**Political Economy of Tomorrow**

***Comrade Chair,***

*Chief Guest General Secretary of CPN (UML) Cde Ishwar Pokharel*

*Guest Speaker Prof. Dev Raj Dahal,*

*Cde participants, the media persons!*

Trade Union Movement is basically the professional movement of the working class. When it comes to social transformation, it becomes itself a political movement. The Trade Union movement may be inclined or be an independent with the political parties. But their issues are not separated that from the politics. Basically, political parties are the representatives of the people of different economic-class. Thus, the nature of the party is identified by the 'class' it serves. And this is the main point concerning the Trade Union and our reason for talking and knowing about them and their policies.

Being for working class, the policies and programmes of the party should be pro-working class as well. It depends on membership in the party; if it is more from the working class, more possibilities remain that the party favours the working class. In the experience of the European countries, first there was the Labour movement and later the movement established *Labour Party* to raise their political issues in the parliament. Though the policies, action-programmes and goal were different, the *Labour Party or Social Democratic Party or Communist Party* all were known as the parties for working-class. And the parties named such as *Conservative, or Republican or Christian* with the '*Democratic'-tag* in it, maintained their side towards the employers and privileged-class. These parties maintain their image based on the social issues like ‘pro-working class vs. pro- business class, expansion of the tax-slab vs. trimming of tax, welfare state vs. liberal capitalist and so on. They limit their election campaign also based on such issues.

Generally, the trade unions provide the policy- feedback to the parties on the labour agendas. And labour-friendly parties consider the suggestions for their policies or promise to do so. This kind of co-operation between political parties and the trade unions are existed in Europe, America, Latin America and some countries in East Asia.

But in Nepal, the formation of the parties is in different basis. Here the parties are based on the "*ideology"* instead of the "*Economic"* base. Thus, the parties in Nepal seem as the representatives of *"Ideological-class"* rather than "*Economical*-*class*". Thus, the issues such as- 'social transformation, class-struggle and people’s welfare' are moreover prevailed in the level of theoretical discussion. Even the communist parties, which is known as 'vanguard of working class,' encourage "*mass"* during the time of election and advocate "*class"* in the theoretical dispensation can be considered as the instance.

Thus we have invited the Genral Secretary of CPN UML in the Delegate Council’s meeting so that we can know, understand and judge the politics and political parties for tomorrow.

The Nepali Congress, which is brushing aside the issues of *social transformation* and adamantly harping the core-values of democracy only. Maoist who opts to ignore the democratic values and continued rhetoric dream of prosperity in virtual 'wonder-world'; the *Madhes* based parties, which seemingly in directionless journey with expectation of large share of power politics. In such "political cloud", the CPN (UML) is offering relatively correct political-ideological stance though badly blamed often. We are interested to learn how the UML is charting its future political discourse and comrade General Secretary will definitely clarify about this.

What we are expecting from tomorrow’s economy is a society free from all kinds of inequality and prevailing of social justice. And the equality is related to the economy and the economy is interrelated with the policies of the political parties.

Prof. Dev Raj Dahal, who has been involved in our movement lending solidarity through his rich intellectuality, will clarify us about the subjects today as well.

As we know, equality means ending of inequality remained on 'income, asset, power and opportunity'. In Nepal, the parties have been realising the issue of Equality in three ways- a supporter of *unequal-equality*, the staunch follower of *absolute-equality* and the advocate for the *equality- relatively*.

In the individual context, equality refers the similar opportunities and access among the citizens on economic- socio and political rights. In the party context, it is the policy of party-concerned on 'distribution and redistribution' of national wealth. Whatever name that the party has, those advocating for the 'liberal market economy' is fall under the first category. Market based liberal economy is the system to impose political & economical hegemony of 'overpowered' section against weakest masses of society. To support a system which makes *the rich- richer and the poor- poorer* is, to be a system-follower of 'unequal equality'!

The second category propagates that "all are equal, everything equal for all!" Such parties barter 'dreams of a virtual 'wonder world' with general people. Denying famous Marxist notion- "To each according to his/her work" they opt to distribute "equally" whatever existed in the hand. They mobilise party rank-n-file with "egalitarian fallacy" and encounter with huge difference between their promises and deeds. Ultimately they besieged on distribution of poverty instead of making peoples' life prosperous.

The third one is the realistic one. Such party makes a balance between the 'theory and the practice'. It stands damn against the distribution of poverty in the name of equality. It is just irrelevant issue for such party- what's the upper limit of earning of the rich; the party however emphasis which way and how much the portion of earning of wealthiest class be spent to assist marginalised poor through the state mechanism? Thus, the advocates of 'relative-equality' make efforts to make the poor people's life prosperous and upgrade the class itself from lower to upper echelon.

Three major political parties of Nepal are the carrier of these three trends; and in my opinion the Nepali Congress, UCPN (Maoist) and CPN (UML) represents *first*, s*econd* and *third* trends respectively.

We will be further discussing issue on party and labour agenda as well. When asked about *labour agenda* of a party, it refers to the policy they have in developing the productive force. Development of Productive Force means, working people enjoy gainful decent employment. One can gauge party's labour agenda analysing its employment policy, wage policy and its commitment to plan of tomorrow for working class.

We can mention the Maoist insurgency and *Madhes* *Movement* in this context. The decade long violent conflict destroyed fatally the rural-base employment opportunity. The productive force was forced to lay-down their tools. They were forced to accept options- either raise the weapons of 'war' or evacuate their home along with entire siblings. The anarchical flames spread all over Terai as *Mahesh Movement* forced many working families to leave the country. Be it the Maoist hatched violent conflict in the name of *class-struggle* or Madhes ignition flame in the name of autonomy, both might have contributed to some extent in the political changes, but fatally destroyed the Productive forces.

Thus, talking about the parties mean, it is being in favour or against of upgrading or degrading the politics. To upgrade or degrade the politics mean to maintaining or destroying the significant portion of the nation's life. That's the reason why we trade-unionist take so much interest in the politics and take part in the party's programmes. If the membership of the party is from the working class, then the party will chart policy and programmes in the favour of the working class. If the membership is recruiting from only those youth and students who haven't bear brunt of practical life, then the party endangered to convert into a forum for intellectual exercises. Thus, we always encourage thousands of working people to join the party concern in order to make it pro-working class party.

Thus, in these two days we will discuss about the future Trade Union Movement. We will also review our works and make plan of action for the coming year.

***A keynote by President Bishnu Rimal; July 10, 2011***

*(This was delivered during the first session of Second meeting of GEFONT National Congress Delegate Council. The Theme of the meeting was- Tomorrows Economy, Politics and Trade Unionism. Original Nepali was translated into English by Manisha Neupane.)*