeoisie, supported US imperialism and Indian expansionism, the other section fought for patriotic issues and wanted to be closer to us. Some people have consequently quit their party and come to ours. In every party this kind of polarisation is going on. Also there is a continuous process of people with a revolutionary mind and democratic tendency leaving UML to join our party.

WPRM: *Given the world-wide debate on the importance of the Nepali revolution, what message do you have for comrades around the world?*

Basanta: Ever since the initiation of the People's War there has been widespread propaganda about our revolution all across the world. As the People's War developed, its influence spread all over the world. Now the whole world knows about Nepal and many people are concerned over the future of our revolution. These days there has been some sort of confusion and some misinterpretation about our revolution and also we have been unable to make the world people understand we are in now. That has been a shortcoming on our part. We have been mainly involved in the Nepali revolution, and have been lacking in spreading the world over what we are doing now. And different trends are interpreting it in their own ways. Some say the Maoists are taking a revisionist position.

The reactionaries are also interpreting our party this way. They say our party is divided between hardliners and soft-liners, between comrades Kiran and Prachanda. They have the intention to create confusion among the masses all over the world and divide the revolutionaries in the international level too. We should admit our weakness in propagating the reality of what is happening in Nepal. We could not publish our information bulletin or bring out *The Worker* regularly. We could not clear the confusion about our party and our line. But we are confident that we are moving ahead towards revolution.

Recently in our Central Committee meeting we concluded that we are at a serious crossroads of revolution and counterrevolution. Before us there is a big opportunity, but serious challenges also. If we take the correct steps there is a big possibility that we can accomplish New Democratic revolution. But if

we make a mistake then the whole revolution can collapse. If we can apply Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in the concrete conditions of Nepal and lead the whole nation and international working class, then we have a huge opportunity. People all over the whole world expect a new world to emerge from Nepal.

We are happy that you took an initiative to come to Nepal and try to clear the doubts. We are very happy to have the chance to speak to comrades from other part of the world. Some people think we have abandoned the revolution and will not go forward from this to New Democracy. No, this is absolutely wrong. We utilised Democratic Republic as a tactic. Whether that tactic was correct or wrong we can debate, and we can reach some conclusion, maybe after several years. We don't claim everything we did or do is correct. We are also human beings and we can make mistakes. But we are establishing a strong base among the masses for a revolutionary change. In this Central Committee meeting we are confident we have developed the correct ideological-political line, and this line will lead the whole people in our country to make revolution.

But in the present globalised world we alone are not sufficient to sustain revolution in our country. We can make revolution in our country, but it will be very difficult to sustain if there is no outside international support. There are a few aspects to this. Comrade Lenin said that the first aspect is to give internationalist support to the revolution. The second aspect is to initiate People's War or revolutionary struggles in those countries to support the revolutionaries. As you are here in support of our revolution, we want to extend this kind of message all over the world. And we want people all over the world to study Nepal and understand by themselves why we had to have different twists and turns in the course of revolution. What we did all was for the sake of making revolution a success. Now the world situation is getting favourable to make revolution. So we have to build international support for our revolution, we have to energise our comrades working all over the world. We have to launch activities against US imperialist and Indian expansionist intervention in Nepal, because we are approaching the successful conclusion of the revolution.

But for that we need a stronger level of solidarity of people to our revolution, a stronger solidarity of the working class people from Indian, US, UK and all over the world. If there is strong support from outside Nepal for our revolution we are confident we can make revolution in our country. The contradictions are sharpening, we think that within a few months some result has to come. All these contradictions are concentrated in the writing of the constitution. But it is a difficult challenge. We cannot write our constitution, the reactionaries will not support us. And the revolutionary class will not support a bourgeois and reactionaries constitution. This is the contradiction.

The constitution can only be written if there is major compromise. **If the proletariat makes a compromise with the bourgeoisie what does it mean? It means the end of the revolution. We can be flexible in tactics but not with the interests of the party and revolution.** If we compromise in the Constituent Assembly, that will mean the end of the revolution for a long time to come in Nepal. So the days coming in the next nine months will see a very tough contention on an issue of people's constitution. This is the reflection of the overall class struggle. In this crucial situation we want revolutionary internationalist help from people all around the world.

The reactionaries the world over understand this contradiction. They want our party not to place people's constitution in the constituent assembly and initiate debate because they understand that our constitution will polarise the entire oppressed section of the people around our party and isolate them. They cannot exclude our party from the task of writing constitution. But at the same time they don't want us to be there. Therefore the reactionary conspiracy is heightening to dissolve the constituent assembly, impose presidential rule and initiate war against our party and the revolutionary masses in Nepal. The unconstitutional move of the president and their sticking to military supremacy is nothing other than a

rehearsal towards that direction. So the days ahead are challenging. But we are confident that the correct grasp of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the unity of the party based on it will be able to shatter the entire challenges imposed upon us and make the new democratic revolution in Nepal victorious in the beginning of the twenty first century.

Thank you!

