

*Problems of State & Democracy in the 21st Century:*

# **DEMOCRACY, MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM & THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE STATE, UNDER PROLETARIAN LEADERSHIP.**

- Statement and articles by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).
- On One Party System & the Withering Away of the Socialist State: two documents by J. V. Stalin.
- Some Comments on Proposed Multi-party System: by the Communist Party of India (Maoist).

*Edited by:*  
*Scientific Socialism Research Unit*  
*London, UK.*

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- On the Withering Away of the Socialist State, by J.V. Stalin.
- Some Comments on CPN (Maoist) Standpoint on Multi-party Democracy : by Azad, spokesperson of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), from 'Peoples March', June - July 2006.

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## Problems of State & Democracy in the 21st Century

Democracy, Multi-Party System & The Withering  
Away of The State, Under Proletarian Leadership

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## Editor's Note

We are very pleased to bring out this volume, our third publication, dealing with the latest developments in Marxist political theories of state and democracy. It contains the relevant section of a policy statement by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) on the aforementioned subjects and two landmark articles by the Party's two foremost ideologues, explaining the Party's historic stance on the issues involved. Prachanda is the Chairman of the CPN (Maoist) and Supreme Commander of the Peoples Liberation Army. Baburam Bhattarai is a member of Standing Committee of the CPN (Maoist) and Convener of the United Revolutionary People's Council. These documents were originally published in 'The Worker' (No 9), organ of the CPN (Maoist), in February 2004. We are grateful to the CPN (Maoist) for allowing us to publish these two articles.

We have deemed it necessary to include two related documents, for historical continuity, by Stalin, as part of discussions on the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R. in 1936 and his report to the eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1939, which are given in two appendices.

As we go to press, the Indian journal 'Peoples March', June-July 2006, has published an interview given by Azad, a spokesperson of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), making sharp criticisms of the stance of the CPN (Maoist) on the aforementioned subjects. Azad expresses his views primarily in response to an interview given by Prachanda to the Indian bourgeois newspaper 'The Hindu' in February 2006. Following this interview, there appears to have been considerable muddling up in several quarters of the *tactical* participation of communists in a bourgeois multi party parliament in general with the *strategic* multi party competition under the dictatorship of the proletariat and, in favourable special circumstances, even during the peoples democratic stage as a 'sub-stage'. We have, therefore, considered necessary and included here pertinent sections from the interviews given by Azad and another by Prachanda to 'The Worker' No 10, May 2006, as post-scripts, to help clarify the issues involved.

Scientific Socialism Research Unit,  
London.

“Our doctrine — said Engels, referring to himself and his famous friend — is not a dogma, but a guide to action. This classical statement stresses with remarkable force and expressiveness that aspect of Marxism which is very often lost sight of. And by losing sight of it, we turn Marxism into something one-sided, distorted and lifeless; we deprive it of its life blood; we undermine its basic theoretical foundations — dialectics, the doctrine of historical development, all-embracing and full of contradictions, we undermine its connection with the definite practical tasks of the epoch, which may change with every new turn of history.....

.....

It is precisely because Marxism is not a lifeless dogma, not a completed, ready-made, immutable doctrine, but a living guide to action, that it was bound to reflect the astonishingly abrupt change in the conditions of social life. That change was reflected in profound disintegration and disunity, in every manner of vacillation, in short, in a very serious *internal* crisis of Marxism....”

- Lenin,

‘Certain features of the historic development of Marxism’,  
December 1910.

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## A Brave New Approach

Since the defeat of the first wave of socialist and people's democratic revolutions, there have been many attempts to explore the root causes of these failures. Apart from Bettelheim's 'Class struggles in the USSR' (1) and W. B. Bland's 'The Restoration of Capitalism in the Soviet Union' (2), no other major work on the subject in the English language is known to us. Two recent articles (3) dealing with the political economy of the Soviet Union, by T. M. Khabarova and A. I. Shumkov, presented at a 'scientific-practical conference' under the title "Stalin and the modern epoch", held in Moscow in December 1999, deserve careful attention. Apart from these, most of the investigations undertaken, devoid of any objective data collected from published or unpublished sources as well as of any 'fieldwork', amongst other tools appropriate for social sciences, can hardly be called scientific. Coupled with an absence of open-mindedness, the initial hypotheses remain unproven, left as they were in the beginning of these supposed exploratory studies.

In this respect, the contributions of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), though from a different angle, mark a qualitative departure. They deal with the problems of such failures from the distinct theoretical premises of socialist state and democracy. Doubtless, this has been possible due to the fact that they are actively engaged and leading what increasingly appears to be the impending successful second wave of New Democratic Revolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Here, deployment of appropriate theoretical tools has been a crucial necessity in order that the revolution may succeed this time around.

The *twin* concepts of 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and the 'withering away of the state machine' constitute, *inseparably*, the foundation of Marxist political science. Yet, during the construction of socialism in the U.S.S.R. they became separated from one another.

Bhattarai traces the historical developments of the Marxist concepts of state and democracy as follows:

".....For instance, on the question of the state in Marx's time, as there was the need to fight against the anarchist tendency, which tended to negate the state instantly, Marx and Engels had

to stress more on the 'necessity' of a transitional state in the form of dictatorship of the proletariat. When this 'necessity' aspect was one-sidedly exaggerated by the revisionists of the Second International and sought to perpetuate the bourgeois state through cosmetic 'reforms', Lenin launched a vicious ideological struggle against it and developed the new Soviet state power after carrying out the October Revolution. On Lenin's death and during the period of Third International and Stalin, though there was mechanistic stress on the 'necessity' of dictatorship of the proletariat from a dogmato-revisionist angle, the question of continuous revolution and withering away of the state was put on the back burner and consequently the dictatorship of the proletariat itself got distorted and ultimately degenerated into bureaucratic bourgeois dictatorship or totalitarianism. It was only during the period of Mao that both the revisionist and dogmato-revisionist tendencies were attacked and a balanced stress was placed on both the questions of dictatorship of the proletariat and of 'continuous revolution' and withering away of the state. As Mao's efforts during the short period were grossly inadequate and incomplete, the revolutionaries of the present age should dare go beyond all the past experiences and build a new type of state power while firmly grasping the question of dictatorship of the proletariat and continuous revolution." (This volume, page 34)

And further on,

"Though the concept of New Democratic state developed by Mao is generally correct and appropriate, the CPN (Maoist) has found it imperative to further develop the concept of democracy in the light of the past experiences of counter-revolutions and continuously changing national and international conditions." (Ibid, page 37)

With this brave stance, Bhattarai and the CPN (Maoist) have shaken the age-old practice that made the communists outside the Soviet Union reliant on the latter to do the thinking for them, in the name of defence of the first workers' state of the world. The declaration that "the CPN (Maoist) has found it imperative to further develop the concept of democracy" confirms our appraisal of the concrete source of theoretical developments

by the CPN (Maoist).

The new thinking has culminated in an outstanding contribution to the science of socialism:

"Similarly, as practiced during the GPCR ('Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution', editor) such methods like guaranteeing freedom of expression, press, strike etc. for the masses, public criticism of and mass action against persons in high authority of Party and state, etc. should be institutionalized. Also, drawing correct lessons from the bitter experiences of failure of the masses to stage organized rebellion against counter-revolution in the past, we should ensure a system in the new context whereby political parties may be allowed to get organized keeping within definite progressive and revolutionary constitutional limits and they may be encouraged to function not only in a 'cooperative' manner but in a 'competitive' spirit vis-à-vis the formal Communist Party. There can be no objective and logical reason for the Communist Party claiming itself to be the representative of the majority proletarian and oppressed classes to hesitate to enter into political competition within a definite constitutional framework, once the economic monopoly of the feudal and bourgeois classes over land and capital and military monopoly over the mercenary professional army, which are the sources of their political hegemony, are thoroughly smashed. One should earnestly acknowledge that this is not an advocacy of bourgeois pluralism but is a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist method to objectively solve contradictions among the people as long as the class division in society exists. Though it could not be practiced for various reasons in the past, the fact that Mao himself was contemplating in that direction can be deduced from his following statement: "Which is better, to have just one party or several? As we see it now, it's perhaps better to have several parties. This has been true in the past and may well be so for the future; it means long-term coexistence and mutual supervision." (Mao 1956: 296)

Whatever it may be, we should be prudent and daring enough to develop proletarian democracy or people's democracy as per

the new needs of the twenty-first century. This is the rationale of the new decision of our Party, under the leadership of Chairman Com. Prachanda, in relation to the development of democracy. Moreover, keeping into consideration our specific situation of existence of autocratic monarchy and non-completion of even a bourgeois republic, we should not rule out the possibilities of having to pass through various mixed and transitional forms of democracy in the process of marching from autocratic monarchy through bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. “ (Ibid, page47)

We have purposely cited these lengthy excerpts as they sum up the basic contents of this volume, consisting of the standpoint of the CPN (Maoist) on the issues of the state and democracy, as expressed in the statement of the Central Committee of the Party in May, 2003, under the title: “Present Situation And Our Historical Task”, (*The Worker*, No 9, February 2003), followed by two explanatory landmark articles by the two highest ranking leaders of the Party.

We would like to mention here that our studies, though still very limited and mainly from fieldwork in Azerbaijan, suggest that democracy was seen differently by the industrial working class and the intelligentsia in the then socialist countries. It was sections of the intelligentsia, whose social origins are still not fully understood by us, that led the counter-revolutions while the working class was largely passive onlooker, sometimes bewildered. Of course, a large section of workers *did* see through the ‘democracy game’, but were frustratingly unable to react in any useful manner. What is needed is a re-examination of the application of the concept of ‘vanguard party’ during the construction of socialism, in the light of almost total isolation of the Communist Party from the masses.

There are a few weaknesses in the CPN (Maoist) positions under discussion. While observations have been made on the developments of the Soviet state and democracy during Lenin’s lifetime and during the Stalin era, with which we would generally agree, support from a comprehensive research on the associated problems encountered by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during different phases of socialist construction is lacking. A solitary paragraph on the Stalin era and a few passing references to it in this respect present a rather oversimplified

account. The C.C. statement and the articles make no reference to Stalin’s defence of the ‘one party system’ in his document, ‘On the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R.’ in 1936. And, contrary to what Bhattarai asserts that the issue of the “withering away of the state was put on the back burner...”, the issue was in fact raised from time to time and was dealt with fundamentally and in an unorthodox manner by Stalin in the concluding section of his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The issue was taken up by a few others at that Congress, and there are reasons to believe, at different levels in the pre-Congress discussions. A systematic study of the theses adopted in these documents is unavoidable if we are to unravel the factors governing their origins. The relevant documents are given in appendices I & II.

Stalin considered the encirclement of the Soviet Union by capitalist forces as the sole criterion to justify the continuation of the state. His positions on the withering away of the state appear to be tantamount to the ‘abolition’ of the state. Otherwise, it is difficult to appreciate how hostile capitalist encirclement was preventing gradual elimination of ‘state interference in social relations’ or replacement of ‘government of persons by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production’ (Engels). This is particularly pertinent when the socialist state was characterised by Stalin as a ‘different type of state’ not to be used any more to suppress internal exploiting classes as they were considered to have been eliminated. It can be assumed that the specific condition of hostile international environment with its severe internal reflections was rendering the judgment of the C.P.S.U seriously blurred. But despite significant weakening of the capitalist encirclement with the emergence of People’s Democracies in Eastern Europe and China, at the end of the Second World War, the issue did not appear to have been re-assessed at the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the C.P.S.U. held in 1951, two years before Stalin’s death.

The CPN (Maoist) stance and the explanatory articles have adequately dealt with the consequences of one party system, in the light of devastating experiences of the socialist countries. Here they stand uniquely in their creative pursuit for developing the science of socialism to satisfy the conditions of the twenty-first century. But, there are a few questions here that deserve further attention. First, although Bhattarai has

categorically denied any “advocacy of bourgeois pluralism”, the endorsement of the “competitive spirit” is still within that sphere. The latter’s replacement with *class struggle in a non-antagonistic manner* seems more appropriate, “once the economic monopoly of the feudal and bourgeois classes over land and capital and military monopoly over the mercenary professional army, which are the sources of their political hegemony, are thoroughly smashed”, but “*as long as the class division in society exists*”. (Italics added). Second, the relationship of the ‘two-line struggle within the Communist Party’ with the competition (or non-antagonistic class struggle) outside has not been established.

Then there are the problems of democracy within the Communist Party, even before its capture of state power, which become inherently associated with and inseparable from problems of the socialist state, when it is the ruling party. Particularly in those countries where armed struggle has become the principal form of struggle, it is inevitable that the Party will be forced to work underground; the operation of democracy in the Party in this situation assumes a very difficult, but unavoidably crucial, issue. The CPN (Maoist) position does not address itself to these problems.

The above mentioned weaknesses are not insurmountable; these are areas for future work. The international communist movement will be grateful to the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) for bringing the issue of the withering away of the state back on the agenda. And the suggested multi-party system after the smashing of the old state is a gigantic step forward in Marxist political theory, which could open up a completely new vista and direction for a fresh beginning of the revolutionary movement in the advanced capitalist countries. The contributions of the CPN (Maoist) in the domain of scientific theory of socialism match their ever-increasing successes on the battlefield. These are great inspirations for the oppressed people of the world, particularly in South Asia. Perhaps it would be no exaggeration to say that what Lenin intended to do in his planned second volume of the ‘State and Revolution’ and what Stalin wished Lenin’s disciples to accomplish, has now been taken up by the Maoists in Nepal.

Long live the Nepalese Revolution!

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London.



## On the Experiences of History and Development of Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

[Note : The following is the concluding section of a statement titled, "Present Situation And Our Historic Task", adopted by the Central Committee of the CPN (Maoist) in May 2003 and published in 'The Worker', No 9, February 2004]

*"Marxism is not lifeless dogma, not a completed, readymade immutable doctrine, but a living guide to action" -Lenin*

The main essence of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is to advance ahead through continuous revolution by scientifically synthesizing world proletarian movement enriched by the great experiences of revolution and counter-revolution. In giving leadership to the democratic revolution against feudalism and imperialism in Nepal, our Party has been from the very beginning laying emphasis on applying the teachings of MLM, not in the form of dogma but in the form of creative application and development as a "guide to action". In this great process of applying and developing the teachings of MLM based on the concrete condition of the Nepalese revolution, we have been waging continuous struggle against rightist revisionists as well as the dogmato-revisionists. The process of ideological struggle that is invariably linked with the necessity of class struggle has brought the People's War to this level of development within the period of 7 years through one leap to another. The Party has already synthesized the discovery at "Prachanda-Path" as a special chain of ideas in the Nepalese revolution based on this development process of class struggle and ideological struggle.

Here what is important to note is that the starting point of the Party's ideological and practical struggle has been the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that has developed Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as the highest synthesis of the science of proletarian revolution. This means, to uphold continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat as a theoretical basis to prevent counter-revolution and to carry forward ideological struggle based on the principle of "Three Dos and Three

Don'ts" for the continuous proletarianization of the Party. Our Party has been firm that any deviations from this will mean deviation from the proletarian movement. But, if it is taken to mean readymade and complete answers for the requirement of revolution in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century then one should be clear that it is against the teachings of MLM and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The synthesis up to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution definitely equipped the world proletariat with the ideological weapon of MLM. But, after the demise of Com. Mao, capitalism got restored in China and there is now not a single socialist state in the world. It would be a subjective deviation to deny the fact that this has given a big setback to the world proletarian movement and that it has brought big negative change in the world situation. Objectively there is no change that this is the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution and that revolution is the main trend of the world. This does not mean that we should underestimate the big loss proletarian class has faced through counter-revolution in China in the struggle for power and that we should not take seriously our effort to stop such counter-revolution in future by taking lessons from these defeats. In the present context of world revolution or in the context of revolution in any particular country, it has become very necessary for the political vanguard of the proletariat to give answer to this big question.

In the same way, with the entry into 21<sup>st</sup> century, there has been unprecedented development in science and technology, particularly in electronic communication technology, in the world. Just as this intense development has been affecting the world in different ways, similarly this makes necessary demands for improvement and development in the political and military strategy of the proletarian revolution. Any positive or negative incidents in any corner of the world has so rapid, intense and direct repercussion in the world that such phenomena has never occurred earlier in humankind's history.

This way, the experiences of counter-revolution give us inspiration to learn lessons from the limitations and weaknesses of past revolution, and the advancements made in science and technology inspire us to make creative development in the strategy and tactics of revolution. From the point of view of epochal development of human society it is still the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution; however, because of above

important changes that have come in subjective and objective conditions it has necessitated today's proletariat to develop and refine their ideology and strategy based on concrete analysis of concrete situation.

On the basis of experience of history, analysis of present world situation and five years' enriched experiences of the Nepalese People's war, the Party's Second historic Conference has made many important political and military syntheses. The qualitative result brought in the development of People's War due to the application of that synthesized idea in the past two years, has not only proved its scientific basis but also it has prepared a strong base for higher ideological, political and military synthesis. On the basis of these developments in the world situation, including the development of Nepalese class struggle from the Second National Conference up to today, and from the September 11 event up to the Iraq war, it is necessary to develop and refine the strategy of the democratic revolution. In this context it is specially worth considering following points on relationship between the Party, Army, State and the People.

### **The Party**

The experiences of revolution and counter-revolution in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century have glaringly showed that the work of defending and developing the revolutionary proletarian character of the Party becomes all the more difficult in the period after the capture of the state power. Why is it that those victorious Parties in the world which have undergone intense ideological struggle against the rightist, leftist and centrist deviations inside and outside of the Party and which have created unprecedented example of earth-shaking bravery and sacrifice by fighting against the enemy in class war while identifying itself with the needs and interest of the people, after they capture state power become transformed into bureaucratic, revisionist, and counter-revolutionary Parties, alienated from the masses within a short period of time? Certainly, basic theoretical answers for this have been given by MLM by the time of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. But, these basic theories need to be developed into an organizational theory, methodology and system so that they can stop counter-revolution, and this is valid even today. This is the problem of application and development of the theory of two-line struggle within the Party and continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Experience has proved that after assuming state power, when various leaders and cadres of the Party are involved in running the state affairs, then there is strong chance that physical environment may swiftly reduce the Party into a bureaucratic, careerist and luxurious class. With intensification of this danger the Party will become more formal and alienated from the masses, in the same proportion. This process when it reaches to certain level of its own development, it is bound to be transformed into counter-revolution. In order to prevent such danger as counter-revolution to happen, it is important to develop further organizational mechanism and system so that Party is constantly under the vigilance, control and service of the proletariat and working masses according to the theory of two-line struggle and continuous revolution. For this it is very important that there should be a mechanism to guarantee overall people's participation in two line struggle and that one section comprising of capable and established leaders and cadres should be constantly involved in mass work and another section should be involved in running the state machinery and that after certain interval of period there should be re-division of work thereby strengthening the relationship between the whole Party and the general masses. Right from the beginning it should be stressed that the Party and the state under its leadership should adopt a policy and methodology of keeping lively relations with the masses, working hard and living in privation and to be wholly devoted to the cause of communism. It should present Party, leaders and cadres as ideal and inspirational examples. It should emphasize to develop policy and structure which will help in waging intense ideological struggle and will expose before the masses those leaders and cadres who misuse their position, dictate over the masses and who are luxurious and careerists. In this context, it should be stressed to discourage the tendency of using coercive measure of state power in two-line struggle in the Party and to emphasize in establishing and encouraging scientific methodologies of judging between right and wrong through ideological struggle with the participation of the masses and the cadres. It is important to guarantee the system of reserving the right of judgment to the cadres and masses in deciding if certain rebellion inside or outside the Party is justified or not.

### **The Army**

The experience of revolution and counter-revolution in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has clearly shown that if the proletariat class advances ahead with correct

revolutionary ideology, policy and programme then the people can develop from almost zero to the level of an invincible people's army which can reduce to dust the ultramodern and powerful army of the enemy. But if wrong ideology prevails then the same army can become a weapon of counter-revolution. The experience has shown even in the context of the people's army that before the revolution, it has been in unison with the masses, full of devotion, bravery, sacrifice and ideological commitment, thus being invincible before the enemy; but after the capture of state power the same starts staying in barracks under special management and the material condition for turning into a bourgeois modern regular army gets intensified. If one is not able to guarantee the development of methodology and structure which will keep the army under the supervision, control and service of the masses and proletarian ideology then such tendencies will go on multiplying till it reaches a specific point when it will automatically get transformed into a weapon for serving counter-revolution. In order to stop repetition of above condition it is necessary right from the beginning to pursue ideological and political work amongst the people's army with great importance and to make conscious the whole people's army and the masses to rebel against counter-revolution. Together with this, it should be guaranteed that the people's army of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not marked by modernization with special arms and training confined to a barrack after the capture of state power but remains a torch-bearer of revolution engaged in militarization of the masses and in the service of the masses. It is only by developing armed masses from both ideological and physical point of view that one can resist foreign intervention and counter-revolution; this fact must be made clear before the armed forces right from the beginning. The main thrust of work for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century people's army should be to complete the historical responsibility of developing conscious armed masses so that they may learn to use their right to rebel.

### **On the State**

The capture of state power through people's war under the leadership of the Party of the proletariat has been the central and difficult question of revolution yesterday and today. But the experience of 20<sup>th</sup> century has clearly proved that the question of continuous democratization of the state power, so that it starts withering away, is thousand times more difficult and complex than capturing state power. The importance and rigor of the

subject can be judged from the fact that at one point of time within a century successful revolutions in Russia, China and other countries had shaken the whole earth, while at the other end the events of big counter-revolutions in those powerful socialist countries lead to a situation of no socialist state.

It is a fact that while capitalist imperialists are successful in camouflaging their military fascist essence by covering it with the so-called democratic mask, at the other end, the proletarians despite having a democratic essence are not able to consolidate their hold on the state. There may be many historical and theoretical reasons behind this, but today the problem of developing democracy has become very complex before us. What are the main obstacles in maintaining the balance between the need of resorting to dictatorship over the defeated class enemy and the necessity of exercising democracy amongst the people? Why is it that people's democracy or proletarian democracy under people's democratic dictatorship or dictatorship of the proletariat have in essence become formal, mechanical and conservative? Here our question has nothing to do with those revisionist and capitulationist renegades of the world who have fallen back to bourgeois formal democracy by condemning people's democratic dictatorship or dictatorship of the proletariat. Here our question is centred around the development of state power as an organisation to facilitate continuous revolution. In the end it is the broad and vigorous democratization process, which will in essence consolidate real people's dictatorship or proletarian dictatorship. There can be no other meaning than this of the great scientific theory of democratic centralism. Why is it that these parties that were able to exercise democratic centralism correctly before the capture of state power have now fallen pray to formal democracy and bureaucratic centralism after they have succeeded in capturing the state power? That the party is dominated by revisionism cannot provide full answer to this question. In the end the responsibility lies with this or that weakness committed by Marxists in the application of dialectical materialism.

A Party, which may be proletarian revolutionary, and a state, that may be democratic or socialist, at a particular time, place and condition, may turn counter-revolutionary at another time, place and condition. It is obvious that the synthesis of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, namely the masses and the revolutionaries should rebel in such a situation, is fully

correct in its place. However, as if a particular Communist Party remains proletarian for ever once a New Democratic or Socialist state is established under the leadership of that Party, there is either no opportunity, or it is not prepared, or it is prohibited, for the masses to have a free democratic or socialist competition against it. As a result, since the ruling Party is not required to have a political competition with others amidst the masses, it gradually turns into a mechanistic bureaucratic Party with special privileges and the state under its leadership, too, turns into mechanistic and bureaucratic machinery. Similarly, the masses become a victim of formal democracy and gradually their limitless energy of creativity and dynamism gets sapped. This danger has been clearly observed in history. To solve this problem, the process of control, supervision and intervention of the masses over the state should be stressed to be organized in a lively and scientific manner, according to the principle of continuous revolution. Once again the question here is to dialectically organize scientific reality that the efficacy of dictatorship against the enemy is dependent upon the efficacy of exercising democracy among the people.

For this, a situation must be created to ensure continuous proletarianization and revolutionization of the Communist Party by organizing political competition within the constitutional limits of the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist democratic state. Only by institutionalizing the rights of the masses to install an alternative revolutionary Party or leadership on the state if the Party fails to continuously revolutionize itself that counter-revolution can be effectively checked. Among different anti-feudal and anti-imperialist political parties, organizations and institutions, which accept the constitutional provisions, of the democratic state, their mutual relations should not be confined to that of a mechanistic relation of cooperation with the Communist Party but should be stressed to have dialectical relations of democratic political competition in the service of the people. It should be obvious that if anybody in this process transgresses the limits legally set by the democratic state, he would be subjected to democratic dictatorship. From the very beginning it should be stressed to end a situation of not having to prove the correctness of one's ideas, the need to get united with the interests of the masses, and dedication, devotion and sacrifice and loyalty to the masses to establish the leadership capacity of the Party once the state power is captured. Special care should be taken to ensure that centralization of thought and leadership in the state would not lead to a situation of curtailing the rights of self-determination of the

masses.

In the context of democratic revolution in Nepal, we have been talking about the liberation of the masses from class, national, regional, and gender oppression. We have also pledged national and regional autonomy along with the rights to self-determination. Similarly we have been talking about Party freedom for anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces. In this situation it should be stressed on correctly organizing the masses' right to self-determination for the continuous democratization of the state.

Thus, only through the appropriate development of the Party, Army and State as stated above that democracy in the twenty-first century would enhance the process of continuous revolution and counter-revolution. •

## On the State and Democracy

- Prachanda

In these days, a process of study and debate is taking place in Party, on the question of democracy in the twenty-first century. The recently held Central Committee Meeting by emphasising the new exigency of synthesising experiences of the great revolutions and awful counterrevolutions, particularities of the present world situation and own experiences of the Nepalese People's War has adopted a draft resolution for debate. With an aim to helping this process of study and debate, some theoretical discussion on the state and democracy has been carried out here.

### Sequence of development of the state and democracy: a theoretical concept.

The question of democracy is inseparably intertwined with the question of state power. Therefore, while talking about the question of democracy, it is essential to understand correctly about the development of the state power. Everyone, who has preliminary knowledge of historical materialism on the development of human society, knows that the state power has emerged from a certain state and contradiction of development of production and the productive forces. There was neither any state nor democracy till a long historical period followed by the development of mankind from ape with a determining role of labour. According to scientific exploration, people, till a long period of about a million years, used to maintain their livelihood through collective efforts without any state and democracy. The process of labour, division of labour, production and the productive forces that developed in the course of that long historical period, also known as primitive communism, led to creating such an objective situation and contradiction because of which a necessity and development of the state gradually took place. On the basis of historical materialism, Marxism invented first time in the history a scientific concept in place of the entire conservative and idealist illusion about the prevalent human society and the process of its development. In his famous book "The origin of the family, private property and the state", Frederic Engels, the co-pioneer of Marxism, has, with a deep discussion on it, presented a scientific conclusion. It has been said there,

"... The State, therefore, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies, which have managed without it, which had no notion of the state or state power. At a definite stage of economic development, which necessarily involved the cleavage of society into classes, the state became a necessity because of this cleavage."

In this way, it is clear that 'a certain stage of economic development' because of which the erstwhile society got entrapped in an insoluble cleavage has been a responsible reason behind the origin of the state. Marxism has, on the basis of historical materialism, also explained the objective ground behind the origin of the state. On the basis of scientific invention of the general laws of social development and investigation of prevalent contradictions in the capitalist society, Marxism has deduced an undeniable conclusion about withering away of the state. Marxism clarified the scientific fact that the class-division and the state standing over its foundation was inevitable in a certain state of development of production and, this cleavage in another definite state of development of the same becomes a hindrance for the society and the state too becomes unnecessary. Frederick Engels, in the same work has further said,

"We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes has not only ceased to be a necessity, but becomes a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they once arose. The state inevitably falls with them. The society, which organizes production anew on the basis of free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole state machinery where it will then belong — into the museum of antiquities, next to the spinning wheel and the bronze axe."

Attacking upon all kinds of concurrent idealist illusions, the same work says, "The state is therefore by no means a power imposed on society from without; just as little is it 'the reality of the moral idea,' 'the image and the reality of reason,' as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a particular stage of development; it is the admission that this society has involved itself in insoluble self-contradiction and is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms, which it is powerless to exorcise. But in order

that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, shall not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, a power, apparently standing above society, has become necessary to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the "state". In this way, Engels has, in relation to the origin of the State and its definition, presented a very correct and scientific materialist explanation. The state that has emerged as a result of class-contradiction went on being consolidated obviously as a tool of exploitation and repression upon the oppressed classes. The task and role of the state has been, in accordance with the state of economic development, to defend the interest of slave-owners in the slave era, of landlords in the feudal era and of bourgeoisie in the capitalist era, and to repress the masses opposed to it. Despite the form of the state has been changing in different epochs of economic development, no change has taken place in its essence as a tool of repression and cannot happen too.

In the history, because of the contradiction between productive forces and the production relation, whatsoever revolutions have taken place from the slave era to the capitalist one have all of them finally reinforced the state. Marxism, following a deep investigation of contradictions in the capitalist era, presented a very new and a historic task of shattering the state power forcefully, not of seizing the old one and consolidating it, and establishing a transitional one (which will gradually advance ahead in the direction of withering away) to smash the resistance of bourgeoisie. Lenin has mentioned the conclusion — "All previous revolutions perfected the state machine, whereas it must be broken, smashed" - as the main and basic factor of Marxist theory on the state. Karl Marx, mentioning the work named 'Eighteenth Brumaire' and clarifying this fact in a letter to Kugelmann, has said,

"I say that the next attempt of the French revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to smash it, and this is essential for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting."

The aforesaid conclusion has, on the one hand, drawn up a clear demarcating line between the anarchism that opposes all kinds of powers

including the state and, on the other, the right opportunism that by looking through bourgeois eyes conceives of the state as an eternal and universal. From the time of Marx and Engels to today, a clear ideological struggle has been going on against anarchism and bourgeois reformism on the question of state power. What is required to be clear here is that without forcefully destroying the bourgeois state power it is impossible to open up the way to withering away of the state.

Asserting the 'centralized state power' as the 'specificity of bourgeois society' Lenin has said, "Two institutions most characteristic of this state machine are the bureaucracy and the standing army. In their works, Marx and Engels repeatedly show that the bourgeoisie are connected with these institutions by thousands of threads." He further says, "The development, perfection, and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus proceeded during all the numerous bourgeois revolutions which Europe has witnessed since the fall of feudalism." It is clear that this 'development, perfection and strengthening' of the bureaucracy and the military mechanism is guided by the necessity of bourgeois class to repress upon the entire workers and labouring masses.

As a brilliant and authentic explanation of Marxism on the state, the following quotation from "Anti-Duhring" by Frederick Engels can be taken up:

"The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production in the first instance into state property. But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the state as state. Society thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the state, that is, of an organisation of the particular class, which was pro tempore the exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage-labour). The state was the official representative of society as a whole; the gathering of it together into a visible embodiment. But it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of slave-owning

citizens; in the Middle Ages, the feudal lords; in our own time, the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society — the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society — this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not “abolished”. It dies out. This gives the measure of the value of the phrase “a free people’s state”, both as to its justifiable use at times by agitators, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also of the demands of the so-called anarchists for the abolition of the state out of hand.”

This lengthy quotation has clarified so many facts on the state. The state continues to exist as a state up to which it suppresses a certain class of the society. Its role as a state also vanishes when a situation in which it represents the whole of the society develops.

This fact applies on the question of democracy also. Whenever the state exists there cannot be anything like ‘a democracy for all’, ‘the full democracy’ or ‘a free people’s state’. When a situation in which the entire society acquires democracy develops, then the need of the democracy itself vanishes. Along with withering away of the state, the democracy, which is inseparably linked with the emergence of the state, is obvious to vanish. It is clear that the state exists till the classes exist in the society and the character of democracy also is class-based till the former exists. In fact, the state is democracy and the democracy is state. It can also be understood in other words - the state is dictatorship and the democracy is dictatorship. It is because the democracy of the exploiting class under their state becomes a dictatorship for the exploited class,

whereas, the democracy of the proletarian class under their state becomes a dictatorship for the bourgeois class. There cannot be anything like a state for both, a democracy for both and a dictatorship for both. Democracy for the entire people is nothing other than the hypocrisy of the bourgeois class to confuse the working masses.

In today’s capitalist imperialist era, there cannot be any bigger dishonesty and hypocrisy than to speak of ‘adult franchise’, ‘independent and impartial election’ and ‘democracy for all’, on the part of bourgeois class, before the standing army and bureaucracy, the main organ of the state power, which is the most centralized, consolidated, gigantic and merciless and destructive as well. The bourgeois exercise of rendering “divinity” to the so-called parliamentary system as an ‘eternal’ and ‘universal’ expression of democracy is not at all a thing that can conceal their militarisation, military insolence and plunderer and genocidal character. Lenin, in his work ‘The state and revolution’ has clarified by saying that it is

“To decide once every few years which members of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament — this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary- constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics”.

He has further clarified in it,

“from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway and so forth — in these countries the real business of “state” is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries, and General Staffs. Parliament is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the “common people”.

### **On the proletarian and bourgeois parliamentary democracy**

We talked in short about the basic Marxist theory on the state and democracy. Here we will discuss more about the relation between the democracy of the proletariat and that of bourgeois class.

It is well known to everybody that the first historic experience of the proletarian democracy is the one of Paris Commune in France, in 1871.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels themselves worked out the theoretical synthesis of the Paris Commune experiences. As the first historical experience of proletarian democracy opposed to bourgeois parliamentarism, Marx, from his status of the great proletarian thinker, sharpened his ideas further by taking up lessons from it. During the period of transition from capitalism to communism, Marx put forward sharply the conclusion that the form of transitional state of the 'proletarian class organized as a ruling class' cannot be anything other than the dictatorship of the proletariat. As an important reason behind the failure of Paris Commune, he criticized in clear words the liberalism that it had shown while suppressing the bourgeois class. On the basis of the experience of Commune, Marx drew up in both the theoretical and practical sense a line between the proletarian and bourgeois parliamentary democracy. Marx said,

“The Commune, was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time....”

“... Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent and repress the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people constituted in communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for workers, foremen and accountants for his business.” (Lenin - The State and Revolution)

Karl Marx has elucidated the difference between two democracies of two classes through the aforesaid expression. Marxism does not oppose adult suffrage and the representative institution elected thereof, moreover, wants to transform it from a gossiping centre of the bourgeois class into a working institution of people's servants. How can it take place? Marx was not any hypothesist. Citing a very simple and practical example, he said that the role of the masses in the proletarian democracy would definitely be like that of a master and, all the officials of the state will act as a servant of them. Marxism has lucidly synthesized that when the task of elected representatives becomes not only that of legislative but also becomes to implement the laws they have enacted, and, when the masses have right to revoke the representatives who go against people's interest, then the representative institution becomes a working centre of the masses and not a gossiping one. Drawing up the essence of Paris Commune

experiences, Karl Marx has discussed on the specificity of the proletarian democracy in his work “Class struggle in France”. There it is said,

“The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people”

“The Commune was formed of the municipal councilors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class”

“Instead of continuing to be the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible, and at all times revocable, agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at workman's wage. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of state disappeared ... Having once got rid of the standing army and the police — the physical force elements of the old government — the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the “parson-power” ... The judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence ... Magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible, and revocable.”

The aforesaid explanation of the Paris Commune experiences put forward by Karl Marx helps considerably to understand the basic specificity of proletarian democracy. ‘The end of standing army’, the election of entire functionaries of the state by the masses and provision of revoking them when the people feel necessary, equal salary for all the functionaries of the state, what can there be an ample democracy for the people other than this? •



## The Question of Building a New Type of State

- Baburam Bhattarai

“The basic question of every revolution is that of state power. Unless this question is understood there can be no intelligent participation in the revolution, not to speak of guidance of the revolution.”

- V.I. Lenin, (1917b: 34)

The question of state power has now become the central question for the New Democratic revolution in Nepal, which is marching forward to capturing central state power after building revolutionary base areas and local power in the vast rural areas. The question has assumed significance and may be discussed primarily from two angles. Firstly, in the universal context; and secondly, in the concrete national context. Firstly in the universal or general sense, the proletarian (i.e. New Democratic or Socialist) state power is of a ‘new type’ as compared to all the state powers of minority exploiter classes in history. Furthermore, after the downfall of all People’s Democratic or Socialist state powers including those in Russia, China and others in the past, the proletarian state powers arising in a new setting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have to be of a further newer type. Secondly, in the concrete semi-feudal and semi-colonial national context of Nepal, where even the old bourgeois revolution and state has not been accomplished, the prospective proletarian state would naturally be, and have to be, of a ‘new’ type. Hence, we would first make a general review of the historical experiences on the question of state and strive to analyse the fundamental characteristics of a new type of state.

### 1. Historical Background

#### A. International Context

The question of state power has been the central question in every major ideological political struggle in the international communist movement.

Struggles against the anarchists during Marx-Engel’s time, struggles against the revisionists during Lenin’s time and struggles against the revisionists and dogmato-revisionists during Mao’s and our own time are principally centred on the question of state power. It would thus be useful to make a brief historical review of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist or proletarian view against the anarchist, revisionist and dogmato-revisionist views, which may also be called petty-bourgeois, bourgeois and bureaucratic bourgeois views on the state and lay the foundation for a new type of state.

As per the historical facts available so far and their historic-materialist interpretations, origin of the state followed the division of classes in society as a means of dictatorship of one class over the others. Hence the state has been the centre of class struggle in every historical stage starting with the primitive state-communal formation through the slave and feudal societies to the modern capitalist society, and every victorious class has further sharpened and strengthened this weapon of the state according to its class interest. The state, which was initially born as ‘servant’ of the society, gradually separated itself from the society and took the form of ‘master’ of the society. By the time the state reached the ‘highest’ and ‘ultimate’ stage of the bourgeois republic it became terrible parasitic machinery over the society armed with a huge bureaucracy and standing army. However, according to the law of dialectics that requires everything that is born to meet with its death, the state is also inevitably destined to die someday.

The latest development of the social productive forces to a very high level has made this both possible and essential. This is the fundamental principle of Marxism on the origin, development and end of the state. Among the founders of Marxism, Marx through his works, principally, “Class Struggle in France” (1850), “Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” (1852), “Civil War in France” (1871), “Critique of the Gotha programme” (1875), etc, and Engels through his works, particularly, “Anti-Duhring” (1878), “The Origin of Family, Private Property and State” (1884), etc. laid the foundation of the scientific conception of the state. However, the issue of utmost dispute and debate in the international communist movement and the one deserving maximum attention while building a new type of state, is the question of elimination of the old type of state in its highest and ultimate stage in the form of a bourgeois republic

and construction of new type of transitional state in its place. Marx and Engels had to wage the main ideological struggle on this question while fighting against the anarchist trend particularly led by Sterner, Prudhon, and Bakunin. While the anarchists idealistically talked of immediate destruction of all types of state and opposed building an alternate state of any kind, Marx and Engels viewed the state objectively and put forward the concept of building a new type of transitional state in lieu of the bourgeois state, whose essence would be the dictatorship of the proletariat. Elucidating the fundamental difference between the Marxist and the anarchist views on the state, Engels has said:

“While the great mass of the Social-Democratic workers hold our view that state power is nothing more than the organisation which the ruling classes - landowners and capitalists - have provided for themselves in order to protect their social privileges, Bakunin maintains that it is the *state* which has created capital, that the capitalist has his capital *only by the grace of the state*. As, therefore, the state is the chief evil, it is above all the state, which must be done away with and then capitalism will go to blazes of itself. We, on the contrary, say: Do away with capital, the concentration of all means of production in the hands of the few, and the state will fall of itself. The difference is an essential one: Without a previous social revolution the abolition of the state is nonsense; the abolition of the capital *is* precisely the social revolution and involves a change in the whole mode of production.” (Marx and Engels 1985:425)

Thus it was well established that the state is not an abstract concept created by somebody's subjective wishes but a concrete object developed and demolished by the objective necessity of society.

Engels had further expounded that after the displacement of the state of the minority exploiter classes by the social revolution of the conscious masses the majority exploited classes should establish a 'transitional' state to apply dictatorship over the defeated exploiter classes and to move towards a classless society, and such a state would be “no longer a state in the proper sense of the word”. (Marx-Engels-Lenin 1984:120) Marx and Engels had time and again highlighted the Paris Commune of 1871 as the best example of such a transitional proletarian state.

After the experience of the Paris Commune Marx had all the more emphatically proclaimed that the form of the state needed for a long transitional period from capitalism to communism would be nothing but the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is expressed thus:

“Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.” (Marx 1975: 26)

The Paris Commune which was created through direct election and participation by the workers of Paris, which was directly defended by the armed masses after dissolution of the standing army and which was equipped with all the executive and legislature powers was upheld as the most shining example of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' by Engels till the end of his life. This is amply reflected in the following assertion of Engels on the twentieth anniversary of the Paris Commune on March 18, 1891:

“Of late, the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentleman, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the dictatorship of the Proletariat.” (Marx and Engels 1985:189)

The founders of Marxism had visualized the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of a new type of state ending all states in history, not as a permanent object separated from and lording over the society but as a temporary product that would wither away by itself in course of time. This is well articulated in this initial formulation by Marx himself:

“And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economist the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did th

was new was to prove: 1) *that the existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular historical phases in the development of production*, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to *the dictatorship of the proletariat*, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*.” (Marx and Engels 1977:528)

The expression “this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to... a classless society” clearly asserts that the new type of state in the form of dictatorship of the proletariat is not a state ‘in the proper sense of the word’ and is a means to do away with all the classes and state.

How the new type of proletarian state (or the dictatorship of the proletariat) gradually withers away and ultimately dies out as a state is further expressed by Engels as follows:

“When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collision and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society- the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society- this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself: the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not “abolished”. It *dies out*.” (Engels 1880:147)

This long quotation is by itself so crystal clear and sharp that it needs no additional explanation. However, as the great Paris Commune in existence only for seventy-two days was the only example of a new type of proletarian state in the form of dictatorship of the proletariat during the life time of Marx and Engels, there was no possibility of any practicing of withering away of the state as visualized by the founders of Marxism.

After the death of Marx and Engels, their worthy successor Lenin made additional contributions to the question of state power, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, his “State and Revolution” (1917) laid a new foundation for the Marxist knowledge and science on the question of state power, and his other works including “Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?” (1917), “The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government” (1918), “Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat” (1919), etc. elucidated the Soviet system as a new type of state. Lenin practically played a pioneering role in building a new type of socialist state by accomplishing the historic October Socialist Revolution and by defending and developing the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviet system against internal and external attacks for seven years.

The concept of a new type of proletarian state put forward by Lenin on the eve of the October Revolution was like this:

“The proletariat... if it wants to uphold the gains of present revolution and proceed further, to win peace, bread and freedom, must “smash”, to use Marx’s expression, this “ready-made” state machine and substitute a new one for it by *merging* the police force, the army and the bureaucracy with *the entire armed people*. Following the path indicated by the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian Revolution of 1905, the proletariat must organize and arm *all* the poor, exploited sections of the population in order that they *themselves* should take the organs of state power directly into their own hands, in order that *they themselves should constitute* these organs of state power”. (Lenin 1917a: 326)

The question of ‘smashing’ the old state and merging of the army and bureaucracy with ‘the entire armed people’, and that of ‘organizing and arming’ the masses and taking the organs of new state power ‘directly’ into their own hands by the masses, is definitely the most significant aspect of the concept of new type of state advanced by Lenin. This was sought to be implemented in the new state built in the form of ‘Soviets of workers, soldiers and peasants’ after the October Revolution.

Similarly, Lenin had envisaged to build a new type of state devoid of a 'standing army' and an 'officialdom placed above the people', and vowed thus:

"...I advocate not the usual parliamentary bourgeois state, but a state *without* a standing army, *without* a police opposed to the people, *without* an officialdom placed above the people." (Lenin 1917c: 49)

However, Kautsky and other Right revisionists of the Second International had sought to discard the very class concept of the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat and to spread the illusion of bourgeois parliamentarism in the form of so-called "pure democracy" within the proletarian movement, against which Lenin had launched a severe polemic. In his famous work "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (1918), Lenin had amply clarified that in a class divided society 'democracy', too, would have a class character and bourgeois democracy and constituent assembly were mere concrete forms of bourgeois state.

While replying to the critics of the Soviet system, Lenin had enumerated the specificities of the Soviet democracy thus:

"In Russia ... the bureaucratic machine has been completely smashed, razed to the ground; the old judges have all been sent packing, the bourgeois parliament has been dispersed-and *far more accessible* representation has been given to the workers and peasants; their Soviets have replaced the bureaucrats, and *their* Soviets have been authorized to elect the judges. This fact alone is enough for all the oppressed classes to recognize that Soviet power, i.e., the present form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic." (Lenin 1918:33-34)

Thus, an extensive network of local to central Soviets of workers, peasants, soldiers and other revolutionary classes developed in the model of the Paris Commune was the practical expression of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and a new type of socialist state after the October revolution. When there arose a contradiction between the bourgeois representative

organ, the constituent assembly, and the socialist representative organ, the Soviet, immediately after the revolution, the constituent assembly was dissolved as a historically retrograde organ, and the forward-looking Soviet democracy was institutionalized. Even when a vicious imperialist aggression and internal civic war ensued in the immediate aftermath of the revolution, the congress and meetings of the elected Soviets were held in short and regular intervals and all-important decisions of the state were taken through the Soviets. However, when the civil war got stretched and a 'New Economic Policy' (NEP) with features of state-capitalism was introduced to tide over the problems of the economic construction after the end of the civil war, there was gradual erosion in the dynamism and liveliness of the initial Soviet system. The higher-level executive committees started getting more active and powerful at the cost of the Soviet Congress and local organs. The organs of the state, Party and army (which was getting transformed into a standing army from the initial 'Red Guards') were getting intertwined inseparably. A bureaucratic apparatus in the old Czarist mould, cut-off from and placed over the people, started rising up gradually. Similar other bureaucratic deviations were cropping up menacingly in the new Soviet state system. As Lenin was a rare genius of revolutionary firmness and dynamism and a past master in applying revolutionary science in the concrete time and place, he made concerted efforts till the end to curb the rising bureaucratic tendencies in the Soviet state system and to ensure the initiative, supervision and participation of the revolutionary masses in the new state power through 'Worker's and Peasants Inspection', 'non-Party Worker's and Peasant's Conferences', etc.

A glimpse of the problem of bureaucracy in the Soviet state and the Party can be had from the following comment by Lenin towards the end of his life in 1923:

"Let us hope that our new Worker's and Peasants' Inspection will abandon what the French call *pruderies*, which we may call ridiculous primness, or ridiculous swank, and which plays entirely into the hands of our Soviet and Party bureaucracy. Let it be said in parentheses that we have bureaucrats in our Party offices as well as in Soviet offices." (Lenin 1923:419)

In this context it would be worthwhile to note the warnings of Rosa

Luxemburg made from a left revolutionary angle, despite her certain idealist and voluntarist limitations, on the future of the Soviet state:

“Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element. Public life gradually falls asleep, a few dozen party leaders of inexhaustible energy and boundless experience direct and rule. Among them, in reality only a dozen outstanding heads do the leading and an elite of the working class is invited from time to time to meetings where they are to applaud the speeches of the leaders, and to approve proposed resolutions unanimously-at bottom, then, a clique affair- a dictatorship, to be sure, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of the handful of politicians, that is a dictatorship in the bourgeois sense...”. (Luxemburg 1918:118)

After Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin made efforts to continue and develop the Soviet state in a socialist direction. However, firstly due to a type of economic deterministic thinking that envisaged the development of the productive forces per se would lead the society towards communism, an one-sided stress was laid on economic development through central planning. Secondly, in the particularity of heightened contradictions with imperialism in and around the World War II, the 'external' cause was accorded primacy and the policy of applying force of state power to settle internal contradictions within the state and the Party was followed. Consequently, by the time of Stalin's death in 1953 the Soviet state was caught in a vicious bureaucratic quagmire, and with Khrushchev's advent it assumed an open bureaucratic capitalist and totalitarian character, which was ultimately transformed into naked capitalism in 1989.

With the 'peaceful' degeneration of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia into the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, Mao sought to draw grave lessons from it and developed the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, or the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). Even beforehand during the Chinese revolution Mao had developed the concept of a new type of state in the form of 'people's democratic dictatorship' or 'New Democracy' to complete bourgeois

democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat in pre-capitalist or semi-feudal and semi-colonial societies and to move towards socialism. These are incorporated in his celebrated works like "On New Democracy" (1939), "On People's Democratic Dictatorship" (1949), etc. After the revolution when there was the danger of the people's democratic dictatorship (till 1956) and the dictatorship of the proletariat (1956 onwards) undergoing bureaucratization and degenerating into bourgeois dictatorship, Mao searched for new methods to ensure supervision and participation of the masses in the state and to correctly handle contradictions prevalent in society. In this process were penned such important works like "On Ten Major Relations" (1956), "On Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" (1957), etc. Later on in the Sixties, when the Khrushchovite revisionists blatantly abandoned the principle of dictatorship of the proletariat and advanced the bourgeois concept of the 'state of the entire people', Mao launched a powerful polemic against the same, which is widely known as the 'Great Debate'.

The method of ensuring maximum and continuous participation of the masses in the state through the practice of 'great democracy' under the leadership of the proletariat, is the question of utmost importance in checking bureaucratic deviations and building a new type of state, which is reflected in Mao's assertion:

“We must have this much confidence. We are not even afraid of imperialism, so why should we be afraid of great democracy? Why should we be afraid of students taking to the streets? Yet among our Party members there are some who are afraid of great democracy, and this is not good. Those bureaucrats who are afraid of great democracy must study Marxism hard and mend their ways.” (Mao 1977:347)

There is no doubt that the GPCR carried out from 1966 to 1976 under the leadership of Mao made historic contribution in the development of a new type of proletarian state. In this context particularly noteworthy are: widespread slogans of "It is right to rebel", 'Bombard the bourgeois headquarter' etc; revolutionary committees made up of non-Party masses to conduct state functions in the model of Paris Commune; formation of Red Guards in millions through the arming of the masses; inclusion of the rights of workers to strike in the state constitution; etc.

Nevertheless, the incidence of counterrevolution from within the existing state and restoration of bourgeois dictatorship in China after Mao's death in 1976, has added further responsibilities on the shoulders of the new age revolutionaries to build a new type of proletarian state. In this context we should move further ahead after drawing positive and negative lessons of practices of dictatorship of the proletariat from the Paris Commune through the Russian Soviet to the Chinese GPCR. It is obvious that as long as the era of imperialism prevails and there is the compulsion of building socialism within a single country, nobody can and should objectively deny the possibility of counter-revolution after a revolution. Even then, if we can't provide scientific and logical answer to the subjective factors behind the relatively easy and more or less 'peaceful' occurrence of counter-revolution and restoration of bourgeois dictatorship in nearly half of the world that had dozens of socialist and people's democratic state systems in the twentieth century, we won't be able to win the confidence of the masses to accomplish revolution and defend and develop the same up to communism. In this sense it is imperative to firmly grasp that the question of building a new type of state in the twenty-first century means the building of the state that would prevent counter-revolution after revolution and would lead to communism through a continuous revolution; or it is a state that would bring about its own end as a state.

Similarly, as there would be a ceaseless process of revolution and counter-revolution so long as the class division in society remains, we should beware of the dangers of reactionary psychological warfare against the possibility of another revolution after a counter-revolution and resultant proliferation of pessimism and liquidationist, agnostic, nihilist, reformist and revisionist thoughts within the revolutionary camp. For this we should correctly grasp the dialectical law of opportunism donning different guises according to varying time and place as seen during the days of Marx, Lenin and Mao. For instance, on the question of the state in Marx's time as there was the need to fight against the anarchist tendency, which tended to negate the state instantly, Marx and Engels had to stress more on the 'necessity' of a transitional state in the form of dictatorship of the proletariat. When this 'necessity' aspect was one-sidedly exaggerated by the revisionists of the Second International and sought to perpetuate the bourgeois state through cosmetic 'reforms', Lenin launched a vicious ideological struggle against it and developed the new Soviet state power

after carrying out the October Revolution. On Lenin's death and during the period of Third International and Stalin, though there was mechanistic stress on the 'necessity' of dictatorship of the proletariat from a dogmato-revisionist angle, the question of continuous revolution and withering away of the state was put in the back burner and consequently the dictatorship of the proletariat itself got distorted and ultimately degenerated into bureaucratic bourgeois dictatorship or totalitarianism. It was only during the period of Mao that both the revisionist and dogmato-revisionist tendencies were attacked and a balanced stress was placed on both the questions of dictatorship of the proletariat and of 'continuous revolution' and withering away of the state. As Mao's efforts during the short period were grossly inadequate and incomplete, the revolutionaries of the present age should dare go beyond all the past experiences and build a new type of state power while firmly grasping the question of dictatorship of the proletariat and continuous revolution.

## **B. National Context**

The centralized feudal state of Nepal was set up nearly two and a quarter century ago under the leadership of King Prithvi Narayan Shah of Gorkha. Though there have been minor reformist changes in 1951 and 1990, the class character of the state has remained semi-feudal and semi-colonial and its political form has been basically autocratic monarchical. As the basic socio-economic base of society has remained semi-feudal and semi-colonial and the standing army, since its inception during the central state formation days, and the bureaucracy, along with its development since 1951, have been primarily loyal to the monarchy, attempts to introduce 'constitutional monarchy' in the following decades after the 1951 and 1990 political changes have not been successful. The latest experiment in 'constitutional monarchy' and bourgeois parliamentary democracy has virtually ended with the qualitative development of the class struggle in the form of People's War (PW) since 1996 and the old state has once again donned the guise of nakedly autocratic monarchy and military dictatorship since October 4, 2002.

As per the general national and regional structure of the feudal state, the old state of Nepal is based on Arya-Khas high caste chauvinism and is of a unitary and over-centralized type. As a result the majority Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Dravid nationalities and Madheshis (i.e. inhabitant of Terai

plains) and the regions of far-western Seti-Mahakali and Karnali are subjected to intense oppression of the unitary and centralized feudal state. Moreover, the *dalits* treated as untouchables in the so-called Hindu *varnashram* system (i.e. caste hierarchy) and women under patriarchal domination, are naturally subjected to worst form of oppression by the feudal state.

Thus it is axiomatic that a new type of state in the context of Nepal means a transitional state that would first complete the bourgeois democratic revolution and then would advance towards socialism and communism. In keeping with this objective reality the CPN (Maoist) has since its inception formulated a minimum programme of establishing a New Democratic state based on the people's democratic dictatorship and set the goal of attaining socialism and communism through carrying out continuous revolution. It has also been envisaged that in the concrete condition of Nepal the form of the first phase of bourgeois democratic revolution would be joint democratic dictatorship of different oppressed classes, nationalities, regions, gender and communities under the leadership of the proletariat.

In the light of the destruction of the old state in most of the rural areas and the rising up of different levels and forms of revolutionary people's power in its place, 'United Revolutionary People's Council' (URPC) has been developed since September 2001 as an embryonic central state power to coordinate and guide the local people's power, which is a broad revolutionary united front of different classes, nationalities, regions, women and others under the leadership of the CPN (Maoist). The 75-point 'Common Minimum Policy and Programme' adopted by the First National Convention of the URPC provides a general outline of the New Democratic or People's Democratic state to be built after the revolution. This Minimum Programme has sought to incorporate many important aspects of proletarian democracy (viz. supervision of the masses over the state, public criticism of the state functionaries, etc) developed during the GPCR.

Keeping in view such specificities like the stage of strategic equilibrium of the PW, the triangular contention among revolutionary democratic, parliamentary and monarchist forces in the country, sensitive geo-strategic positioning of the country sandwiched between two gigantic

neighbors, etc, the Party has advanced a further proposal of minimum forward-looking political solution of completing the bourgeois democratic revolution through peaceful negotiations. An outline of a transitional state which is a step below the New Democratic/People's Democratic state has been provided in the "An Executive Summary of the Proposal Put Forward by CPN (Maoist) for the Negotiations" [See, CPN (Maoist) 2004] proposed by the Party during the latest round of negotiations on April 27, 2003. The Party believes that the concept of such a transitional state rising above the bourgeois parliamentarism but not yet reaching the level of New Democracy is appropriate both theoretically and practically in the concrete conditions of Nepal.

Though the concept of New Democratic state developed by Mao is generally correct and appropriate, the CPN (Maoist) has found it imperative to further develop the concept of democracy in the light of the past experiences of counter-revolutions and continuously changing national and international conditions. In this context a recent resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Party for a public debate says:

"A Party, which may be proletarian revolutionary, and a state, that may be democratic or socialist, at a particular time, place and condition, may turn counter-revolutionary at another time, place and condition. It is obvious that the synthesis of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, namely the masses and the revolutionaries should rebel in such a situation, is fully correct in its place. However, as if a particular Communist Party remains proletarian for ever once a New Democratic or Socialist state is established under the leadership of the Party, there is either no opportunity, or it is not prepared, or it is prohibited, for the masses to have a free democratic or socialist competition against it. As a result, since the ruling Party is not required to have a political competition with others amidst the masses, it gradually turns into a mechanistic bureaucratic Party with special privileges and the state under its leadership, too, turns into mechanistic and bureaucratic machinery. Similarly, the masses become a victim of formal democracy and gradually their limitless energy of creativity and dynamism gets sapped. This danger has been clearly observed in history. To solve this problem, the process of control, supervision and intervention of the masses over the state should

be stressed to be organized in a lively and scientific manner, according to the principle of continuous revolution. Once again the question here is to dialectically organize scientific reality that the efficacy of dictatorship against the enemy is dependent upon the efficacy of exercising democracy among the people.

“ For this, a situation must be created to ensure continuous proletarianization and revolutionization of the Communist Party by organizing political competition within the constitutional limits of the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist democratic state. Only by institutionalizing the rights of the masses to install an alternative revolutionary Party or leadership of the state if the Party fails to continuously revolutionize itself the counter-revolution can be effectively checked. Among different anti-feudal and anti-imperialist political parties, organizations and institutions, which accept the constitutional provisions of the democratic state, their mutual relations should not be confined to that of a mechanistic relation of cooperation with the Communist Party but should be stressed to have dialectical relations of democratic political competition in the service of the people. It should be obvious that if anybody in this process transgresses the limits legally set by the democratic state, he would be subjected to democratic dictatorship. “ [CPN (Maoist) 2004:148-49]

Certainly the questions raised in the above resolution regarding the development of democracy will have far reaching significance not only in our own national context but also in the international arena. Thus, only by correctly grasping this we may be able to build a new type of state in the coming days.

## 2. Important Questions on Building a New Type of State

In the light of the above historical experiences and the new necessities of the ever-changing space and time, it would be worthwhile to analyze the important questions on building a new type of state.

### A. The Question of Smashing the Old State

One basic precondition for building a new type of state is the complete

smashing of the old state. The more completely and deeply the old state is smashed, the better would be the probability of building a more stable and complete new state. This is the objective law verified by historical experience and facts. The main reason for this is the mutually exclusive rationale and basis of the ‘old’ and ‘new’ state. The fundamental characteristics of the old state as manifested in the primitive class state power to the highly developed bourgeois republic is the use of force or exercise of dictatorship over the majority of laboring classes in society on behalf of the minority exploiting classes. As antithetical to this, the characteristic feature of the new type of proletarian (or people’s democratic, or socialist) state is the use of force or exercise of dictatorship over the minority parasitic classes on behalf of the majority laboring classes. Because of this polar opposite characteristics of the two types of state, it is just impossible to transform the old state into the new one in toto or with general reforms. Particularly in the context of the modern bourgeois republic with a huge standing army and bureaucracy, which is linked with every nook and corner of society with innumerable fibers, it is just unthinkable to build a new state without first completely smashing the old one.

This is the reason why the propounders of scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, have always forcefully hammered on the question of smashing the old state. While showering praises on the Paris Commune, they had said:

“One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.” (Marx-Engels-Lenin 1984:115)

Furthermore, in his letter to Kugelmann on April 12, 1871, i.e. just at the time of the Paris Commune, Marx had written:

“If you look up the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it [Marx’s italics], and this is the precondition for every real people’s revolution on the continent. And this is what our heroic Party



comrades in Paris are attempting.”

This was prominently quoted and highlighted by Lenin in his pioneering work **State and Revolution**. (Marx-Engels-Lenin 1984:215)

The principal rationale and basis of the strategy of protracted PW advanced by Mao is also the revolutionary tactics of smashing the old state power part by part from below and concurrently building the new state power in the predominantly rural and agrarian semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries. In this sense there is an inalienable and interdependent dialectical relation between the destruction of the old and construction of the new. If we intently analyze the experiences of revolution and building of new state in Russia, China and elsewhere, it can be seen that where there has been destruction of the old with greater intensity there has been construction of the new with reciprocal stability. In Russia, as the revolution had started from the cities and the impact of revolution in the rural areas had reached in lesser degree and late, there was greater difficulty in building the new revolutionary state in the latter. This historical fact was even acknowledged by Lenin. It is also seen that the new state changes its color more easily and swiftly if we have to induct more officials and technicians from the old state after the revolution. This is the reason why Marx had stated that the workers had to pass through the experiences of intense civil war of fifteen, twenty or fifty years so as to be capable of running the new state.

Certainly some organs of the old state like financial institutions, postal system, communications, transportation etc. can be adapted to the new state. But they are not the principal organs of the state. Standing army, bureaucracy, judiciary etc. are the principal and decisive organs of the state, which have to be mandatorily smashed to build the new state. Along with this the ideological and cultural organs of the old state need to be systematically dismantled to lay the ideological and cultural foundation of the new state. In this context all genuine proletarian revolutionaries should firmly grasp that to reject all revisionist and reformist illusions of ‘peaceful transition’ from the old state to the new one is not just a question of tactical expediency but a question of strategic and theoretical importance.

## B. The Question of Class Dictatorship and Proletarian Leadership

The most important and fundamental question in the context of building a new type of state is the question of class dictatorship and proletarian leadership. Because, the ‘state’ in its literal sense and essence is the means of forcibly exercising the will or dictatorship of one class over the other and without the leadership of the last class in history, which has ‘nothing to lose but its chains’, i.e. the proletariat, no state can be ‘new’ in its real sense. In essence, by ‘new’ here it is meant to be the new means, which would negate itself like the proletarian class.

The word ‘dictatorship’ has been in dispute since the beginning and it is for the use of this word that the bourgeoisie still castigates the communists the most severely. Shaken by such castigation the revisionist ‘communists’ of the world, including those in Nepal, have sought to discard this word of ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ from their policies and programmes and vainly attempted to appease the reactionaries. But, just as the sun does not stop shining even if someone closes his eyes, so the inherent character of class dictatorship of any state does not change even if someone stops using the word ‘dictatorship’ about it. The only question to be chosen is: the dictatorship of which class? If it is not the dictatorship of the proletariat, or the ‘peoples democratic dictatorship’ in a multi-class society like ours, then it is the ‘dictatorship of the bourgeoisie’, or ‘feudal-bureaucratic bourgeoisie dictatorship’, or any other single or multiple class dictatorship. There is no such thing as the ‘free people’s state’ as claimed by the anarchists of Marx and Engels time, or the ‘state of the whole people’ as parroted by the Khrushovite revisionists of the later period.

Stressing on this very issue Engels had written in his famous letter to August Bebel in 1875:

“As, therefore, the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, to hold down one’s adversaries by force, it is pure nonsense to talk of a free people’s state: so long as the proletariat still *uses* the state, it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist.” (Marx-Engels-Lenin 1984:120)

As an exception in special situations of two struggling classes being in the position of a stalemate, Marx and Engels have talked of the state temporarily assuming a non-class and neutral status and have put forward the examples of the initial stages of the rules of Napoleon Bonaparte (1798-1815) and Louis Bonaparte (1848-1871) in France. (See, Marx 1871 and Engels 1884). However, there should not be any iota of doubt among the revolutionaries that these exceptional conditions are temporary and that the historical rule is for the state to ultimately assume the form of dictatorship of one or the other class.

Hence, while building a new state the revolutionaries should first of all determine with utmost gravity and clarity which class dictatorship it is and against which class this dictatorship is applied. In a semi-feudal and semi-colonial multi-class society like ours, it should be firmly grasped that at the initial stage the new state would be a joint democratic dictatorship of all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist classes, or all the progressive classes from the proletariat through the peasantry to the national bourgeoisie except the feudal and comprador and bureaucratic bourgeoisie. After the completion of the bourgeoisie democratic revolution and transition to socialism the state's character would be the dictatorship of the proletariat and all types of dictatorship would wither away only in communism.

In this context the proletarian revolutionaries should be clear of one general misconception that the 'dictatorship' to be applied against the reactionary classes and the rule of law or 'democratic centralism' to be practiced among the non-antagonistic classes and the general masses are not one and same thing. Dictatorship is the means of eliminating the enemy classes through use of force and suppression, which is carried out primarily through the armed force, jails, etc. On the contrary, the method of non-antagonistic struggle and punishment used among the ranks of the non-antagonistic classes and masses so as to transform them is 'democratic centralism'. Elucidating this point Mao says:

"Dictatorship does not apply within the ranks of the people. The people cannot exercise dictatorship over themselves, nor must one section of the people oppress another. Law-breakers among the people will be punished according to law, but this is different in principle from the exercise of dictatorship to suppress enemies

of the people. What applies among the people is democratic centralism." (Mao 1957:387)

The method or process of applying dictatorship over the reactionary classes also needs to be developed with the demands of the time. The Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) had put forward the concept that the reactionary ruling classes maintain their dictatorship ('hegemony' in his word) by organizing a form of 'consent' among the people through cultural and ideological means apart from the use of the armed force (see Gramsci 1971), and this had created quite a debate in the international communist movement. This is, however, not an entirely new thing but a supplementary means of psychological use of force to aid the principal and ultimate use of physical force, and is in essence a dictatorship. Nevertheless, in view of the increased role of propaganda war with the advance of information technology in recent years, the new type of state should pay more attention to use the cultural and ideological weapons to maintain its dictatorship.

Whereas the bourgeoisie has been very craftily practicing its dictatorship under a parliamentary 'democratic' cover and in the name of the 'whole people', there has been a long debate in the international communist movement about the form of proletarian dictatorship and the practical method of assuming proletarian leadership over the state. In view of the serious setbacks received by the models of proletarian dictatorship practiced in Russia, China and elsewhere in the twentieth century, the present day revolutionaries should draw appropriate lessons from these experiences and dare experiment and develop new models. After the experiences of the Paris Commune and the Russian Soviets a general understanding was developed that the proletariat should exercise its leadership through the Communist Party organized as its vanguard and the dictatorship should be applied through the Soviets or People's Councils modeled after the Paris Commune. Giving a concrete expression to this, Lenin in 1920 had said:

"...the dictatorship is exercised by the proletariat organized in the Soviets; the proletariat is guided by the Communist Party....."  
(Marx-Engels-Lenin 1984:473)

Similarly, Mao had formulated the method of people's democratic

dictatorship and proletarian leadership this way:

“... People’s democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat (through the Communist Party) and based on workers and peasants unity”. (Mao 1948)

After the October Revolution Lenin had time and again stressed that dictatorship of the proletariat should be applied through the Soviets. However, his expression while addressing the Third Congress of the Comintern in 1921 that ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat would not work except through the Communist Party’ was later taken mechanistically rather than in a general sense. As a result grave errors were committed everywhere to virtually erase all differences between a Communist Party and a socialist state. The present day revolutionaries should definitely dare correct them. In the light of the bitter experiences of gradual erosion of the distinction between the Party and representative institutions, the gradual conversion of the Communist Party itself into a bureaucratic bourgeois Party and the Party’s claim of the leadership of the state as a monopoly, we should develop a correct and new method to apply class dictatorship and to exercise proletarian leadership over the state. We should firmly grasp that the dictatorship is not that of a Party or a person but that of the class, and the proletarian leadership is not to be claimed as a monopoly but is to be won over through revolutionary practice and to be applied democratically. We must end at the earliest such paradoxical situation that the bourgeois dictatorship with a reactionary essence has been able to mislead the masses by presenting itself in an attractive form but the people’s democratic or proletarian dictatorship with a revolutionary content has had an ugly external form and been discarded by the masses. For this, first of all, it should be established in practice that the Communist Party does not receive the leadership right as a ‘monopoly’ but gets it because of its proletarian revolutionary character, and an institutional mechanism should be ensured for the class and the masses to reject and abandon a Party that has lost its proletarian character. Similarly, it should be firmly grasped and implemented in practice that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not the dictatorship of the Party or its higher leadership but a class dictatorship applied through the elected representative organs (i.e. the Soviets or the People’s Council) of the masses. Even though the ‘content’ of the dictatorship is principal, the dialectical principle that if the ‘form’ is not correct it will ultimately hamper upon the ‘content’ should be correctly grasped and implemented. The future of building a new type

of state principally rests on this cardinal question.

### C. The Question of Democracy

The main essence of the new type of state is dictatorship over the reactionary classes and democracy for the majority of the progressive and patriotic masses. Hence there is a complex dialectical interrelation between applying dictatorship over one particular section of society and availing democracy to the other section. Only in the process of articulating this interrelation that it is possible to build a new type of state. If one attempts to divorce democracy and dictatorship from each other or to merge the both into one, then there occur serious problems and accidents. This has been proved by the bitter experiences of building new type of state in the past century.

Democracy and dictatorship are two sides of the same coin. In a class divided society democracy for one class is dictatorship against another class and dictatorship over one class is a democracy for another class. Hence in the new proletarian state to apply dictatorship over the handful of exploiting classes is to provide democracy for the overwhelming masses, and to expand the scope of democracy for the masses is to tighten the noose of dictatorship over the reactionary classes. In this sense democracy is also a form of state and as soon as the dictatorship of the proletariat becomes unnecessary democracy, too, becomes unnecessary or withers away.

Hence the revolutionaries should be freed of the hypocritical illusion of absolute democracy or ‘democracy for all’ as spread by the bourgeois. The bourgeois democracy, or formal democracy, is a concept born out of the struggle against absolute monarchy. Though it has a progressive character and role in a particular historical context, in another historical context it becomes retrograde and it is imperative for proletarian democracy to replace bourgeois democracy; and proletarian democracy itself will be negated in yet another historical condition. This may be made clearer from Lenin’s statement:

“The dialectics (course) of the developments as follows: from absolutism to bourgeois democracy; from bourgeois to proletarian democracy; from proletarian democracy to none.” (Lenin 1958:42)

In the context of building a new type of state our main concern is how to make proletarian democracy, or in our semi-feudal and semi-colonial context the people's democracy, more lively, dynamic and extensive. That means, once again, to mobilize the masses to the utmost for applying all-round dictatorship over the reactionary classes, on the one hand, and to correctly handle the contradictions among the people, on the other. As democracy is not an end in itself but merely a means to attain a specific goal, to think otherwise while talking of democracy in the present context would not only be wrong but also harmful. Hence our foremost democratic task should be to mobilize the masses to the maximum extent possible for exercising people's democratic dictatorship over the pro-feudal and pro-imperialist elements in all the political, military, economic & cultural organs of the state. Similarly, our next important democratic task should be to solve the contradictions among different strata of the people by means of democratic centralism without any physical application of force and through ideological struggles and legal remedies. In the past, principal subjective factor for counter-revolution in the socialist and people's democratic states was the failure to constantly mobilize the broad masses for exercising dictatorship over the enemies and for practising democratic centralism among the people and the lacunae in the organization so that the masses could rebel when the need be. It is imperative for us to acknowledge this and to practice proletarian democracy in a new way from the very beginning.

Another important task is to find an appropriate method and institutional process for practicing democracy with these clear objectives. As in the hypocritical formal democracy of the bourgeoisie, we cannot confine the proletarian or people's democracy to formalism by fixing certain formulae. Nevertheless, in the light of the experiences of the Paris Commune through the Russian Soviet to the Chinese GPCR, we can generalize and institutionalize certain methods of proletarian democracy and must dare adopt additional methods and principles going beyond them according to the new needs of the twenty-first century.

In this context as the model of direct democracy practiced in the Paris Commune is worth emulating even today, it would be useful to quote Marx's description of it as below:

“ The Commune was formed of the municipal councilors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members was naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive & legislative at the same time....the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the Administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at **workmen's wages**....

“Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old Government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression....The priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the alms of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors, the Apostles. The whole of the educational institutions were opened to the people gratuitously, and at the same time cleared of all interference of church and state. Thus, not only was education made accessible to all, but science itself freed from the fetters which class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it.

“ The judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subservience to all succeeding governments to which, in turn, they had taken, and broken, the oaths of allegiance. Like the rest of public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible, and revocable.

“...the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest country hamlet, and that in the rural districts the standing army was to be replaced by a national militia, with an extremely short term of service.” (Marx-Engels-Lenin 1984:75-76)

Similarly, as practiced during the GPCR, such methods like guaranteeing

the freedom of expression, press, strike etc. for the masses, public criticism of and mass action against persons in high authority of Party and state, etc. should be institutionalized. Also, drawing correct lessons from the bitter experiences of failure of the masses to stage organized rebellion against counter-revolution in the past, we should ensure a system in the new context whereby political parties may be allowed to get organized keeping within definite progressive and revolutionary constitutional limits and they may be encouraged to function not only in a 'cooperative' manner but in a 'competitive' spirit vis-à-vis the formal Communist Party. There can be no objective and logical reason for the Communist Party claiming itself to be the representative of the majority proletarian and oppressed classes to hesitate to enter into political competition within a definite constitutional framework, once the economic monopoly of the feudal and bourgeois classes over land and capital and military monopoly over the mercenary professional army, which are the sources of their political hegemony, are thoroughly smashed. One should earnestly acknowledge that this is not an advocacy of bourgeois pluralism but is a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist method to objectively solve contradictions among the people as long as the class division in society exists. Though it could not be practiced for various reasons in the past, the fact that Mao himself was contemplating in that direction can be deduced from his following statement:

“Which is better, to have just one party or several? As we see it now, it's perhaps better to have several parties. This has been true in the past and may well be so for the future; it means long-term coexistence and mutual supervision.” (Mao 1956: 296)

Whatever it may be, we should be prudent and daring enough to develop proletarian democracy or people's democracy as per the new needs of the twenty-first century. This is the rationale of the new decision of our Party, under the leadership of Chairman Com. Prachanda, in relation to the development of democracy. Moreover, keeping into consideration our specific situation of existence of autocratic monarchy and non-completion of even a bourgeois republic, we should not rule out the possibilities of having to pass through various mixed and transitional forms of democracy in the process of marching from autocratic monarchy through bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy.

#### D. The Question of Armed Force

Armed force or the army is the backbone of every state in history. To conceive of a state without an armed force is like dreaming of a sun without any light. In that sense, the principal organ of the new type of state would surely be the armed force. The same is the implication of Marx's observation: “The first condition of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the existence of a proletarian army” (Seventh Anniversary of the International). In what sense and to what extent such an army would be 'new' would ultimately determine how much 'new' the state would be. The professional standing army of the old state, generally rising from the period of absolute monarchy, has now become the largest and the most lethally equipped standing army in history under the modern bourgeois republic. As it fights for the minority exploiting classes and against the majority oppressed classes and is cut off from the masses and productive labour and thus reduced into a mercenary army, the inherent character of the reactionary standing army is utterly brutal, anti-people and counter-revolutionary. That is why the pioneers of proletarian revolution and state have always stressed on smashing the old standing army and on arming the masses to defend the new proletarian state.

While eulogizing the Paris Commune, Marx had said:

“The first decree of the Commune...was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people.” (Marx-Engels-Lenin 1984: 75)

Similarly, in the decree on the formation of the Red Army issued by the Council of People's Commissars led by Lenin on January 12, 1918, i.e. immediately after the October Revolution, it was said:

“The old army served as the instrument for all class oppression of the toilers by the bourgeois. With the transfer of power to the toiling and exploited classes, the necessity has arisen of creating a new army which would at present serve as the bulwark of Soviet power and which would in the near future provide the basis for replacing the regular army by the armed people, and give support to the impending socialist revolution in Europe.” (Quoted in Trotsky 1969: 45)

However, due to different factors as cited earlier, the Red Army in Russia could not fulfill the dream of the Bolsheviks that it “*would in the near future provide the basis for replacing the regular army by the armed people*”. On the contrary, in course of time the Red Army itself got converted into a large professional army and ultimately it became an instrument of counter-revolution. Similarly, the Chinese Red Army, steered in the twenty-two years long vicious PW, too, gradually changed its colour as a standing army after the revolution and ultimately served as a weapon of counter-revolution. On the basis of these bitter experiences and guided by the scientific ideology of Marxism--Leninism-Maoism on the question of army and state we should strive to build a new type of army as a defender of the proletarian state and medium of continuous revolution, which would be equipped with revolutionary ideology and politics, intimately linked with the general masses and capable of organizing rebellion of the armed masses against counter-revolution.

In this context we should be serious to implement the following resolution recently adopted by the Central Committee of our Party:

“...it should be guaranteed that the people’s army of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not marked by modernization with special arms and training confined to a barrack after the capture of state power but remains a torch-bearer of revolution engaged in militarization of the masses and in the service of the masses. It is only by developing armed masses from both ideological and physical point of view that one can resist foreign intervention and counter-intervention; this fact must be made clear before the armed forces right from the beginning. The main thrust of work for the 21<sup>st</sup> century people’s army should be to complete the historical responsibility of developing conscious armed masses so that they may learn to use their right to rebel.” [CPN (Maoist) 2004:147]

### E. The Question of United Front

Another important aspect of building a new type of state is the correct handling of united front policy. In the real world there are several other classes in between the feudal/bourgeois and the proletariat, and in the particular semi-feudal and semi-colonial context like ours there are national,

regional gender and other forms of oppressions apart from the class one. Hence, during the transition period the proletariat that has to bear the historical responsibility of providing the leadership for liberation of all the exploited and oppressed sections should be able to practice a correct united front policy and make the state a joint dictatorship of all of them. The question of united front is in essence the question of correct practice of democracy and dictatorship

In this context, we should correctly grasp that one of the major reasons for the defeat of the historic Paris Commune was the inability of the Paris workers to materialize a timely united front with the rural peasants and one of the principal problems of socialist construction in Russia was the inability to correctly handle the contradictions among the rural peasants. Particularly in a semi-feudal context like ours, one of the principle basis of building a new type of state would be the correct united front policy with the various strata of the peasants. The revolutionaries should acknowledge this with deep seriousness.

Similarly, another big problem encountered while building a proletarian state in the past was related to correctly handling the question of liberation of oppressed nationalities. In the light of all those historical experiences, we should firmly grasp that the best way to solve the national question is to implement the right to self-determination of oppressed nationalities under the leadership of the proletariat according to the concrete time, place and conditions. The new state should strive to correctly handle the national question in the spirit of the following analysis of Lenin:

“In the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through a transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of nations only through a transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations, i.e., their freedom to secede.” (Lenin 1916:160)

The question of liberation of women, occupying half the heavens but subjected to patriarchal oppression for ages, is another important task before the new state. This is the main essence of Lenin’s exhortation that ‘the subject most starkly demarcating bourgeois democracy and socialism is the status of women in them’. Hence the specific task of a

new proletarian state should be to guarantee special rights to women for a definite period and to ensure them equal rights and status as the men in all spheres.

Similarly, in the specificities of South Asia, the new state should scientifically solve the question of liberation of *dalits*, who are treated as untouchables according to the Hindu *varna* (caste) system, and other minority communities oppressed by the old state in different forms.

In sum, the real essence and challenge of the new state is to solve the non-antagonistic contradictions among all the oppressed classes, nationalities, regions and gender not through the method of 'dictatorship' but through that of 'democratic centralism' and to organize a joint dictatorship of all of them against the reactionary classes.

#### **F. The Question of Construction of Economic Base**

There is dialectical interrelation between economic base and political superstructure of society. Whereas initially the economic base gives rise to political superstructure, later on the continuous intervention of the superstructure makes impact on the economic base. Hence, for moving forward towards communism after building a new type of proletarian (i.e. people's democratic or socialist) state, it is imperative to build a corresponding economic base.

In fact the initial basis for the origin of the state and the principal basis of life of the class state so far has been the anarchy of social production. This is what he meant when Engels said:

“In proportion as anarchy in social production vanishes, the political authority of the state dies out.” (Engels 1880:151)

Thus the quintessential task of the new type of proletarian state is to end the anarchy of production inherent in the feudal, petty bourgeois, bureaucratic bourgeois, etc. economic systems and to construct large scale planned, balanced, organized and controlled socialist economic system.

Moreover, without the development of labour productivity to definite higher levels, the material base for socialism and communism cannot be prepared.

For, without sufficient production in society that enables distribution to all “according to necessity”, one cannot materially conceive of classless and stateless communism. Hence the new proletarian state should prepare the economic base for socialism and communism by increasing the capacity of labour through rapid expansion of education and culture and by increasing productivity through maximum utilization of science and technology and organization of large-scale production.

However in the past, particularly in Russia during the period of Stalin, a mechanical and metaphysical conception that the development of productive forces by itself would usher in socialism and communism was prevalent and a wrong outlook prevailed that equated state ownership with 'socialism'. These, of course, were proved wrong by the later developments. The development of the productive forces and state ownership are necessary preconditions for socialism, but they themselves are not adequate and complete. More important than this are the socialist labour relations of production and socialist transformation of all the organs of the superstructure including the state and the development of socialist consciousness of the masses. Drawing lessons from these bitter experiences, Mao's China, particularly during the GPCR, had developed a new system of socialist economic construction based on the principle of 'grasp revolution, promote production', which the present day revolutionaries should emulate and strive to develop further according to the changed circumstances. One should constantly keep in mind that the economic base for socialism and communism can be prepared only by resolving the long-standing contradictions between advanced productive forces and backward production relations, between physical labour and mental labour, between rural and urban areas, between agriculture and industry, between economic production and defense production, etc., through conscious and planned struggles.

In a most backward and primarily agrarian and rural semi-feudal and semi-colonial economic context like ours, the path of economic construction from people's democracy to socialism would be all the more protracted, arduous and complex. Hence we should strive to transform the backward agrarian economy into an advanced industrial economy through cooperativization, collectivization and socialization and to lay the foundation of socialism and communism by constantly placing the revolutionary politics in command and by arousing the initiative of the masses. Only on

such a material base that the new type of state can be built and can it march forward.

### **G. The Question of International Relations**

In the present era of imperialism, due to the inherent unequal and uneven nature of development of capitalism, there is the need and possibility of bringing about proletarian (i.e. people's democratic or socialist) revolution even in one particular country of the world. However, as the whole world is increasingly tied into the economic, political, military, cultural stranglehold of imperialism, international relation would be a very complex and significant dimension in building a proletarian state in one country alone. The following analysis of Lenin about the international relation of proletarian state in such a huge country like Russia after a year of the October Revolution may be equally or even more relevant in our present context:

“...From the very beginning of the October Revolution, foreign policy and international relations have been the main question facing us. Not merely because from now all the states in the world are being firmly linked by imperialism into a single system, or rather, into one dirty, bloody mass, but because the complete victory of the socialist revolution in one country alone is inconceivable and demands the most active co-operation of at least several advanced countries....” (Lenin 1986: 117)

In the past century, even though the more than a dozen of the socialist or people's democratic states in the world perished mainly due to their own internal causes, there can be no doubt that world imperialist sabotage and interventions played an important secondary role in their downfall. Hence it is imperative for the new type of proletarian state to be built now to follow a policy of marching ahead while resisting against imperialism/ expansionism/hegemonism from the very beginning. For this, it is necessary, on the one hand, to unite with all proletarian forces of the world on the basis of proletarian internationalism, strategically, and on the other, to maintain diplomatic relations with all the countries on the basis of the policy of peaceful coexistence with different state systems and to attempt to derive maximum advantage out of inter-imperialist contradictions, tactically.

Within this general policy and in the specific geo-political context of Nepal, we should strive to maintain diplomatic relations with the two immediate big neighbours on the basis of non-alignment and mutual benefits and to march forward to establish South Asian Soviet Federation after completing revolution in whole of South Asia as envisioned by our Party's Second National Conference held in 2001.

### **H. The Question of Continuous Revolution and Withering Away of the State**

The main reason why the proletarian state or the dictatorship of the proletariat was termed 'no longer a state in the proper sense of the word' by Marx and Engels is that it is not a medium of preserving or defending class contradiction as in traditional class society but is a medium of transition from class society to classless society and the object of withering away of itself in the process. Thus the main essence or particularity of the new type of state is, firstly, that it is the means of continuous revolution against the residual and newly emerging classes, and secondly, that it withers away in the process. This is not separate but a single interrelated process.

Furthermore, what ought to be correctly grasped is that 'withering away' does not mean physical liquidation of the state, but, as Engels has said, a transformation from the means of 'government of persons' into means of 'administration of things'. For, with the end of class contradiction in communism only the 'political' role of the state as a 'special coercive force' is over, but the mechanism of voluntary organization to manage the essential goods and services in society remains intact.

However, it is a bitter truth that in the past the proletarian state powers instead of serving the masses and acting as instruments of continuous revolution turned into masters of the people and instruments of counter-revolution, and rather than moving in the direction of withering away transformed into huge totalitarian bureaucracies and instruments of repression. The present day revolutionaries should draw appropriate lessons from this and should strive to lay proper foundation for the new type of state from the very beginning.



In this context the first thing the new state power should acknowledge and practice from the very inception, as Lenin initially propounded and Mao subsequently raised to a new height, is the concept of GPCR or continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. As the defeated reactionary class can again raise its head in a new form and the material condition of the state power itself can give rise to a new bureaucratic capitalist class from within the revolutionary camp, we should institutionalize a mechanism of continuous struggle with the participation of the wider masses under the leadership of the proletariat in every sphere of the state and the superstructure. In other words, advancing from the GPCR in China we should look for new methods to exercise all round dictatorship over the old and the new reactionary classes and to continue this process till all classes are abolished in society.

Secondly, to transfer the state power that had become master of the people in the past into servant of the people and to lead it towards ultimate withering away, methods of ensuring participation of the wider masses in the state or expanding greater democracy in society should be institutionalized. In this context it may be worthwhile to keep in mind the following statement of Lenin:

“ From the moment all members of society, or at least the vast majority, have learned to administer the state *themselves*, have taken this work into their own hands, have organized control over the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits and over the workers who have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism—from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment when it becomes unnecessary. The more democratic the “state” which consists of the armed workers, and which is “no longer a state in the proper sense of the word”, the more rapidly *every form* of state begins to wither away.” (Lenin 1917d: 334-5)

Thus, continuous revolution against the residual ‘pugmarks of the old state’ and newly emerging classes and participation of the wider masses in such a continuous revolution is the method of withering away of the state initially hammered by Marx and Engels and later developed by

Lenin and Mao. Withering away is, therefore, neither the abolition of the state immediately after the revolution as contended by the anarchists, nor is it first developing in a bureaucratic form like the old state of the bourgeoisie and then miraculously collapsing some day in the distant future as claimed by the revisionists, or more particularly by the dogmato-revisionists. Withering away means cessation of only the ‘political’ function of the state as an instrument of coercion, and it begins on the very day of consummation of the revolution but gets completed only with the total victory over the residual and newly emerging classes through continuous revolution and with the ultimate submersion of the state in the sea of the masses. The new proletarian (including the people’s democratic) state should correctly grasp and implement this, and only in that sense would this state be different or ‘new’ from the old one.

### 3. Conclusion

Despite the contrary propaganda of the imperialists, the 21<sup>st</sup> century will once again go through a vicious class struggle or war for the state power. Our great PW is part of the same worldwide process. Hence it is imperative for all to focus their attention on the question of state power, which is the central question in every revolution. Every state is in essence an instrument of dictatorship over certain classes and that of democracy for some others. In this sense dictatorship and democracy remain as two sides of the same coin in every state, and it is just ridiculous to talk of a state with either only dictatorship or only democracy. But it is a great paradox of history that whereas the proletarian state with an essence of dictatorship over the limited exploiting classes and that of democracy for a majority of exploited classes has been denounced as ‘dictatorial’, the bourgeois democracy with an essence of democracy for a handful of exploiting classes and that of dictatorship over the majority of working classes is hailed as an ideal model of universal and eternal democracy. Apart from the class bias and disinformation campaign of the imperialists certain grave shortcomings in the practice of the proletarian state in the past, (for example, practical cessation of differences between the Party and the state, gradual inaction and demise of the people’s representative institutions, development and expansion of the standing army in place of arming the masses, virtual emasculation of the electoral system and freedom of speech and press, use of state force to solve contradictions within the Party and among the people, lack of people’s participation,

supervision and intervention in the state affairs and development of totalitarian tendencies, etc.) are also responsible for this. In this background, we should dare develop the model of a new type of proletarian state with the ideological guidance of MLM and Prachanda Path and keeping in mind the experiences of revolutions from the Paris Commune through the Russian Soviet and the Chinese GPCR to our present revolution.

In this context it is imperative to keep in mind what Lenin has said:

“The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a *tremendous abundance and variety of political forms*, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*” (Lenin 1917d: 286) (emphasis added).

In other words, the essence of the transitional revolutionary state to be built after smashing the old reactionary class state would be dictatorship of the proletariat or democratic dictatorship of the oppressed people. But the political forms of such transitional revolutionary dictatorship can be varied in keeping with different time and places, and we should exercise our revolutionary creativity in practicing and developing such forms. Particularly in the light of the historical experiences of easy degeneration of the past proletarian states into totalitarian bureaucratic capitalist states, we should strive to find newer forms of the ‘transitional’ state, which is said to be “no longer a state in the proper sense of the word”.

In the transitional period of a backward society like Nepal, where the transition has to take place from semi-feudal autocracy through bourgeois democracy to communism, there would be naturally more diversities and complexities. However, if we succeed to exercise continuous dictatorship over the handful of reactionaries with active participation of the masses by forging a united front of different sections subjected to class, national, regional, caste and gender oppressions under the leadership of a correct proletarian Party, we shall definitely attain the goal of classless and exploitationless society. The main thing is the correct proletarian outlook of the leadership and the question of ensuring continuous and active participation of the masses in the state affairs. This is the rationale behind our Party’s recent attempt to raise the question of democracy from a new perspective. The proletarian revolutionaries should firmly grasp that the question of democracy and new type of state are inseparably

interlinked, and they should initiate the process of withering away of the state by submerging the state in the sea of the great democracy of the masses, as Lenin had said: “The more democratic the ‘state’... the more rapidly every form of state begins to wither away.” In this context, we should defeat the anarchist tendency that denies the very necessity of a transitional state, the Right revisionist tendency that gets swayed by the formal democracy of the bourgeoisie and abandons dictatorship of the proletariat, and the dogmato-revisionist tendency that vulgarizes the proletarian (or people’s democratic) dictatorship into a totalitarian bureaucratic capitalist dictatorship, and must-strive to establish the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought that leads to a classless and stateless communism through continuous revolution and withering away of the state by exercising great democracy under the dictatorship of the proletariat (or people’s democratic dictatorship). In this eventuality no body can stop our great campaign to build a new type of proletarian state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and march towards communism through continuous revolution and withering away of the state.

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## Post Script A

### **Some comments on CPN (Maoist) stance on multi party democracy under proletarian power:**

**- Azad,  
Spokesperson of the Communist Party of India (Maoist)**

[**Note:** As mentioned in the 'Editor's Note', the following has been taken from an interview published in the 'Peoples March', June-July, 2006, under the title: "EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CPI (MAOIST) SPOKESPERSON ON NEPAL DEVELOPMENTS: "There is need for caution with the present tactics": CPN (Maoists) may be giving over-emphasis to the possibility of advancing the movement through the Constituent Assembly!"

The following introductory note within the parenthesis is by the Peoples March.

*(With the latest developments in Nepal and the tactics and Strategy now being put forward by the CPN(Maoist) and the continuous appeals by Indian Marxist and revisionists to the Indian Maoists to learn from the Nepalese Maoists, People's March has been trying to get the response of the Indian Maoists. At last we have received by e-mail a response from the spokesperson of the CPI(Maoists) which, to a large extent, gives their response. We are giving below an interview taken by our correspondent with comrade Azad, the spokesperson of the CC, CPI (Maoist) in end June 2006.)*

As discussed in the Editor's Note, questions 7 and 8, of the 14 questions put to Azad by the Peoples March (PM), are included here]

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*PM: Then are you in favour of multiparty democracy at least after the seizure of power? If not what is the form of government you envisage after the revolution?*

- The Marxist-Leninist-Maoist understanding regarding the form of government that will be best suited for the proletariat is the Commune or the Soviet or the Revolutionary Council that can best serve the proletariat and the vast majority of the masses as they act not as talking shops and mere legislative bodies but as both legislative and executive bodies. The representatives to these bodies are elected and are subject to recall any time the people feel they do not serve their interests. If we look at the very process of the protracted people's war it entails the setting up democratic power in the Base Areas of all anti-imperialist and anti-feudal forces UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PROLETARIAT elected democratically at gram sabhas (village council - editor) with the right to remove them also by the gram sabha. Here there is a close interaction between the power structures and the will of the people and therefore truly democratic. Once power is seized at the all-India level, till the transformation to the socialist stage all genuinely anti-imperialist and anti-feudal parties will be part of the new power, and the transition to socialism can only take place through continuing the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. This does not deny democracy for the masses at large but, as Lenin said, petty production generates a bourgeoisie daily, hourly and these elements will find their representative at all realms of state power, including the Party. Can anyone think of a better form of government and better form of exercising democracy in the real sense of the term?

*"To decide once every few years which members of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary- constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics", said Lenin.*

This was said by Lenin over a century back. Since then, particularly since World War II, the parliament and its related institutions have become even more corrupt and rotten to the core.

A good example of how the new power was built was the Paris Commune. The concepts practiced there were further worked out in the Soviets of the USSR, the communes in China and the experiments of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) and is being sought to be practiced

in the Base Areas being set up by the Maoists in different parts of the world.

Comrade Lenin also explained very lucidly how the Parliament functions even in the most democratic of the republics and, contrasting it to the Commune, showed how the Communes (or the Soviets in Russia and Revolutionary Councils in China) are the most suitable forms of government for the proletariat and the toiling masses.

*“The parliamentary bourgeois republic hampers and stifles the independent political life of the masses, their direct participation in the **democratic** organization of the life of the state from the bottom up. The opposite is the case with the Soviets.*

*“The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and the elective principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from talking shops into “working” bodies. “The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time.”*

*“The Commune substitutes for the venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion does not degenerate into deception, for the parliamentarians themselves have to work, have to execute their own laws, have themselves to test the results achieved in reality, and to account directly to their constituents. .... We cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions, but we can and must imagine democracy without parliamentarism, if criticism of bourgeois society is not mere words for us, if the desire to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie is our earnest and sincere desire, and not a mere “election” cry for catching workers’ votes, as it is with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries,”*

*PM: And how do you ensure political competition with other parties? The CPN (Maoist) claims that it is only by organizing political*

*competition and institutionalizing the right of the masses to install an alternative revolutionary party in power that counter-revolution can be effectively checked.*

- It is, indeed, surprising that the CPN (Maoist) should arrive at such a conclusion even after the proletariat is equipped with rich and varied experiences on the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, after it is armed with such an appropriate form, method and weapon as the cultural revolution and is in possession of a wealth of writings by our teachers—Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao—and by several Marxist writers on the subject of checking the degeneration of the Party, Army and the State; preventing the restoration of capitalism; and building a new type of state and society. To think that continuous proletarianization and revolutionization of the Communist Party can be ensured and that counter-revolution can be effectively checked by organizing so-called political competition or by institutionalizing the right of the masses to install an alternative revolutionary party or leadership on the state means falling into the trap of bourgeois formalism and under-mining the real task of mobilizing the masses extensively to wage bitter class struggle against the old reactionary defeated classes and the new bourgeois class developing within the Party, Army and the Administration. It is difficult to grasp how alternative revolutionary parties can exist- especially since the communist parties have always understood that different political lines represented either a proletarian outlook or a bourgeois outlook.

The crucial point lies *not* in ensuring the right of the masses to replace one Party by another through elections, which is anyway the norm in any bourgeois republic or bureaucrat bourgeois-feudal republic, but ensuring their active and creative involvement in supervising the Party and the state, in checking the emergence of a new bureaucratic class, and themselves taking part in the administration of the state and society and in the entire process of revolutionary transformation. And it will be the foremost task of the Party to organize and lead the masses in checking counter-revolution and bringing about the revolutionary transformation in all spheres through continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. And this is the most important lesson handed down to us by the entire historical experience of the world revolution, particularly by the GPCR.

Moreover, is it possible for the Party of the proletariat to prevent the comeback of the defeated classes to power and check counter-revolution peacefully or by a coup by providing such an opportunity to them to compete in a "democratic" manner? Would the Bolshevik Party have won the elections in Russia after the revolution had it organized such political competition given its near-total absence in the vast backward countryside where the most reactionary ideas ruled the roost? In fact, the Bolshevik Party had to even dissolve the constituent assembly immediately after it captured power despite the fact that it was only a minority in it as the constituent assembly acted as an instrument of the reactionaries and became an obstacle for carrying out revolutionary reforms and for exercising proletarian dictatorship as in the Soviets. It is not just the case of Russia, in many countries, particularly in semi-colonial semi-feudal countries, where petty commodity production and peasant economy predominate, the feudal ideology, culture, customs and the force of habit among the majority of the population will make it possible for other non-proletarian and even reactionary parties under the anti-feudal anti-imperialist cloak to come to power relatively easily. Hence it will not be surprising if we find that the idealist and subjective proposal of the CPN(Maoist), though made with good intentions, ultimately becomes a convenient tool in the hands of the capitalist-roaders to seize power.

As regards political competition with other parties, we have the experience of China where several democratic parties such as the Democratic League, Peasants and Workers' Party and others competed with the CPC and contested in elections to the various organs of power. Although these existed for almost a decade after the revolution the people rejected them when they refused to support socialism and tried to take China along the capitalist road. Political competition was encouraged in China, not in the form of participation in Western-type bourgeois parliamentary elections but in the elections to various bodies. Democratic parties and organizations belonging to the four classes that comprised the motive forces of revolution were to take part in the elections to the various bodies.

The CPC had strived to unite all the anti-feudal anti-imperialist parties and forces during the new democratic revolution and also after the seizure of power and establishment of people's democracy or the people's democratic dictatorship.

In his article **On the correct handling of contradictions among the people**, in 1957, Mao explained the policy of the CPC towards other political parties after the capture of power thus:

*"It is the desire as well as the policy of the Communist Party to exist side by side with the democratic parties for a long time to come. But whether the democratic parties can long remain in existence depends not merely on the desire of the Communist Party but on how well they acquit themselves and on whether they enjoy the trust of the people. Mutual supervision among the various parties is also a long-established fact, in the sense that they have long been advising and criticizing each other. Mutual supervision is obviously not a one-sided matter; it means that the Communist Party can exercise supervision over the democratic parties, and vice versa."*

In China many methods were evolved to prevent capitalist restoration and the rise of a new bourgeoisie in the Government and Party. Mao's *let a hundred flowers blossom and let a hundred schools of thought contend*; his *'Three-thirds' system of democratic representation which restricts the seats of Communist party members in all elected bodies to a maximum of one-third of the whole and gives two-thirds of the seats to members of other parties and non-party elements*; his putting six political criteria for political parties to stand for elections; etc; are only a few of the examples adopted. Democracy is not merely a formal putting a vote but must exist in the very living process of any organization, with the leadership under the close supervision of the masses and cadre; this too is possible with only a general raising of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) consciousness of the Party and the masses and intensifying the class struggle. In China there were many parties after the revolution sharing power, but the unity was on a principled basis, and was part of the front to deepen the class struggle against the remnants of the feudal and Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeois (CBB) forces. In Nepal they in effect dilute the class struggle by forming a government with feudal and CBB elements.

The most important thing is that all the revolutionary bodies in the

proletarian or people's democratic state are elected and every person so elected is subject to recall, which is not seen, in the so-called parliamentary democracies.

## Post-script B

### **Politics: Strategy and Tactics**

#### **- Prachanda**

[**Note:** The following section has been taken from an interview titled "Hoist the Revolutionary Flag on Mount Everest in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", given to The Worker, No 10, May 2006]

*It is said that the secret of the development of People's War lies in the proper coordination between political and military lines. There have reportedly been some problems in maintaining their balance sometimes. What is the reality? How was the experience of peace talks for two times?*

- All those who have seriously studied our movement right from the days of our Party formation to preparation, initiation and hitherto development of the People's War, will see that it is different from many of the prevalent and conventional norms of the past communist movements. Our uniqueness, after having fundamentally set the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideological and political working direction, can be seen in the fact that we have taken our ideological and political struggle to a new height and established them among the people by forging Party unity even with rightists. We have prepared for People's War using even the parliament, given emphasis on striking a balance and coordination between political and military interventions, and we have used peace talks and ceasefire against the enemy in a new way. But in this context, one thing is continuous, which is, placing revolutionary political line at the centre, making concrete analysis of concrete condition and adopting mass line. In the context of preparation, initiation and development of People's War, it is being developed as a right coordination between political and military lines. That balance and coordination can be clearly seen in our process of taking initiatives for People's War by founding a political base and presenting the basic problems of the country and the people in the form of 40-point demands from an open front. The first and the second peace talks can be considered as a new development of that coordination. The Party has already analyzed that the two talks have played an important

role in establishing the Party's political line among the people in a more extensive way and in clarifying the Party's commitment to establishing peace with a forward-looking political solution reflecting people's need and aspiration as well as justifying the development and significance of the military line.

*The Party seems to be successfully handling the question of strategic firmness and tactical flexibility. Don't you think that the Party runs the risk of getting deviated if it goes on stressing on tactical flexibility?*

- Even our hardcore enemies are compelled to accept our Party's capability of handling strategic firmness and tactical flexibility. We think that while tactical flexibility without strategic firmness leads to a quagmire of reformism and revisionism and while strategic firmness without tactical flexibility leads to a marsh of mechanical tendency and dogmatism, only a proper implementation of dialectical interrelationship between strategic firmness and tactical flexibility can propel revolutionary movement in a proper and dynamic way. This conclusion has already been very well substantiated by our Party and the development of People's War. Had there been only tactical flexibility, our Party would have sunk into the process of uniting with rightist reformists, it would have become pro-parliamentary in the process of making special use of the parliament, and would have never returned to war after the peace talks with the enemies. From these and many other examples, it has already been clear that all the tactical plans and visions of the Party are inseparably linked with strategic plans and visions. Likewise, had we shown only strategic firmness, the Party would have turned into a parochial group isolated from the people, which would have only drained the people's unlimited energy and initiatives in the revolution. Today our practical behaviors have already clarified that our strategic firmness comes into effective implementation by means of our tactical flexibility. In fact, the revolutionary movement is being damaged on the one hand by conservatives who only talk of strategy and on the other hand by the reformists who only talk of tactics. The fast development of People's War became possible because our Party, while fighting against the deviation, understood and mobilized the interrelation between strategy and tactic. In order to keep the revolution in motion, it is necessary to give continuity to strategic firmness and tactical flexibility. We have to be clear here that those who see through reformist spectacles consider our strategy as dangerous and always protest against

it while those who see it through the spectacles of 'left' parochialism consider our tactical flexibility as dangerous and always protest against it. But having proved them unscientific, our Party, as the correct practitioner of dialectical materialism, has been moving and will continue to move in future in the direction of revolution.

*During the initiation of People's War, the Party attacked parliamentary forces more than they did the monarchy, but now it is just the opposite. What is the meaning and relevance of this? Are the questions of nationality and people's democracy linked with it?*

- It is appropriate to understand new people's democracy, constituent assembly and democratic republic basically in terms of the interrelation between strategic firmness and tactical flexibility. Whenever a proletarian Party becomes weak in terms of ideology, politics, organization and physical power, it stresses, and should do so, on the establishment of its ideology and power accumulation by means of multidimensional political exposure through its strategic slogans. When the Party is strong and is nearing its strategic goal, it takes up, and should rightly do so, the role of responsible leadership to ensure political outlet by taking together as many forces as possible and putting stress on political slogans. One has to be clear about one thing, that our Party is talking about the development of people's democracy in the 21st century after having learnt from the experiences of the revolutions and counter-revolutions of the 20th century, and accordingly has accepted multi-Party competition within an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist constitutional frame. But here, the issues of constituent assembly and democratic republic should be understood in terms of strategic firmness and tactical flexibility. To demand a makeup like that of the initial phase of the struggle when one has come to a stage of running a regime or to demand a character like that of the stage of running a regime when one is in the initial phase of struggle, both don't represent materialist dialectics.

*Many are heard saying that the UML's multi-Party people's democracy and the Maoist's multi-Party democratic republic are similar. What is the reality?*

- UML's multi-party people's democracy expresses class coordination and a reformist line of bourgeois parliamentarianism while our slogan of



democratic republic expresses transitional revolutionary slogan that helps propel class struggle in a special condition of power balance. In this sense, there is a huge difference in essence between the UML's multi-Party people's democracy and our democratic republic. Recently, the UML has also talked about moving towards democratic republic and we have been holding discussions on the essential commonalities between us. We hope that through the slogan of democratic republic, the UML too will move from reformist line of class coordination to revolutionary line of class struggle.

*What is the essence and relevance of the 12-point understanding with the parliamentary parties? Is it just an agreement of convenience for both sides or does it have a long-term significance?*

- Our Party has taken the 12-point understanding with the parliamentary political parties very seriously. We consider it not as a game plan or an agreement of convenience but as a historically essential and practical understanding required to fulfill people's aspiration for peace and democracy against feudal and tyrannical monarchy. The ensuing protests against tyranny has not only justified its significance but has also approved of it. As a first milestone of the process of achieving complete democracy (i.e. 'democratic republic in our understanding) through a constituent assembly election, the 12-point understanding has a long-term importance.

*After Lenin's time, CPN (Maoist) is perhaps the first Party to have successfully caught the path of revolutionary war even after having represented in the parliament. Can you shed some light on this experience?*

- One will be in position to make concrete analysis of concrete condition only after one has adopted Marxist science by keeping it away from left or right dogma while being determined to take the revolution ahead. Our Party, during the early phase of its initiation, moved ahead by struggling against rightist revisionism externally and Mohan Bikram's dogmatic revisionism internally. This struggle encouraged us to adopt Marxism as a science by keeping ourselves away from the traditional deviation of Nepali communist movement that understands Marxist science in terms of formulas. This understanding enabled us, by taking decision to use the parliament, to teach the Nepalese society about the futility of the parliament

and the necessity of People's War. The 'left' conservatives who perceived Marxism and revolution in terms of fixed models saw us as sinking into the rightist quagmire while the rightists saw us as dogmatist, as we were exposing the parliament. In fact, we were neither rightist nor dogmatists, we were just Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, which history has already shown. In fact, whatever we are trying to do is not new but an attempt to scientifically fix and give momentum to the intensity of the international communist movement which was broken due to Stalin's weakness after the demise of Lenin and which Mao tried to take ahead.

We are not saying that since we went to the People's War after having used the parliament, everyone in the world has to do the same. *We know it very well that in today's world the usefulness of the tactics to use parliament has almost come to an end.* (Italics ours- editor). But continuous boycotting of a system without considering the situation of a country and its people is not Marxism. Ignoring concrete analysis of concrete condition and also mass line would just mean to make Marxism, Leninism and Maoism meaningless by reducing it to the level of a religious sect. Our experience of the use of parliament is less important in terms of the utility of parliament and more in terms of understanding Marxism as a science.

*What are the ideological and practical aspects of Prachanda Path?*

- All the processes of development of nature, society and human thought are mobilized and limited by absolute struggle and relative unity of the opposites. Mao has explained it as sovereignty of internal contradiction, distinctiveness of contradiction, primary contradiction and secondary contradiction. In the course of taking the Party and the revolution forward, there can be numerous contradictions that have to be settled. In other words, the Party always faces mountains of works to be done. In such a situation, if we sort out the aspects of opinions, plans and programs that need to be given immediate emphasis and those that need constant attention even in a secondary form, then we will be able to accomplish our goal in a scientific way.

On the basis of this principle to mobilize internal differences in a scientific way, the third historical extensive meeting of the Central Committee of our Party has presented a series of strategies and tactics that the

Party has to emphasize and pay attention to in the entire development process of People's War. Also, the Party always follows this scientific principle while deciding on every new policy, plan and program.

### Appendix I

## **On the Existence of One Party System in the U.S.S.R.**

**J. V. Stalin**

**(From 'On the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R'; under the subtitle, 'Bourgeois Criticism Of The Draft Constitution'). 1936.**

Finally, there is yet another group of critics. While the last mentioned group accuses the Draft Constitution of abandoning the dictatorship of the working class, this group, on the contrary, accuses it of not changing anything in the existing position in the U.S.S.R., of leaving the dictatorship of the working class intact, of not granting freedom to political parties and of preserving the present leading position of the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. And this group of critics maintains that the absence of freedom for parties in the U.S.S.R. is a symptom of the violation of the principles of democratism.

I must admit that the Draft of the new Constitution does preserve the regime of the dictatorship of the working class, just as it also preserves unchanged the present leading position of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. If the esteemed critics regard this as a flaw in the Draft Constitution, that is only to be regretted. We Bolsheviks regard it as a merit of the Draft Constitution.

As to freedom for various political parties, we adhere to somewhat different views. A party is a part of a class, its most advanced part. Several parties, and, consequently, freedom for parties, can exist only in a society in which there are antagonistic classes whose interests are mutually hostile and irreconcilable — in which there are, say, capitalists and workers, landlords and peasants, kulaks and poor peasants, etc. But in the U.S.S.R. there are no longer such classes as the capitalists, the landlords, the kulaks, etc. In the U.S.S.R. there are only two classes, workers and peasants, whose interests — far from being mutually hostile — are, on the contrary, friendly. Hence, there is no ground in the U.S.S.R.

for the existence of several parties, and, consequently, for freedom for these parties. In the U.S.S.R. there is ground only for one party, the Communist Party. In the U.S.S.R. only one party can exist, the Communist Party, which courageously defends the interests of the workers and peasants to the very end. And that it defends the interests of these classes not at all badly, of that there can hardly be any doubt.

They talk of democracy. But what is democracy? Democracy in capitalist countries, where there are antagonistic classes, is, in the last analysis, democracy for the strong, democracy for the propertied minority. In the U.S.S.R., on the contrary, democracy is democracy for the working people, i.e., democracy for all. But from this it follows that the principles of democratism are violated, not by the Draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R., but by the bourgeois constitutions. That is why I think that the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is the only thoroughly democratic Constitution in the world.

Such is the position with regard to the bourgeois criticism of the Draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

## Appendix II

### **On the Withering away of the Socialist State**

**J. V. Stalin**

**(From the concluding section of the ‘Report to the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’, under the subtitle, “Some Questions Of Theory”. 1939.)**

Another of the defects of our propagandist and ideological work is the absence of full clarity among our comrades on certain theoretical questions of vital practical importance, the existence of a certain amount of confusion on these questions. I refer to the question of the state in general, and of our socialist state in particular, and to the question of our Soviet intelligentsia.

It is sometimes asked: “We have abolished the exploiting classes; there are no longer any hostile classes in the country; there is nobody to suppress; hence there is no more need for the state; it must die away. — Why then do we not help our socialist state to wither away? Why do we not strive to put an end to it? Is it not time to get rid of the state, as so much lumber?”

Or again: “The exploiting classes have already been abolished in our country; socialism has in the main been built; we are advancing towards communism. Now, the Marxist doctrine of the state says that there is to be no state under communism. — Why then do we not help our socialist state to wither away? Is it not time we relegated the state to the museum of antiquities?”

These questions show that those who ask them have conscientiously memorized certain tenets of the doctrine of Marx and Engels about the state. But they also show that these comrades have not grasped the essential meaning of this doctrine; that they do not realize in what historical conditions the various tenets of this doctrine were elaborated; and, what is more, that they do not understand present-day international conditions, have overlooked the capitalist encirclement and the dangers it entails for the socialist country. These questions not only betray an underestimation of the capitalist encirclement, but also an underestimation of the role and

significance of the bourgeois states and their organs, which send spies, assassins and wreckers into our country and are waiting for a favourable opportunity to attack it by armed force. They likewise betray an underestimation of the role and significance of our socialist state and of its military, penal and intelligence organs, which are essential for the defence of the Land of Socialism from foreign attack. It must be confessed that the comrades mentioned are not the only ones guilty of this underestimation. All the Bolsheviks, all of us without exception, to a certain extent sin in this respect. Is it not surprising that we learnt about the espionage and conspiratorial activities of the Trotskyite and Bukharinite ringleaders only quite recently, in 1937 and 1938, although, as the evidence shows, these gentry were in the service of foreign espionage organizations and carried on conspiratorial activities from the very first days of the October Revolution? How could we have failed to notice so grave a matter? How are we to explain this blunder? The usual answer to this question is that we could not possibly have assumed that these people could have fallen so low. But that is no explanation, still less is it a justification, for the blunder was a blunder. How is this blunder to be explained? It is to be explained by an underestimation of the strength and significance of the mechanism of the bourgeois states surrounding us and of their espionage organs, which endeavour to take advantage of people's weaknesses, their vanity, their slackness of will, to enmesh them in their espionage nets and use them to surround the organs of the Soviet state. It is to be explained by an underestimation of the role and significance of the mechanism of our socialist state and of its intelligence service, by an underestimation of the importance of this intelligence service by the twaddle that an intelligence service in the Soviet state is an unimportant trifle, and that the Soviet intelligence service and the Soviet state itself will soon have to be relegated to the museum of antiquities.

What could have given rise to this underestimation?

It arose owing to the fact that certain of the general tenets of the Marxist doctrine of the state were incompletely elaborated and were inadequate. It received currency owing to our unpardonably heedless attitude to matters pertaining to the theory of the state, in spite of the fact that we have had 20 years of practical experience in state affairs which provides rich material for theoretical generalizations, and in spite of the fact that, given the desire, we have every opportunity of successfully filling this gap in theory. We have forgotten Lenin's highly important injunction about

the theoretical duties of Russian Marxists, that it is their mission to further elaborate the Marxist theory. Here is what Lenin said in this connection:

“We do not regard Marxist theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the corner-stone of the science which socialists *must* further advance in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life. We think that an *independent* elaboration of the Marxist theory is especially essential for Russian socialists, for this theory provides only general *guiding* principles, which, *in particular*, are applied in England differently from France, in France differently from Germany, and in Germany differently from Russia.” (Lenin, *Our Programme*, written in the second half of 1899.)

Consider, for example, the classical formulation of the theory of the development of the socialist state given by Engels:

“As soon as there is no longer any class of society to be held in subjection; as soon as, along with class domination and the struggle for individual existence based on the anarchy of production hitherto, the collisions and excesses arising from these have also been abolished, there is nothing more to be repressed which would make a special repressive force, a state, necessary. The first act in which the state really comes forward as the representative of society as a whole — the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society — is at the same time its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then ceases of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the processes of production. The state is not ‘abolished,’ *it withers away.*” (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Partizdat, 1933)

Is this proposition of Engels' correct?

Yes, it is correct, but only on one of two conditions: a) if we study the socialist state only from the angle of the internal development of a country, abstracting ourselves in advance from the international factor, isolating, for the convenience of investigation, the country and the state from the international situation; or b) if we assume that socialism is already victorious in all countries, or in the majority of countries, that a socialist encirclement

exists instead of a capitalist encirclement, that there is no more danger of foreign attack, and that there is no more need to strengthen the army and the state.

Well, but what if socialism has been victorious only in one separate country, and if, in view of this, it is quite impossible to abstract oneself from international conditions — what then? Engels' formula does not furnish an answer to this question. As a matter of fact, Engels did not set himself this question, and therefore could not have given an answer to it. Engels proceeds from the assumption that socialism has already been victorious more or less simultaneously in all countries, or in a majority of countries. Consequently, Engels is not here investigating any specific socialist state of any particular country, but the development of the socialist state in general, on the assumption that socialism has been victorious in a majority of countries -- according to the formula: "Assuming that socialism is victorious in a majority of countries, what changes must the proletarian, socialist state undergo?" Only this general and abstract character of the problem can explain why in his investigation of the question of the socialist state Engels completely abstracted himself from such a factor as international conditions, the international situation.

But it follows from this that Engels' general formula about the destiny of the socialist state in general cannot be extended to the particular and specific case of the victory of socialism in one separate country, a country which is surrounded by a capitalist world, is subject to the menace of foreign military attack, cannot therefore abstract itself from the international situation, and must have at its disposal a well-trained army, well-organized penal organs, and a strong intelligence service, consequently, must have its own state, strong enough to defend the conquests of socialism from foreign attack.

We cannot expect the Marxist classics, separated as they were from our day by a period of 45 or 55 years, to have foreseen each and every zigzag of history in the distant future in every separate country. It would be ridiculous to expect the Marxist classics to have elaborated for our benefit ready-made solutions for each and every theoretical problem that might arise in any particular country 50 or 100 years afterwards, so that we, the descendants of the Marxist classics, might calmly doze at the fireside and munch ready-made solutions. But we can and should expect the Marxist-Leninists of our day not to confine themselves to learning by rote a few

general tenets of Marxism; to delve deeply into the essence of Marxism; to learn to take account of the experience gained in the 20 years of existence of the socialist state in our country; and, lastly, utilizing this experience and basing themselves on the essence of Marxism, to learn to apply the various general tenets of Marxism concretely, to lend them greater precision and improve them. Lenin wrote his famous book, *The State and Revolution*, in August 1917, that is, a few months before the October Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet state. Lenin considered it the main task of this book to defend Marx's and Engels' teaching on the state from distortion and vulgarization by the opportunists. Lenin was preparing to write a second volume of *The State and Revolution*, in which he intended to sum up the principal lessons of the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917. There can be no doubt that Lenin intended in the second volume of his book to elaborate and to further develop the theory of the state on the basis of the experience gained during the existence of Soviet power in our country. Death, however, prevented him from carrying this task into execution. But what Lenin did not manage to do should be done by his disciples.

The state arose because society split up into antagonistic classes, it arose in order to keep in check the exploited majority in the interests of the exploiting minority. The instruments of state power became concentrated mainly in the army, the penal organs, the intelligence service, the prisons. Two basic functions characterize the activity of the state: at home (the main function), to keep in check the exploited majority; abroad (not the main function), to extend the territory of its class, the ruling class, at the expense of the territory of other states, or to defend the territory of its own state from attack by other states. Such was the case in slave society and under feudalism. Such is the case under capitalism.

In order to overthrow capitalism it was necessary not only to remove the bourgeoisie from power, not only to expropriate the capitalists, but also to smash entirely the bourgeois state machine, its old army, its bureaucratic officialdom and its police force, and to substitute for it a new, proletarian form of state, a new, socialist state. And that, as we know, is exactly what the Bolsheviks did. But it does not at all follow that the new, proletarian state may not retain certain functions of the old state, modified to suit the requirements of the proletarian state. Still less does it follow that the forms of our socialist state must remain unchanged, that all the original functions of our state must be fully retained in future. As a matter of fact,

the forms of our state are changing and will continue to change in line with the development of our country and with the changes in the international situation.

Lenin was absolutely right when he said:

“The forms of bourgeois states are extremely varied, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The transition from capitalism to communism certainly cannot yield a great abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: the dictatorship of the proletariat.” (Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, August-September 1917.)

Since the October Revolution, our socialist state has in its development passed through two main phases.

The first phase was the period from the October Revolution to the elimination of the exploiting classes. The principal task in that period was to suppress the resistance of the overthrown classes, to organize the defence of the country against the attack of the interventionists, to restore industry and agriculture, and to prepare the conditions for the elimination of the capitalist elements. Accordingly, in this period our state performed two main functions. The first function was to suppress the overthrown classes within the country. In this respect our state bore a superficial resemblance to previous states, whose functions had also been to suppress recalcitrants, with the fundamental difference, however, that our state suppressed the exploiting minority in the interests of the labouring majority, while previous states had suppressed the exploited majority in the interests of the exploiting minority. The second function was to defend the country from foreign attack. In this respect it likewise bore a superficial resemblance to previous states, which also undertook the armed defence of their countries, with the fundamental difference, however, that our state defended from foreign attack the gains of the labouring majority, while previous states in such cases defended the wealth and privileges of the exploiting minority. Our state had yet a third function: this was economic and organizational work and cultural and educational work performed by our state bodies with the purpose of developing the young shoots of the new, socialist economic system and re-educating the people

in the spirit of socialism. But this new function did not attain any considerable development in that period.

The second phase was the period from the elimination of the capitalist elements in town and country to the complete victory of the socialist economic system and the adoption of the new Constitution. The principal task in this period was to organize socialist economy throughout the country and to eliminate the last remnants of the capitalist elements, to organize a cultural revolution, and to organize a thoroughly modern army for the defence of the country. And the functions of our socialist state changed accordingly. The function of military suppression inside the country ceased, died away; for exploitation had been abolished, there were no more exploiters left, and so there was no one to suppress. In place of this function of suppression the state acquired the function of protecting socialist property from thieves and pilferers of the property of the people. The function of armed defence of the country from foreign attack fully remained; consequently, the Red Army and the Navy also fully remained, as did the penal organs and the intelligence service, which are indispensable for the detection and punishment of the spies, assassins and wreckers sent into our country by foreign intelligence services. The function of the state organs as regards economic and organizational work, and cultural and educational work, remained and was developed to the full. Now the main task of our state inside the country lies in peaceful economic and organizational work, and cultural and educational work. As for our army, penal organs, and intelligence service, their edge is no longer turned to the inside of the country but to the outside, against external enemies.

As you see, we now have an entirely new, socialist state, one without precedent in history and differing considerably in form and functions from the socialist state of the first phase.

But development cannot stop there. We are moving ahead, towards communism. Will our state remain in the period of communism also?

Yes, it will, if the capitalist encirclement is not liquidated, and if the danger of foreign military attack is not eliminated, although naturally, the forms of our state will again change in conformity with the change in the situation at home and abroad.

No it will not remain and will wither away if the capitalist encirclement is

is liquidated and is replaced by a socialist encirclement.

That is how the question stands with regard to the socialist state.

## **What is Scientific Socialism Research Unit?**

The SSRU is a very small unit of workers engaged in systematic study and research on a few selected problems of socialism faced by revolutionary socialists today, following the collapse of socialism worldwide.

Obviously, Marxist methodology is our principal tool in all our investigative work. However, we recognise that Marxism is a science and it is to be applied with great care for infinite complexities associated with social phenomena. Unfortunately, quite often, it is used as a set of dogmas, mechanically applied to widely varying situations without due regard for their specificities. And, it also suffers from opportunistic attempts to negate its fundamental essence in the name of creative application.

We recognise that Marxism basically grew out of the studies of European capitalist societies belonging to the second half of the nineteenth century. But, as the arena for its immediate use greatly shifted from the relatively more advanced contemporary capitalism of countries like Germany to the less developed industrial societies of Russia and Eastern Europe, and then on to the feudal or semi-feudal societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America, revolutionary socialists in these countries were faced with the extremely difficult task of dealing with such specific socio-economic phenomena, like 'casteism' in South Asia, which were not immediately close to those, which fundamental Marxism had to deal with.

Furthermore, in the present world situation as a whole, new forms of imperialism via multinationals and globalisation are creating new demands on the development of scientific socialism. Unfortunately, theoretical development of Marxism since the collapse of socialism worldwide has been abysmal. Marxism is in fact going through a period of crisis. We do not have in our unit, at present, the necessary practical experiences and theoretical expertise to cope with the formidable tasks that confront

today's revolutionary socialists in a situation like this. We sincerely hope that others from diverse parts of the world will join us in our aforementioned endeavours.

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