

KASAMA ARTICLES: ON THE MAOBADI AND THE CRISIS IN NEPAL

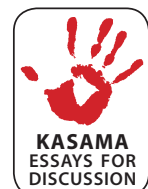


"We should be clear on what we know, and what we don't. And one thing we know is that this revolutionary cause in Nepal is just. It has drawn in millions of people. It has built itself an army. It has captured the imagination of the youth. It has embodied the hopes of some of the earth's most impoverished and isolated people. And this is the first time this generation has even SEEN such problems of communist revolution played out in real life.

"There is a living revolution going on here — in all its complexity, mystery and unpredictability. And we should know that we need to take a clear political stand of support for this.

"Sure, we will 'wait and see' in one sense — in the sense that everyone 'waits and sees' how great events turn out — including their direct participants. But in another sense, it would be wrong (and I'm tempted to say a criminal betrayal of internationalism) to SIT BACK while we 'wait and see.'"

—Mike Ely, "And If a Showdown Comes in Nepal..."



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Kasama
is a communist project that, in theory and practice,
fights for the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.

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Kasama Articles: On the Maobadi and the Crisis in Nepal

from KasamaProject.org

Eyes On The Maobadi: 4 Reasons Nepal's Revolution Matters

Posted at KasamaProject.org on June 10, 2008

By Mike Ely

Something remarkable is happening. A whole generation of people has never seen a radical, secular, revolutionary movement rise with popular support. And yet here it is – in Nepal today. This movement has overthrown Nepal's hated King Gyanendra and abolished the medieval monarchy. It has created a revolutionary army that now squares off with the old King's army. It has built parallel political power in remote rural areas over a decade of guerrilla war – undermining feudal traditions like the caste system. It has gathered broad popular support and emerged as the leading force of an unprecedented Constituent Assembly (CA). And it has done all this under the radical banner of Maoist communism — advocating a fresh attempt at socialism and a classless society around the world.

People in Nepal call these revolutionaries the Maobadi.

Another remarkable thing is the silence surrounding all this. There has been very little reporting about the intense moments now unfolding in Nepal, or about the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) that stand at their center. Meanwhile, the nearby Tibetan uprisings against abuses by China's government got non-stop coverage.

There are obvious reasons for this silence. The Western media isn't thrilled when people in one of the world's poorest countries throw their support behind one of the world's most radical movements.

But clearly many alternative news sources don't quite know what to make of the Nepali revolution. The Maobadi's mix of communist goals and non-dogmatic methods disturb a lot of leftist assumptions too. When the CPN(Maoist) launched an armed uprising in 1996, some people thought these were outdated tactics. When the CPN(Maoist) suspended armed combat in 2006 and entered an anti-monarchist coalition government, some people assumed they would lose their identity to a corrupt cabal. When the Maoists press their current anti-feudal program, some people think they are forgetting about socialism.

But silent skepticism is a wrong approach. The world needs to be watching Nepal. The stunning Maoist victory in the April elections was not, yet, the decisive victory over conservative forces. The Maobadi are at the center of the political stage but they have not yet defeated or dismantled the old government's army. New tests of strength lie ahead.

The Maoists of Nepal aren't. Thus a opposition movement any more – they are tackling the very different problems of leading a society through a process of radical change. They are maneuvering hard to avoid a sudden crushing defeat at the hands of powerful armies. As a result, the Maobadi of Nepal are carrying out tactics for isolating their internal rivals, broadening their appeal, and neutralizing external enemies.

All this looks bewildering seen up close. This world has been through a long, heartless stretch without much radicalism or revolution. Most people have never seen what it looks like when a popular communist revolution reaches for power.

Let's break the silence by listing four reasons for looking closely at Nepal.

Reason #1

Here are communists who have discarded rigid thinking, but not their radicalism.

Leaders of the CPN(Maoist) say they protect the living revolution "from the revolutionary phrases we used to memorize."

The Maobadi took a fresh and painstakingly detailed look at their society. They identified which conditions and forces imposed the horrific poverty on the people. They developed creative methods for connecting deeply with the discontent and highest hopes of people. They have generated great and growing influence over the last fifteen years.

To get to the brink of power, this movement fused and alternated different forms of struggle. They started with a great organizing drive, followed by launching a guerrilla war in 1996, and then entering negotiations in 2006. They created new revolutionary governments in remote base areas over ten years, and followed up with a political offensive to win over new urban support. They have won victory in the special election in April, and challenged their foot-dragging opponents by threatening to launch mass mobilizations in the period ahead. They reached out broadly, without abandoning their armed forces or their independent course.

The Maobadi say they have the courage "to climb the unexplored mountain." They insist that communism needs to be reconceived. They believe popular accountability may prevent the emergence of arrogant new elites. They reject the one-party state and call for a socialist process with multi-party elections. They question whether a standing army will serve a new Nepal well, and advocate a system of popular militias. And they want to avoid concentrating their hopes in

one or two leaders-for-life, but instead will empower a rising new generation of revolutionary successors.

Nepal is in that bottom tier of countries called the "fourth world" – most people there suffer in utter poverty. It is a world away from the developed West, and naturally the political solutions of the Nepali Maoists' may not apply directly to countries like the U.S. or Britain. But can't we learn from the freshness they bring to this changing world?

Will their reconception of communism succeed? It is still impossible to know. But their attempt itself already has much to teach.

Reason #2

Imagine Nepal as a Fuse Igniting India

Nepal is such a marginalized backwater that it is hard to imagine its politics having impact outside its own borders. The country is poor, landlocked, remote and only the size of Arkansas. Its 30 million people live pressed between the world's most populous giants, China and India.

But then consider what Nepal's revolution might mean for a billion people in nearby India.

A new Nepal would have a long open border with some of India's most impoverished areas. Maoist armed struggle has smoldered in those northern Indian states for decades – with roots among Indian dirt farmers. Conservative analysts sometimes speak of a "red corridor" of Maoist-Naxalite guerrilla zones running through central India, north to south, from the Nepali border toward the southern tip.

Understanding the possibilities, Nepal's Maobadi made a bold proposal: that the revolutionary movements across South Asia should consider merging their countries after overthrowing their governments and creating a common regional federation. The Maobadi helped form the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia (CCOM-POSA) in 2001, which brought together ten different revolutionary groupings from throughout the region.

A future revolutionary government in Nepal will have a hard time surviving alongside a hostile India. It could face demands, crippling embargos and perhaps even invasion. But at the very same time, such a revolu-

tion could serve as an inspiration and a base area for revolution in that whole region. It could impact the world.

Reason #3

Nepal shows that a new, radically better world is possible

Marx once remarked that the revolution burrows unseen underground and then bursts into view to cheers of “Well dug, old mole!” We have all been told that radical social change is impossible. Rebellion against this dominant world order has often seemed marked by backward-looking politics, xenophobia, lowered sights and Thihadism. And yet, here comes that old mole popping up in Nepal — offering a startling glimpse of how people can transform themselves and their world.

Some of the world’s poorest and most oppressed people have set out in the Nepali highlands to remake everything around them — through armed struggle, political power, and collective labor. Farming people, who are often half-starved and illiterate have formed peoples courts and early agricultural communes. Wife beating and child marriage are being challenged. Young men and women have Thoined the revolutionary army to defeat their oppressors. There is defiance of arranged marriage and a blossoming of “love matches,” even between people of different castes. There is a reThection of religious bigotry and the traditions of a Hindu monarchy. The 40 ethnic groups of Nepal are negotiating new relations based on equality and a sharing of political power.

All this is like a wonderful scent upon the wind. You are afraid to turn away, unless it might suddenly disappear.

Reason #4

When people dare to make revolution – they must not stand alone

These changes would have been unthinkable, if the CPN(Maoist) had not dared to launch a revolutionary war in 1996. And their political plan became reality because growing numbers of people dared to throw

their lives into the effort. It is hard to exaggerate the hope and courage that has gripped people.

Events may ultimately roll against those hopes. This revolution in Nepal may yet be crushed or even betrayed from within. Such dangers are inherent and inevitable in living revolutions.

If the Maobadi pursue new leaps in their revolutionary process, they will likely face continuing attacks from India, backed by the U.S. The CPN(Maoist) has long been (falsely!) labeled “terrorists” by the U.S. government. They are portrayed as village bullies and exploiters of child-soldiers by some human rights organizations. Western powers have armed Nepal’s pro-royal National army with modern weapons. A conservative mass movement in Nepal’s fertile Terai agricultural area has been encouraged by India and Hindu fundamentalists.

Someone needs to spread the word of what is actually going on. It would be intolerable if U.S.-backed destabilization and suppression went unopposed in the U.S. itself.

Here it is: A little-known revolution in Nepal.

Who will we tell about it? What will we learn from it? What will we do about it?

Learning from the Maobadi

Posted at KasamaProject.org on March 30, 2009

By *J.B. Connors*

In June 2006, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) wrote a letter to RCP responding to criticisms. In the last week, attention has been given on this site to critiquing the dogmatic method of those RCP criticisms.

But we really need to focus a bit on what the Nepali Maoists are actually saying (and doing) — which in many ways is much more interesting than dissecting (yet again) the complaints of dogmatists. Our look at the Maobadi needs to be a thoughtful and critical one, not naïve cheerleading or wishful thinking. We need a clear idea of what they represent — in order that we can build broad understanding of this important revolution, and also so we can ourselves learn from the positive and negative of this experience as it unfolds.

Fresh Eyes on a Burning Issue

The CPN(M) (aka Maobadi) takes some pains to make clear what problem they are working on: how to lay the basis in the way they come to power for continuing the revolution while they are in power. They do not want to enter power with a narrow base. This is part of a larger strategy to prevent the corrosion and reversal of the revolution.

The CPN(M) writes:

“History is a witness that the proletarian class had succeeded in establishing its power in almost one-third of the globe, with the breath-taking sacrifice of millions in the twentieth century.... But questions have come up as to why those proletarian powers turned into their opposites without any bloodshed, right after the demise or capture of the main leadership? Why did Comrade Stalin fail to control the emergence of revisionists from within the Party he had led, despite that he did his best, including forceful suppression against them? Why did the CPC under Mao’s leadership, despite that it launched the Cultural Revolution, fail to stop revisionist Deng and his clique from grabbing power after his demise?.... These and alike are the ques-

tions for which we are trying to find correct answers. Only cursing the revisionists does not solve the problem.”

The Nepali communists are posing questions that all communists face — the questions handed us by the last century. What laid the basis for the reversal of the revolutions in Russia and China? How can the popular basis for socialism be more firm, more popular, more conscious, more sustained, more engaged? How do we struggle against capitalist restoration without producing a repressive atmosphere that downpresses the revolutionary people and weakens the emergence of successors?

The need to do better than previous revolutions underscores the need to break with previous models of socialism. This is nothing new:

The revolution Lenin led was very different than the Paris Commune. Mao had to disobey the Comintern to make a revolution in China. The “blueprint” that was the Russian revolution did not fit China. Mao’s party had to analyze the society that was China and freely create how to make the revolution there based on the situation of China.

These two communist revolutions were lost after a great leader passed. Stalin died in the early 1950s and the final reversal of the Soviet revolution was soon completed. Mao died in 1976 and the revolution in China was reversed in a coup.

In the shock following the restoration of capitalism in China, Bob Avakian said:

“Who will be Mao Zedong’s successors? ...We will be Mao’s successors in our millions and hundreds of millions.”

I thought then this marked a solution to the problem.

Not that there won’t be irreplaceable leaders, but that the challenge is to broaden the revolution. So that at time of crisis and loss, real social ferment has happened to the point where there is a real possibility of new leaderships leading on the basis of real, active, conscious revolutionary mass support. But this would only be possible if the whole society were engaged in this

social ferment and if advanced sections of the people are themselves stepping up to the plate.

The CPN(M) is not bullied into a dogmatic narrowing of choices. And for daring to try out a new thought they are catching a lot of shit. The CPN(M) makes this point:

“Memorizing things from books and interpreting for hours and hours on their basis is one thing, and applying them in living practice is qualitatively another. Frankly speaking, it is very easy not to commit any mistakes in strategy. But it is extremely difficult to take up and apply appropriate tactics in the service of strategy. It is dangerous too. Where there is more danger, there is more opportunity, this is dialectics.”

No Simple Models – Particularities Demand Creativity

The RCP writes in their March 2008 letter:

“The positions and policies of the CPN(M) over the last two years are, or should be, recognizable as a departure from basic Marxist-Leninist-Maoist (MLM) principles and the very basis on which our Movement was formed.”

This appeal to orthodoxy involves a conservative clinging to formulas and a dogmatic adherence of self-invented principles.

Bob Avakian once knew better. Thirty years ago, he wrote in Mao’s Immortal Contributions:

“It can be further said that it is even a law of revolution, and especially of proletarian revolution, that in order for it to succeed in any particular country, the struggle in that country and those leading it will have to depart from and even oppose certain particular conceptions or previous practices which have come to be invested with the stature of ‘established norms’ in the revolutionary movement.”

By contrast, the CPN(M) says that it is easy to be “right” in sweeping statements about goals and strategies. This is because it is harder to actually solve the problems of *making* the revolution in the real world — winning over the people, training the revolutionary

cores, defeating the powerful enemies, winning the actual battles, neutralizing the actual middle forces, developing and implementing actual solutions and so on.

There are no recipes. Each revolution will present itself in a different way for many reasons: no two countries are the same, in a single countries conditions change in startling ways. The international situation and the very structures of the global capitalist system are undergoing rapid changes.

Tactics and alignments that might be useful to begin a revolution might be wrong at a different stage. And every decision is life-and-death.

Over and over through the revolutionary process there will be arrays of choices with an uncertain result. The pros and cons must be weighed in every case and every time with the possibility of uplifting victory or demoralizing defeat. Each time a crucial test is passed a new one is presented.

If you are skiing down a mountain you make a combination of left and right turns at high speed and different intervals, depending on the terrain. You could never take the combination of turns exactly as they were made on one mountain and replicate the turns exactly the same way on another and hope to get down the mountain alive.

This is the question of how we approach models in a non-dogmatic way. Just because one combination of tactics works in one situation and produces a revolution, does not mean the exact same combination of activities would work in another. When skiing the underlying principles of gravity and friction would remain constant, but how you wound your way down a mountain would have to vary from slope to slope.

Lenin elaborated this point:

“To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie...and to renounce in advance any change of tack, or any utilization of a conflict of interests (even if temporary) among one’s enemies, or any conciliation or compromise with possible allies (even if they are temporary, unstable, vacillating or conditional allies)... is it not like making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain and refusing in advance ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace one’s steps, or ever to abandon a course once selected,

and to try others?... 'Political activity is not like the pavement of Nevsky Prospekt' (the well-kept, broad and level pavement of the perfectly straight principal thoroughfare of St. Petersburg)... It is folly, not revolutionism, to deprive ourselves in advance of any freedom of action, openly to inform an enemy who is at present better armed than we are whether we shall fight him, and when. To accept battle at a time when it is obviously advantageous to the enemy, but not to us, is criminal; political leaders of the revolutionary class are absolutely useless if they are incapable of "changing tack, or offering conciliation and compromise" in order to take evasive action in a patently disadvantageous battle."

Even back when the RCP supported the revolution in Nepal, in the 1990s, they exaggerated the extent to which the Nepali Maoists simply adopted Mao's strategic approach from China. In fact the Nepalis have said all along that they developed a unique, new, hybrid approach that

(a) combined insurrection with protracted peoples war, and

(b) that they deliberately alternated political offensives with military offenses.

A political offensive made the initial insurrection possible, the peoples war made a new political offensive possible, this current period of political work may be making a new victorious military offensive possible.

By contrast, the RCP has tried to impose a verdict on the world communist movement that you can't pause and then restart a peoples war once you've started it.

It is worth asking how exactly this became some supposed law of revolution. Even Mao himself stopped and restarted his people's war several times — that's why there were two civil wars in China separated by a substage in which the agrarian revolution was temporarily called off. That is why there was a major pause like the Chungking negotiations over post-WW2 coalition government, which included the dismantling of some base areas and shifting of revolutionary armies in some major temporary concessions.

Now that said, does this mean that the Nepalis are making the right decisions? We will see.

The Maobadi are engaged in a risky social experiment. They are trying some novel approaches to the riddles posed. And what is wrong with revolutionary experiment?! Even if it fails? Fear of failure leads to paralysis.

When making revolution, there are no guarantees and no proscribed path to power. There are not only two models (as some claim). Or to put it another way: If at this point in history the proletariat had made twenty revolutions, perhaps there would obviously be twenty "models," meaning we might have realized there are no fixed models.

The complaint of the RCP is not that the Nepalis have a new reconception — but that the Maobadi rejected Bob Avakian's reconception. Without Avakian's synthesis, they insist, you will inevitably tumble into swamp or abyss. Their theory greatly exaggerates such necessity, or what the RCP calls "the logic of the logic." U.S.-Soviet rivalry would inevitably lead to world war in the 1980s. The rise of the Religious Right would inevitably lead toward a civil war over theocracy in the U.S. and so on. Necessary outcomes that never arrived.

Their main criticisms is that the Nepali advocacy of multiparty democracy under socialism, and their use of the anti-monarchical upsurge as a transitional stage must lead to capitalism and capitulation.

The RCP had written:

"We feel that to make the most essential question one of formal democracy, and its expression in elections, competing political parties, and the like, is a serious mistake and will strengthen tendencies toward the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, or its outright overthrow by counter-revolutionaries."

The Maobadi answered:

"We don't think the question is as simple as you have placed here. Everyone knows there was no multiparty competition and the like, in Russia and China, which according to you is the main source of strengthening tendencies towards the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Then why did Russia and China fail to sustain the revolution and continue with the dictatorship of the

proletariat until communism?... Multiparty competition is not the only way by which imperialism can play a role to reverse the revolution. We request comrades to focus the debate on what positive and negative consequences it can lead to if such a competition is put into practice under the proletarian dictatorship, but not to reject it outright by accusing it as formal democracy of the bourgeoisie.”

The One-Party State: Why Is That A Given?

Bob Avakian puts forward his theory of broadening mass support for socialism: i.e., solid core with a lot of elasticity. This is essentially a theory of monolithic Stalin-style “solid core” leading society, a tight singularity around the great leader, plus the “elasticity” of more “vibrant dissent and wrangling.” This is essentially a re-imagining of the one-party state — centered on a promise of less repression aimed at intellectuals and the people generally.

Mao’s view of how to broaden the base to opposed revisionist takeover included having the masses go through mass experience of revolutionary storms. Avakian’s theory downplays that element. There are few mass storms in what he’s written over the last few years. What you have is the all-knowing solid core telling the elastic periphery what to do — there is even an expression, “the god-like role.”

This is really not the needed radical break from methods of the 20th century. And this theory of “solid core with elasticity” is ironically a major theoretical step backward from Mao’s own practice of waves of mass struggle pressing the revolution forward.

And isn’t our revolution, a communist revolution, a conscious revolution? If we are not constantly trying to draw the masses more into understanding the world around them, how to change it, what are we doing? If leaders and representatives can’t put themselves before the masses for criticism and judgement, then what are we doing?

We should be asking ourselves if there would be a different basis of support for the revolution after seizing if different tactics were used before it happened. What are the possibilities in that?

I believe communists need to dig into these theoretical and practical controversies around socialist democracy — in a way that I won’t even scratch here. But surely we have to acknowledge that our future socialist movements have no reason take the one-party state as a settled verdict — as if we can’t see its problems, and as if we can’t imagine any alternatives.

Roots of Restoration

The RCP emphasizes the restoration of capitalism in the “last battles” of coup-like moments (1956 in the USSR, and 1976 in China). This is such a fixation, that after forty years, the RCP has still not bothered to make an analysis of the 1930s, and the roots of restoration in the repressions and conservative winds of that period.

But the Nepalis are not satisfied with that method of focusing on coups:

“...this kind of interpretation doesn’t represent dialectical materialism, because it negates the inevitability of quantitative development for a qualitative leap. There was a material basis mainly in the superstructure for the counter-revolution to take place, which was constantly developing from within the socialist state itself.... Had there been no such material basis, counter-revolution could not have taken place in a single stroke on the wish of revisionists.”

“[T]his kind of argument leads to the conclusion that it is the revisionists alone who are responsible for counter-revolution. This way of thinking does not go into the depth of the problem but skips the question of why revolutionaries failed to prevent the emergence of revisionists from within a revolutionary party. Revolutionaries must not remain self-content only by cursing revisionists for the damaging consequences, but should emphasize more what mistakes they made in the past and what measures they should take to correct them at present. The trend of cursing others for a mistake and enjoying oneself from such acts does not represent either a proletarian responsibility or culture.”

The Nepali Maoists are pointing out that the seeds of the counter-revolution in China developed along with the revolution.

The RCP has argued all my communist life that the loss in China and Russia was a defeat, not a failure. The other (revisionist/bourgeois) side just proved stronger. Okay, I suppose that can be true, but it's not a very complete answer. We also have to look at the methods of the revolutionaries — to understand how we can do better. It's more than just ideologically identifying and avoiding revisionism.

The Maobadi are saying that it is not enough to declare something as wrong or revisionist. They want us to work on the “question of why revolutionaries failed to prevent the emergence of revisionists from within a revolutionary party.”

The Maobadi say:

“The trend of cursing others for a mistake and enjoying oneself from such acts does not represent either a proletarian responsibility or culture.”

The Mass Line — Leading the People Through Schools of Revolution

The Nepalis have talked about the transformation of contraction being its principle aspect. This means you work to win people over, not eliminate them or silence them.

Is it not the case that they are trying to walk the masses through these various forms of power? So that they understand for themselves what the limitations are and will demand more. Isn't that what happened in the Russian revolution? The masses from April to October tried every form of power before insurrection. And there was a period of dual power in the USSR also a period where there were the workers' Soviets holding and wielding power along side the Provisional government.

The Maobadi have created a situation where they are formally running the government of a state they have not yet overthrown, and where there are still two fundamentally different armies confronting and coexisting in ways that mean the situation of final power has not yet been decided. This is not similar to the con-

frontation of the Soviets with the Provisional government in Russia — but it does have major elements of “dual power.” The RCP implies that the Nepali theory of “transition” at this point is inherently and simply a theory of peaceful transition of the bourgeois state through structural reforms and a capitalist period — but this is a misreading and misrepresentation of the Maoists' position. Certainly there are significant and vocal forces among them who see “transition” as meaning a period of dual power where the conditions for a final seizure of power are being hatched. And it comes out in some important ways in the increasing question within the Maoist press over whether this period of “transition” may now be coming to an end.

Here in this country, we have a legacy of 30 years of dogmatism within the communist movement to work our way through. And with that background, it is disconcerting for many to see someone else make progress at this.

The goal of our movement is to have the people emancipate themselves — in the protracted revolutionary movement toward communism. We want to start now to imagine and create the ways of doing this. And one lesson I've drawn from Nepal is that this can't be done by proscribed paths or familiar formulas.

And if a Showdown Comes in Nepal.....?

Posted at KasamaProject.org on April 22, 2009

By Mike Ely

Jaroslav writes a critique of the revolutionaries in Nepal. He rejects the idea that they may be working to show large numbers of people, through living political practice, that there is a need for a new revolution:

“I am not saying [the people] had all the education they need for seizure of power, I’m saying that what UCPN(M) is doing now is not contributing to any further education. Either people get it & it is repetition, or they don’t & it’s not helping.

This is a remarkable claim. I want to use this remark as a jumping off point — for some comments that are not aimed at anyone personally. They are aimed at a mix of dogmatism and deep cynicism has (unfortunately) paralyzed too many people who sincerely want radical change.

The Riptides of Revolutionary Opportunities

Let’s just step back a second, and think about how revolutionaries come to know the mood of the people within an emerging revolutionary situation — when the people are not yet ready to strike and when exactly they become ready. Think of how carefully revolutionaries need to evaluate which sections of the people are needed for victory, and how the thinking of those sections are changing. Victory and defeat can hinge on this. In such moments the mass line has heightened importance — These are not the politics of small propaganda groups, but of moving millions of people into position to act (and fight).

The hard core needs to be ready (mentally) to move decisively— literally to die and kill for the next advance — and they need to be *organized* to act with great unity, energy and determination (something that, if you think about it, revolutionaries are not always able to do). The middle forces need to be swinging toward the revolution (or at least toward “friendly neutrality”). And the

reactionary forces need to be “over a barrel” — exposed, divided, far from the high moral ground.

This is political combat of a particularly close kind — where society is becoming highly politicized and all kinds of awakening forces are scrambling to decide what to do.

One of the things that happened in Nepal over the last few years, is that the focus of the revolutionary struggle (the monarchy) was overthrown — and a series of changes and political processes put into place. There was a tremendous (even giddy) air of expectation and hope — that these processes would create a new Nepal. And while there was widespread understanding that the Maoist-led peoples war had played a tremendous role in toppling the king — that does not automatically mean that the people are ready to launch a *new* potentially difficult civil war — *in the real world, people don’t support initiating civil war, until they become convinced* that it is absolutely necessary to move forward on their most heartfelt needs and demands— i.e. until they have a sense that a stalemate has emerged, that the die-hards are determined to prevent progress, that the reactionaries will not bend to pressure, that sinister forces are preparing some deadly counter-revolutionary stroke that may shift events in a horrific direction....

And in every revolution there have come such intense periods, where the revolution has gathered a significant force, but for actual victory (and for a chance of stable political power after victory) they need to win over and lead sections beyond their core — sections of people who were previously beyond their reach, people not naturally sympathetic to the communists’ core ideologies and long range goals.

This is often difficult. The German Communist Party did not succeed in doing that (in the 1920s and 30s) and was trapped in a kind of political ghetto with millions of supporters but an frustrating inability to form broader alliances for the defeat of Hitler and the seizure of power.

Another example: I won’t detail the complex efforts of Lenin and his party between April and October of 1917 — but they started in a situation where “everyone” supported the bourgeois Provisional Government

that had replaced the Tsar in February... and it took a series of shocking events and the active exposure of this government's determination to continue Russia's participation in World War 1 to turn the people against it.

And, it has to be said that the process was not just a matter of winning over middle forces to the need for a second revolution — it was also a process of winning over *the communist party itself* to that new leap. When Lenin arrived in Petrograd (in April 1917) the communist leadership in the city had adopted a public position of "critical support" for the very government that Lenin intended to overthrow. When Lenin announced he would plan a second revolution — his own second-tier leadership literally questioned his sanity and his grasp of the situation — and publicly distanced themselves from those views. On the eve of the insurrection, Lenin faced a revolt on his own central committee — with two prominent Bolsheviks even denounced plans for the October insurrection *in public* (and warning the reactionaries of what was coming).

So there was a very concrete political process in which the revolutionary forces helped expose the nature of very specific, and very new political arrangements (centered on the Provisional government) which were ruling in the name of democracy and the anti-Tsarist February revolution. And they hammered on the three main points "Bread, Peace and Land" — which represented the most urgent demands of the people, and which (it came to be understood) the people could only get by overthrowing the Provisional government under communist leadership.

In China, the people emerged from World War 2 (and the occupation by Japan) quite devastated and exhausted — and the onus of launching a new, second civil war had to be put clearly on the reactionaries and their foreign backers. And so Mao went through a protracted process of negotiations for coalition government. And here too, this was not just for the "education" of the more backward — but also to consolidate his own party (and the larger progressive world opinion) behind an understanding of why a new war (against the reactionary nationalist government) was needed and just.

There is no formula for this kind of approach to the actual seizure of power. It is described as an art — and involves manipulating very specific and rapidly changing dynamics. It requires an intimate understanding of the "mood of the people" — not just in general... but the specific moods of different sections of the people, the soldiers of the other side, the spirit of the communists themselves, the relations between reactionaries and their social base and so on. It is not just a matter of "educating" people in some pedagogic fashion — but of creatively working to create a fighting mood among the people (around your organized core), and working to put the enemy in a position of isolation, confusion and internal disarray.

If you think seriously about what such situations are like, if you have a sense of the historical nature of such transitions to the final "coup de grace" of revolution — then you will get a sense of how wrong it would be to think you can sit a world away and judge the effectiveness of tactics seen and unseen.

What It Means to Support a Revolution

We should be clear on what we know, and what we don't.

And one thing we *know* is that this revolutionary cause in Nepal is just. It has drawn in millions of people. It has built itself an army. It has captured the imagination of the youth. It has embodied the hopes of some of the earth's most impoverished and isolated people. And this is the first time this generation has even SEEN such problems of communist revolution played out in real life.

There is a living revolution going on here — in all its complexity, mystery and unpredictability.

And we should know that we need to take a clear political stand of support for this.

Sure we will "wait and see" in one sense — in the sense that *everyone* "waits and sees" how great events turn out — including their direct participants.

But in another sense, it would be wrong (and I'm tempted to say a criminal betrayal of internationalism) to SIT BACK while we "wait and see."

Here again I need to quote Jaroslav, who writes:

“In fact this uncertainty is extremely important to note for what it is. Because of uncertainty about their positive progress, we cannot say that what they are doing is a good example or not. Therefore I especially disagree with any calls to ‘learn from Nepal’ or the like. Also, after so many fake ‘revolutionary’ organisations in history, I think the burden of proof lies with the revolutionary, not with the skeptic observer.”

This is just wrong on every level.

First we will learn from Nepal no matter how it turns out. And I think (on a deeper ideological level) that we need a worldview that is prepared to learn from all kinds of events and people. And, let’s not forget: There is a terrible legacy that thinks “learning” is a “one to many” process where “we preach and you listen.”

There is a tremendous amount to learn from living revolutions — and this discussion is one sign of that. This is true even when they lose (which is often the outcome). The Nepalis talk about learning from Peru and Nicaragua — and they are right.

Again: A whole generation has never seen such a revolutionary process before — so in many ways, many sincere revolutionaries no real idea how to look at and evaluate what might be going on — and have little sense of how communists should act when a precious revolution actually emerges.

As for this argument that Nepali revolutionaries somehow have a “burden of proof” (that they owe TO US?!) Well it is rather startling. Is our role really to play “skeptical observer” when people fight and die making revolution? No.

Here is a place where (with sacrifice and consciousness) millions of people have made communism and revolution a living political question. The revolutionaries and the oppressed of Nepal now have the “burden” of finding their way to revolution and socialism — through incredible obstacles.

And shouldn’t we be asking what “burden” WE have?

And really, we have seen here on our site, examples of the view that revolution is really unlikely. That they are all bourgeois anyway. That there is nothing but be-

trayal and capitalism, so why get worked up about any of it?

This is the result of some long difficult decades — but it is a view that does not reflect reality or a communist understanding of society. And there is even a view that says “well, I want to support revolutionaries, but only once its clear they are on the right path and that they are going to win.”

With that logic, there will be no internationalism until after-the-fact — which means no internationalism at all. Imagine if the revolutionaries of the 1960s had adopted that approach to the Vietnamese revolution?

When the Paris Commune broke out, Marx had all kinds of questions and concerns about strategic and tactical decisions being made in Paris.... but he also understood that the world was seeing its first revolutionary communist *attempt* at power, and he responded with all the partisan energy that such a moment decided. It was the only revolution of its kind for Marx’s generation — these were a few months that came and went quickly, but left everything changed.

Let’s confront the reality: A very destructive dogmatism has worked to demobilize revolutionaries in the U.S. And it is a dogmatism that is linked to a deep pessimistic mood of failure about the chances for revolution. And meanwhile a depressed rightism has led other sections of activists to assume that revolution isn’t even on the radar screen of our times.

It is as if the whole world now has a “burden of proof” to show some “skeptical observers” that it is not just a big pile of shit.

And this dogmatism is not just a matter of a few recent “letters” calling the Nepalis “revisionists” — it is a matter of years of training in very mechanical and idealist thinking, where communism has been severed from any sense of living people and living politics. And one of the hallmarks of this line is a very distorted and mistaken use of a famous Lenin quote:

““There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is — working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one’s own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympa-

thy, and material aid) this struggle, this, and only this, line, in every country without exception.”

We have here a reduction of theory and politics to a matter of mere formulas (snatched out of context). And this particular misuse has encouraged a narrowness toward the world’s revolutions that has become a *defacto jettisoning of internationalism*. An absence of very basic solidarity. A deadening of any spirit of celebration.

Internationalism was once a proud hallmark of revolutionaries here in the U.S. The revolutionary movement in the U.S. was literally born and then reborn in connection with international events (the Russian revolution, the war in Vietnam, the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles in Africa, and so on). And to see revolutionaries and communists made passive, suspicious, incurious, and crudely dismissive in their reactions to international events is truly shocking and intolerable.

We need to turn this around. We need to fight through these line struggles with some energy and speed. We need to understand (clearly) the difference between supporting a living revolution and endorsing every tactic of distant revolutionaries. We need to really understand that something remarkable is unfolding in South Asia (both India and Nepal) that radical and progressive people in the U.S. need to know about — and quickly. And those of us who are freeing ourselves from this deadening pessimism and dogmatism need to hook up and get to work.

I don’t know what will happen in Nepal — but there is a chance (a chance!) that a showdown may be brewing between the Maoists and the Army. If that is so, if Nepal is about to get kicked into the headlines over the summer, and if the revolutionaries enter a life and death struggle — then what are we prepared to do? And what do we need to do now, to be prepared when the big events hit?

To be clear, I am not predicting a specific showdown in Nepal. I do not know what will come now. I do not know what is happening behind the scenes. I don’t know how well the advocates of revolution are doing in their struggle with the advocates of caution.

And I don’t expect the Nepali revolutionaries to explain themselves to us in advance.

If there are people who just want to passively “wait and see” — then fine, let them do that — and perhaps they will at least agree not to snipe at every sign of our own action and life.

But mainly, I am saying that the rest of us have a responsibility to act with some energy. So we need to be preparing (with materials, networks, common understandings, plans, articulate explanations, etc.) to act. We were not that active in the days of last year’s Constituent Assembly election — when we could have reached many new forces. We blew that opening.

We may have new opportunities ahead to speak about communist revolution to far wider audiences than we have long seen. Will we be ready this time?

Badiou & Nepal: Battlegrounds Over Communist Reconception

Posted at KasamaProject.org on April 5, 2009

Nando wrote the following piece as a commentary on Stephen Mauldin's Badiou 101 for the RCP,USA.

By Nando Sims

Clarity writes a single sentence comment:

"It should be made crystal clear that Badiou has explicitly renounced any adherence to Marxism as a system of thought.

This raises a question of fact, but also a more interesting question of method.

On the question of fact, David gets right to the point:

"Whether Badiou has - explicitly - renounced Marxism as a system of thought, I don't know. It is obvious however that his that his thought is only tangentially related to what traditionally has been known as 'Marxism.'"

Of course, that depends on how you define Marxist. Some suggest that our definition of Marxism should allow Badiou's work to fit inside. But for now, my reading suggests that Badiou's writings are not an elaboration, application, or development of Marxism-as-I-understand-it.

Badiou is developing a different philosophy — emerging out of a history of Maoism. This is a communist theory, but seems clearly not Marxist.

Next Question: What Do We Have to Learn?

Now that initial observation still leaves us with the less obvious question of method. What do we DO with a communist philosophy that is not Marxist?

And why, for example, does Clarity think this has to be "crystal clear"?

As a child, I would come back from play and sometimes have just met a new friend. My European grand-

mother (who would visit from time to time) would always ask "Is he Protestant or Catholic?" She thought it had to be crystal clear. She never said *why* she asked that question. But that too was crystal clear. For her, some crucial lines were already drawn (and had been drawn for centuries).

For me the more important question is: What do we have to learn from this work? What do communists and revolutionaries have to learn from this non-Marxist communist philosopher?

And it is (of course) just a subset of the larger question: What do we have to learn from anyone?

And there is a related more political question: What openings can a non-Marxist communist philosopher help make, what space and hearing in this world can he help generate, for communist revolution generally?

There is one position that says (simply): We have nothing to learn.

It works like this: We have our form of Marxism, it answers the key questions of philosophy (and politics and more), and if someone backs up, and over several decades tries to make a new run at communist philosophy, we have nothing to learn here. On the contrary, it is harmful. It is inherently a false start from the beginning. And to the extent that it comes up with something new, different from Marxism — well, it can only be false, misleading, distracting, confusing.

Why talk about Badiou, when there is so much within Marxism we have not talked about yet? Why welcome young intellectuals coming to a form of communism through Badiou (it is asked jealously) when we have our guys who are so clearly underappreciated?

It is the kind of framework that (I assume) leads Arthur to write after John's post:

"I haven't read Badiou or Zizek and scanning previous related threads has not inclined me towards taking the trouble. This review does convince me to at least take a look, though its still not a high priority for me and will take some time."

And then to bob up half a day later and write:

"I've now spent a few hours on Badiou and Zizek (mainly Zizek because less boring). Not

convinced the quickie does extract an essence. Equally unconvinced there's much of an essence to extract at all."

(It is like saying, "I've been in Thailand half an hour now. Christ, this place sucks." Or, "I spent the afternoon studying Buddhism, why would anyone embrace this stuff?" Or "I read an essay on Marx in high school, what a loser!" I particularly enjoy that Arthur spend a couple of hours with both Badiou *and* Zizek — why waste time when you can squeeze out two verdicts in one afternoon!)

And I imagine many people reading this are aware of how influential that kind of closed thinking is among people who consider themselves communist rebels (and even "scientific"). It is why Clarity didn't feel the need to say more than one sentence. He didn't need supplement his statement of "the fact" with any discussion of its implication — because the implication is in the air, in the religious training.

And this is why (I believe) Stephen sweetly asks "Do you think there is a 'Marxism' that is a closed system of thought?"

Because if you are embedded within a closed system (even if you label it "Marxism"), then all you need to know about Badiou is whether he is your kind of Marxist or not. *What else do we really need to know? Right?*

If your playmate is the wrong religion, no good can come of this.

Blinking in the Bright Light of the Outside World

I have a rather different view.

When I left the RCP, I did not know who Badiou was. I don't believe i had heard of him. I had heard of Zizek for only one reason: he had written an introduction to a book featuring Avakian. Obviously I popped out of a political culture where a very narrow sliver of Marxism is promoted as a closed system.

After spending more than a few hours over the last years reading (not just one or two philosophers — but generally catching up on a whole world of thinking) *like I was some communist Rip Van Winkle...* I discovered (yes) that Badiou is not a Marxist (that took about fif-

teen minutes). I also discovered that I am rather unlikely to become a "Badiouist" in any sense — i have some rather deep differences in both politics and philosophy with his work (which emerge in a primitive way at my still primitive level of engagement).

But I have also found parts of his work, insights, new ways of thinking, approaches — that are very thought-provoking and perhaps valuable. I don't have final verdicts on this (my thoughts are still being "provoked") and I am in no particular rush to reach final verdicts. I am much more in the stage of absorbing and thinking about this — and preparing to discuss here on Kasama.

But I am far enough along that i want to deal with this question of method.

Is This a Matter of Privilege?

Bob H writes:

"I'm curious why the Kasama site has given such prominence to Badiou and Zizek. While I find Zizek's essays thought-provoking and original, I don't get a sense of a major paradigm shift in theory. Is it because Avakian has dismissed "the Derridas" that continental thought attracts ex-RCPers?...So I'm curious about the basis for the rather privileged position that Zizek and Badiou get from the site moderators as key towards a new synthesis. It doesn't seem to be because of a superiority of predictive or explanatory power of their theoretical structures. Or am I missing something obvious here?"

This is a fair question.

First, I think there is a misunderstanding: I don't believe there is any intention to "privilege" either Zizek or Badiou.

What we are fighting for here is merely the right to creatively engage the thinking of our time. And this is a fight against a very cloistered and dogmatic conception of Marxism and of how Marxism develops. It is a fight that is necessary merely to clear the ground for a serious discussion of what our communist theory should be, and what role the works of *many different contributors* will be.

That fight has broken out both over Badiou, and over the Nepali Maoists — and so (here on Kasama) we are addressing larger issues by discussing the rather sordid assault on Badiou and the Nepali Maoists.

And (to be clear) we are addressing the polemics of the RCP not because they (or their specific polemics) are influential. They are not. But because there is *within those polemics* an articulation of inherited dogmatic views that *have been* and are quite influential among communists world wide (and here I don't mean just Maoists either).

There is a whole legacy of narrowness that needs to break down if we are to make any progress.

And it is not surprising that the fight has broken out over Badiou and the Nepali Maoists:

Badiou has opened a door, inviting a new generation of intellectuals to re-engage the “Communist Hypothesis” in the midst of a sudden global capitalist crisis. And the Nepali Maoists have emerged as the first communist movement to congeal a broad popular support and bring its revolution to the brink of (possibly) seizing power.

The first reintroduces philosophical consideration of communism in the public realms of theory, and the second reintroduces a political communism with the dignity of immediate and practical actuality.

And, for dogmatic communists who have lived cut off from creativity or mass engagement — all of this gives rise to confusion, fear and even jealousy.

We will have to engage both Badiou and the Nepali Maoists critically (and many others I won't list...) in the process of forging a new communist coherency. We will have to engage our own inherited communism too, deeply. And the experience of socialist revolution in the 20th century (which Badiou one-sidedly considers “failure”).

And so, our momentary focus this week here on Kasama is not an attempt to stack the outcome by *privileging* a few thinkers from the start. It is a particularly sharp engagement over Badiou and the Nepali Maoists because those are two of the places this larger fight has broken out.

We will also have to engage those who have been introduced to a philosophical communism by Badiou

and Zizek and others — but who have not yet considered the necessity of fusing the “idea of communism” with the living class struggle for power and liberation.

The Bushiness of Marxism

One of the issues here is the very right to engage someone like Badiou.

In the mind of some (expressed in our discussions here and in the polemic of the RCP) Badiou and those “like” him can be easily identified as “harmful” and therefore quickly lightly. And the method is on display. And underlying this, is an assumption that there is really no need to step outside a very very narrow framework to learn and assimilate from others— and to challenge our own deeply held views.

When the history and development of communist theory is explained — its family tree often is presented as rather linear. Most family trees are bushy. But modern Marxism is described as if it is a rather straight-line descent: Marx to Engels to Lenin to Stalin to Mao (and beyond). And each thinker supposedly took the inherited Marxism of his day, and applied it to new conditions and developed a new “contribution” to the ongoing development.

And this is not just a theory of history, but a model offered to the rest of us. Because (by extension) we are supposed to take our most current, inherited-form of Marxism (as a whole, as a given, in its most advanced “synthesis”) and appreciate it, and go out and promote it (not something else). And defend it against “deviations” which always appear, like the devil, lurking at every hand, in so so many forms.

But in fact, this history and model is impoverished.

Just one place to unravel that is to ask: How much of Mao's innovations to communist theory came by bringing in traditional Chinese thinking into Marxism (especially on dialectics, but not just there)? How much of Mao's thinking was influenced by the powerful currents of pragmatism that shaped his generation of Chinese revolutionaries (in the 1920s)? And how much was Mao Zedong's synthesis a collective process?

Or another question: What was the influence of Althusser or world-system theorists on the 60s generation of American Maoists? Or of Stephen Jay Gould in the decision by some American Maoists to reject the “inevitabilism” that is so strong within inherited Marxism? Or Jorge Palacios of the Chilean Maoists — what was his contribution to the creative spots of “Conquer the World”? What was the debt to the communists of Peru on the question of building urban political base areas (a la Raucana) or the idea to treat “combativity” as a school of revolution? And what is the methodological result of not routinely making such influences explicit — in how we view the creation of communist theory?

Or let’s ask: What was the attitude of Marx and Engels toward the non-marxist thinkers of their time — Darwin, for example. They polemicized with the non-Marxist communist theorist Duhring, but hailed the non-Marxist communist philosopher Dietzgen for his independent work.

Just a few examples.... among many. But you find out that Marxism is in fact more bushy and complex in its descent — not just a linear hand-off from each genius-of-the-epoch to his successor.

And what you discover is that Marxism (at least when it is creative) is not closed — even though some of its histories (like *Mao’s Immortal Contributions*, or *Harvest of Dragons*) treat it that way — as a road with three or four main “milestones” each defined by the name of one great thinker.

And we can also ask: what happens when Marxism is treated non-creatively — as if it were a closed system?

There are anecdotes where Soviet scientists were asked to refute Bohr’s quantum physics and Einstein’s theory of relativity — because (the logic said) these theories contradict our existing version of dialectical materialism, so they must be wrong, so it is the job of communist scientists to refute them. And the implications of suggesting that they could NOT be refuted in this way were dangerous. Scientists who opposed Lysenko’s official “Marxist” (and false) theory of biology did not fare well.

You can enclose your thought in a bubble, and venture out to demand that it be made “crystal clear”

whether this or that thinker is a Marxist — because (if you are enclosed in a bubble you call “Marxism”) that is the only question that really matters, right?

What if Marx Had Not Created Marxism....?

A thought experiment: If Marx had not given communist theory a major starting foundation (if he had died as a child, for example).... what would communist theory have come to look like? If communist theory had not initially emerged in Germany (influenced by Hegel and Feuerbach and the whole stream of philosophy that Marx studied), but had (instead) emerged in say Japan, or South Africa, or China, what would it look like? If it has not emerged in a single robust form in the nineteenth century, but taken a number of sharply competing forms and philosophies..... what would our assumptions be?

There is accident and contingency in the world.

And I suspect that if communist theory had emerged somewhere else, it might have looked radically different. It still would have been (one way or another) a communist theory, it would be grappling with the same world (the same realities, the same historical epoch, the same planet, the same structures of economics and society). But it might well have looked different in many (even fundamental ways) — even while the objective nature of reality would have inevitably pulled its development toward some similar themes (classes, the nature of capitalism, the questions of transition to a new society globally, etc.)

And, in some ways, reading Badiou has been like reading a communist theory that feels as if it comes from a different water fountain. The familiar is unfamiliar, the assumed is suddenly not assumed.

Of course, that is not literally true: Badiou is part of the same broad river of philosophy that Marx swam in. And Badiou did not emerge separate from modern Marxism (but out of a long engagement with Marxism in its French Maoist forms.)

But Badiou proposes a theory of “multiple of multiples” where Marxism has posited a theory of dialectics. He has proposed a theory of event where Marxism has groped for a theory of conjuncture. He has posited

a concept of different “truth processes,” where some forms of marxism have announced a series of increasingly more scientific syntheses. (And like any work of translation — you discover that the concepts and words aren’t “equivalent” or parallel — you can’t just conceive of it as a series of comparable discrete fragments to compare and contrast.)

And, to me, this is not a binary situation where we either become Badiouists or else reject Badiou as unmarxist. (What an impoverished view of our options that is!) When Einstein emerged in physics, we were not forced to drop Marxism and become Einsteinians — and that is really not the question when we study Einstein (or string theory). And that binary view of things has (in many ways) impeded the ability of some communists to learn from developments in others spheres (like natural science) or the work of other non-Marxist thinkers in political and philosophical spheres, or even the work of Marxists who are not in the line of linear descent (how many know about Vigotsky?).

The question really is: at a moment where our particular inherited Marxisms are showing strains, and revealing some real voids and problems... what can we learn here from other engagements with communism and the revolutionary process? How do we actually learn from communism’s own history? Do we intend to have a creative approach to Marxism itself or not?

A Quiz: For Revolutionaries with Litmus Tests

Posted at KasamaProject.org on April 25, 2009

Quiz instructions:

Read the following text, then click for the questions.

For ten years, the communists and people of China waged a bitter civil war against the forces of the GMD (Guomindang - the Nationalist Party) — the political party and military that in the 1930s most represented the big landlords, reactionary warlords, corrupt bureaucrat capitalists and foreign-serving “compradors” of China.

There was the horrific massacre of workers and communists in Shanghai — as Chiang Kaishek turned his guns suddenly on his former communist allies, and sought to wipe them out. There were encirclement and suppression campaigns — where the GMD massacred the peasants who were the base of new liberated zones. There was the Long March, where Mao’s forces trekked across the broad expanse of China, fighting desperate battles constantly with pursuing GMD armies.

The Maoist forces regrouped in the remote area of Yen-an, on China’s distant northern border — and prepared themselves for the next stage of the revolution. The communists were organized on the basis of agrarian revolution — violent land reform that took property and wealth from the landlords and gave them to the people. Political power in the base areas was organized on the basis of rural Soviets — independent states flying the red flag with the hammer and sickle. The revolutionary forces were called the Red Army.

Then on September 22, 1937, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued a manifesto. They proposed as one of the “general objectives for the common struggle of the entire people” the enforcement of “democracy based on people’s rights and the convocation of the National People’s Congress in order to enact the Constitution and decide upon the plans of national salvation.”

The Communist Party Central Committee declared:

“1) The Three Peoples Principles enunciated by Dr. Sun Yatsen [the great bourgeois democrat founder of the Nationalist Party] are the paramount need of China today. This Party is ready to strive for their enforcement.

“2) This Party abandons its policy of overthrowing the Guomindang of China by force and the movement of sovietization and discontinues its policy of forced confiscation of land from landowners.

“3) This Party abolishes the present Soviet government and enforces democracy based on people’s rights in order to unify the national political machinery.

“4) This Party abolishes the Red Army, reorganizes it into the National Revolutionary Army [of the GMD], places it under the direct control of the Military Affairs Commission of the National Government, and awaits orders for mobilization to share the responsibility of resisting foreign invasion at the front.”

The next day, Generalissimo Chiang Kaishek declared:

“The various decisions embodied in the Manifesto, such as the abandonment of a policy of violence, the cessation of Communist propaganda, the abolition of the Chinese Soviet government, and the disbandment of the Red Army are all essential conditions for mobilizing our national strength in order that we may meet the menace from without and guarantee our own national existence.”

* * * * *

Quiz questions

Imagine you are a skeptical observer living in the United States in 1937, mark (on the scale of 1 to 5), mark how much you agree with the following statements:

1) I think that this group around Mao Zedong (which just took over the Communist Party in 1935) is clearly on a revisionist path.

1 2 3 4 5

2) I am very queazy about all this. Why would communists abandon their Soviet governments, and subordinate their armies to their enemies?

1 2 3 4 5

3) I think we should take a “wait and see” attitude — if they continue on this path they should get no support, if they do better we should reconsider it.

1 2 3 4 5

4) I don't know much about China, but I know Marxism-Leninism. And this violates every principle of Marxism-Leninism.

1 2 3 4 5

5) I've been a Maoist for years and never heard of this manifesto. It's not in my histories of China.

1 2 3 4 5

6) On what basis can anyone declare that Mao's policy is more complex than it appears? What evidence is there that he intends to keep independence of his armed forces? How can such tactics possibly lead to state power?

1 2 3 4 5

7) Some say Mao is proclaiming one thing, but intending to pursue his fight for power under new conditions. This alone is revisionist, since communist leaders should always proclaim exactly what they are thinking and doing to the people (and to us observers around the world).

1 2 3 4 5

Add up your score. We will shortly post an explanation of how to evaluate how you did.

Nepal: Understanding Riptides of Transition

Posted at KasamaProject.org on March 25, 2009

Nando writes:

“I don't want to contribute to a world where ‘if Mao or Lenin did it, it must be ok, if they didn't do it, it must be wrong.’ However, i do need to note... that if the RCP's method was applied to Mao, Mao too would be denounced.”

David then provided some statements from Mao Zedong which we have posted below — from the 1945 days when Mao was starting negotiations with the most powerful reactionary party in China, considering a coalition government, and maneuvering to launch the final seizure of power.

David writes:

“These quotes might be considered when viewing the RCP's criticisms of the UCPN(M).”

Mao Zedong: On Coalition Government 1945

“Some people suspect that the Chinese Communists are opposed to the development of individual initiative, the growth of private capital and the protection of private property, but they are mistaken. It is foreign oppression and feudal oppression that cruelly fetter the development of the individual initiative of the Chinese people, hamper the growth of private capital and destroy the property of the people. It is the very task of the New Democracy we advocate to remove these fetters and stop this destruction, to guarantee that the people can freely develop their individuality within the framework of society and freely develop such private capitalist economy as will benefit and not ‘dominate the livelihood of the people’, and to protect all appropriate forms of private property.”

“Some people fail to understand why, so far from fearing capitalism, Communists should advocate its development in certain given conditions. Our answer is simple. The substitution of a certain degree of capitalist development for the oppression of foreign imperialism and domestic feudalism is

not only an advance but an unavoidable process. It benefits the proletariat as well as the bourgeoisie, and the former perhaps more. It is not domestic capitalism but foreign imperialism and domestic feudalism which are superfluous in China today; indeed, we have too little of capitalism. Strangely enough, some spokesmen of the Chinese bourgeoisie fight shy of openly advocating the development of capitalism, but refer to it obliquely. There are other people who flatly deny that China should permit a necessary degree of capitalist development and who talk about reaching socialism in one stride and “accomplishing at one stroke” the tasks of the Three People’s Principles and socialism. Obviously, these opinions either reflect the weakness of the Chinese national bourgeoisie or are a demagogic trick on the part of the big landlords and the big bourgeoisie. From our knowledge of the Marxist laws of social development, we Communists clearly understand that under the state system of New Democracy in China it will be necessary in the interests of social progress to facilitate the development of the private capitalist sector of the economy (provided it does not dominate the livelihood of the people) besides the development of the state sector and of the individual and co-operative sectors run by the labouring people. We Communists will not let empty talk or deceitful tricks befuddle us.”

“The policy of adjusting the interests of labour and capital will be adopted under the new-democratic state system. On the one hand, it will protect the interests of the workers, institute an eight- to ten-hour working day according to circumstances, provide suitable unemployment relief and social insurance and safeguard trade union rights; on the other hand, it will guarantee legitimate profits to properly managed state, private and co-operative enterprises—so that both the public and the private sectors and both labour and capital will work together to develop industrial production.”

Nepal’s Maoists: On the Need for Creative Invention in Revolution

(Original name “No revolution can be replicated but developed”)

Posted at KasamaProject.org on April 25, 2009

Let’s take a close look at this revealing essay by the Nepali Maoists. They put it forward at a key moment as their explanation to the world of their plans for this period. And many times since then they have urged us to look to their basic statements of policy, not to this or that public statement in the world press.

We published this statement first almost a year ago on the South Asia Revolution site, and would like to urge people to dig deep into it now.

by Basanta

“We do not regard Marx’s theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the foundation stone of the science which socialists must develop in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life. We think that an independent elaboration of Marx’s theory is especially essential for Russian socialists; for this theory provides only general guiding principles, which, in particular, are applied in England differently than in France, in France differently than in Germany, and in Germany differently than in Russia.”*—Lenin

Introduction:

Under the adept leadership of chairman comrade Prachanda, our party, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), has been leading powerful people’s war since February 13, 1996. This revolution, irrigated by the blood of more than 13,000 best sons and daughters of Nepalese people, is now clashing at close with the enemies to give birth to a new Nepal, free from feudal and imperialist exploitation. Ever since the loss of proletarian power by our class in China, it is the only revolution that has attained this height. It is not that communist parties are not engaged in revolutionary struggles

* Lenin Vol. 4 page 211

all through the period following it. Also, it is not to speak ill of others, but it is a living fact that it is the only people's revolution, which has reached this level in the contemporary communist movement. Naturally, this great accomplishment has on the one hand become pupil of eyes for the proletariat and oppressed classes the world over and dust in eyes for imperialism and all sorts of reactions, on the other. It shows the great opportunities and grave challenges before our party and the revolution it has been leading.

Today, the New Democratic Revolution in Nepal is at a crucial juncture of great victory and severe setback. It is true for any revolution when it reaches at the threshold of seizing central power. In such a situation, only a correct political tactic can lead to great accomplishment while a wrong one is bound to result into disastrous consequence. We have witnessed triumphant revolutions in Russia and China. We have also witnessed serious setbacks of proletarian revolution in other parts of the world. We have sufficient treasury of experiences, positive and negative in the international communist movement. Success or failure of any revolution is dependent on whether or not the party of the proletariat can draw correct lesson from those experiences, both negative and positive, and apply the positive ones creatively in agreement with the specificity of the given country.

The revolution in Peru that had built up strong base areas and a strong People's Liberation Army and that had entered into the stage of strategic offensive has suffered a serious setback. Also the armed struggles in Burma, Malaysia and Nicaragua that had made considerable advances in their specificity failed to fight back enemy onslaught at a certain juncture of history. The result is before us. Apart from this, there are some armed struggles that are being waged uninterruptedly under the leadership of communist parties since sixties and seventies but they have neither been able to develop a people's army nor have they been able to establish base areas till date. We firmly believe that without learning from these unpleasant lessons and without developing an ideological and political line to evade from reactionary ambush that the imperialism has planted

since Vietnam War no revolutionary party can lead revolution to victory in the present world situation.

The fact that has been objectively proved is that the people's war waged under the leadership of our party had been making qualitative leaps one after another in the past and has now reached at the threshold of seizing central power. But, the present process of negotiations to clear the way for restructuring the state power through constituent assembly election has created confusion within the contemporary communist movement. Some of our comrades have even termed this process as a deviation from the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Not only at this time, there were confusions over some of the political steps our party had adopted in the past too. For instance, some of our fraternal parties had disagreement when we had united with known right revisionists, the Fourth Congress group led by Nirmal Lama, and when we had partially used parliamentary election, in the beginning of nineties. Apart from this when we had entered into peace negotiations in the past some parties thought that CPN (M) would not keep on with people's war and take up the revolutionary agenda again. It was a surprise for our fraternal comrades, for the end result did not come out as they speculated but gave rise to a qualitative leap of people's war after each negotiation. What we firmly believe is that the present process of negotiations too will be a surprise for our comrades, who have doubt on our line, because it is not a deviation from the fundamentals of MLM but a mandatory course that the Nepalese revolution has to go through to seize central power in the present world situation.

Undoubtedly, the concern our fraternal comrades have shown is positive. We have high regard to their sincere criticism. But, why do such confusions arise at the particular junctures of revolutionary process, mainly during the period of political offensive? Why our fraternal comrades have failed to understand the dynamism of revolution we are leading? We think that this gap is the result of differences we have in grasping the historical and dialectical materialism, the Marxist philosophy. More precisely, this gap exists mainly because our comrades take a look at our people's war from pragmatic and militarist angle and draw con-

clusion based on dogmatic grasp of our ideology, the MLM. A brief study of how our party, the CPN (Maoist), grasped MLM correctly and applied it creatively in our concrete condition in the past and how we have been linking that with present practice to seize power can help understand us in a correct way. This article will try to focus on some such points.

If one looks at the history of the international communist movement nobody will find any party sailing smooth. None does so. Every party passes through a tortuous road, so many ups and downs, twists and turns and victories and defeats in its course. Ours was such a party that had gone basically along the right revisionist track for a long period of more than 40 years since its formation. Only in the later part of 80s we came to realize that the way we understood MLM and applied it in our revolutionary life was wrong. It was definitely a strenuous task and a big challenge before the revolutionaries to bring it back along the correct MLM track. Without having a decisive rupture from the wrong legacy of the past it was quite impossible for us to transform. Only the correct grasp of materialist dialectics on the part of our party and its creative application in two-line struggle helped us move forward along the revolutionary path.

Ideological grasp:

Everyone knows that our party, the CPN (Maoist), was formed by organisationally splitting from the party led by MB School of thought. We had profound revolutionary will-power and firm faith on MLM. But, revolutionary will-power alone could never be enough to make revolution nor could sincerity alone to MLM be. Unless we could grasp the MLM correctly and make a decisive rupture from the reformist legacy of the past — MB's vulgar evolutionary thinking on the development of an object and his eclectic understanding mainly on the contribution of Mao — it was quite impossible for us to lead a revolutionary process. It was not an easy task but a strenuous one to transform the entire rank and file of the party capable to lead revolution. The need of the day was to become a true Marxist-Leninist-Maoist capable to apply historical materialist dialectics in each and every steps of revolutionary

practice. We had to go through an intense process of sharp ideological struggle against various shades of revisionism and the eclectic and metaphysical legacy within us to revolutionize our own way of thinking. For this, we focused ideological struggle mainly upon the vulgar evolutionary concept on the development of an object and the eclectic projection of Mao thought from revisionist and semi-Hoxaite angles.

Firstly, the main challenge before our party and Nepalese revolution was to completely reverse the evolutionary way of thinking within us. On this, comrade Prachanda, struggling against this concept on the development of an object, played a key role in the transformation of the whole rank and file of the party and revolutionary masses as well. Laying emphasis on this he writes, "The dialectics of development of the process of each entity and event that, being related with each other, are in a dynamic flow of incessant change is such that as Lenin said is not in a straight line, but spiral. That development does not take place gradually and unknowingly in a spontaneous way. But it takes place in the form of a rupture from continuity, in the form of a leap, catastrophe and revolution and in the form of transformation of quantity into quality. It is the scientific essence of Marxist dialectics on development."^{*} In fact, this correct grasp of materialist dialectics on the part of leadership and its application in two-line struggle inside party helped bring the entire rank and file into a revolutionary track.

Secondly, like in the contemporary international communist movement, there was a varying degree of grasp of Mao's contributions within the Nepalese communist movement too. On the one hand, various shades of opportunists and revisionists were paying lip service to Mao Tsetung thought to fulfil their vested interest and on the other revolutionaries too were trying to grasp this as a universal principle. In this situation, without a scientific and proper terminology to express its weight and without correct grasp of it, neither ideological struggle against various shades of revisionism could be focused on correctly nor could the revolutionaries be united under a correct ideological

* Prachanda, Problems of theoretical deviation in Nepalese people's revolution; page 17.

and political line to develop class struggles. Clarifying this, the document on Maoism writes, “Presently, the terminology of ‘Mao Tse-tung Thought’ has been used, on the one hand, by the reformists in the sense of a hypothesis according to the actual weight of the word ‘thought’ and on the other, by the communist revolutionaries in the sense of a universal principle. In this context, to continue with the usage of misleading terminology “thought” despite having the scientific terminology of “ism” with the weight of expressing a universal principle is nothing but to provide loophole for right revisionism. Hence it is essential for communist revolutionaries who have already been grasping Mao Tse-tung Thought as today’s Marxism-Leninism to use the terminology ‘Maoism’ readily and firmly. In the light of rightist attacks on Mao’s contributions after the counter revolution in China many of the former revolutionaries, too, have been attempting to use the terminology ‘thought’ in the sense of downgrading Mao’s contributions, and not accepting it as the third stage of development of Marxism and as a universal principle. Here lies the crux of the problem.”**

In the history of Nepalese communist movement, the period mainly between the second half of 80s to the first half of 90s remains such an important period during which our party had to struggle hard to grasp materialist dialectics correctly. In fact, we waged vigorous ideological and political struggle against right revisionism, nationally and internationally, right liquidationism mainly within the party, the remnants of semi-Hoxaite dogmato-sectarianism, our own legacy of the past, and other various shades of revisionism and opportunism existing within the entire communist movement, including ourselves. This as a whole prepared our party ideologically to make an initiator of the great people’s war in the last decade of 20th century to accomplish New Democratic Revolution in Nepal, as part of the World Proletarian Revolution.

** On Maoism, adopted in the Congress of CPN (Unity Centre)

Development of politico-military line:

In general, it is not that difficult to formulate a general politico-military line in a country oppressed by imperialism and feudalism. Comrade Mao has on the whole solved this problem; just for example, new democratic revolution, protracted people’s war, encirclement of cities by countryside, land to the tiller, etc. etc. Nevertheless, there are several particular factors in the given country, specificity of the national and international situation, and space and time that one cannot find in Mao’s volumes but are required to emphasise on and focus into while one needs to develop a comprehensive ideological and political line. This is what is meant by ‘concrete analysis of the concrete condition’ to paraphrase Lenin. Unless one does so, no one can develop people’s war to the level of seizing power even if one initiates and carries it on.

Comrade Mao has taught us that “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” It is a general truth for any revolution and a revolutionary party. In due course, gun is decisive to make a revolution victorious. But it is possible only when the party of the proletariat fights ideologically and politically in all fronts and crushes all the strategies that the imperialism and domestic reaction enforce to prevent revolution in the given country. In the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the enemy strategy has been to make use of various measures that can prevent the development of revolutionary consciousness among the masses. To abort revolution in its embryo, the measures that the imperialist system has been making use of are psychological warfare, cultural war, enemy infiltration to carry out destructive activities in the party of the proletariat, economic and political reforms to confuse the revolutionary masses, network of NGOs and INGOs to entrap petty bourgeois circle in the reformist mirage, foreign employment, religious superstition etc. Armed suppression and genocide is its final resort after the revolution is born. In short, the enemy fights a total war. Unless one can revolutionise masses by waging ideological war to crush such measures, no people’s war, even if initiated, can attain its goal. With this in mind, our party paid sufficient attention to develop a counterstrategy, based on tit for tat, the total war.

Apart from this, every country has its own particularity that guides the development of armed struggle for the seizure of power. As a preparation to step in the armed struggle, our party analysed deeply the specific objective condition of our country, which is excerpted below, to formulate strategy and tactic of Nepalese people's war.

1. Nepal is a landlocked country which is surrounded from three sides by the expansionist India and in the north surrounded by the reformist China. Although it is small in terms of area, however except for 17% of the Terai plain lands, the rest of the country is geographically replete with remote hills and Himalayan Mountains with different climate, ethnic groups, cultures and languages.

2. In Nepal for a long period, a centralised reactionary state equipped with a modern and powerful permanent army and a bureaucracy has been in existence. This is specially centralised in the cities. The enemies of Nepalese people are not only within the country but also present outside of it in the form of imperialists, especially Indian expansionists.

3. The economic and political development of Nepal has been uneven. Nepal is predominantly rural and the exploited peasants who represent 90% of total people are spread in these villages. The process of urbanisation is on the rise; however, we must say it is still small.

4. The Nepalese peasants and other sections of the masses have passed through a process of different forms of struggle both local and countrywide for a long time. There is a widespread attraction towards communists among the people. However, here the influence of reformism and right revisionism is also strong. In Nepal there has been virtually no direct experience of armed struggle under the leadership of Communist Party.

5. The reactionary ruling class of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial Nepal, where the medieval monarchical system exists, is undergoing intense crisis and this crisis has started manifesting politically as well in a serious manner.

6. A big section of the Nepalese people is spread in different countries for employment, mainly in India for army and other kinds of works.*

Keeping in view with the general line to be adopted in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country, as taught by Mao, it is through aforesaid particularities that our party concretised the strategy and tactics of the Nepalese armed struggle. On this, the same document writes, "From the first specificity it can be seen that for waging war in Nepal it has neither large area, nor any possibility of using any sea; neither there is wide forest — nor there is any possibility of direct help or support from any other neighbouring country. However, geographical situation is most favourable for waging guerrilla war with direct link with the people. ... The second specificity shows that there is no situation of direct military clash between the enemy forces for political power, so that the armed forces of the people could take advantage of seizing a definite area ... at the beginning. ... When the first and the second specificities are viewed together it is found possible to establish and survive independently in certain specific area just as in China's Ching-Kang Shan [Mao's original base area] and to be able to expand from these onwards. The third specificity shows the possibility of starting guerrilla wars in different parts of the country and developing them by taking peasant revolution as the backbone... The fourth specificity clearly shows that people's support will go on increasing if the right revisionists are thoroughly exposed and the tactics of armed struggle is pursued vigilantly. The fifth specificity indicates that the pace of development of armed struggle to establish people's alternative revolutionary power would be faster and inspires to undertake bold tactics to achieve it. And the sixth specificity demonstrates the necessity of mobilising the Nepalese people working in foreign countries — mainly those Nepalese working in India — by conducting political work amongst them and using the area for supplying of various necessities for the success of armed struggle in Nepal."

* [All 6 points are quoted from:] Strategy and tactic of armed struggle in Nepal, Third Plenum of the CC of CPN (Maoist), March 1995

The document further writes, “In Our situation — give priority to the rural work, but do not leave urban work; give priority to illegal struggle, but do not leave legal struggle too; give priority to specific strategic areas, but do not leave work related to mass movement too; give priority to class struggle in villages, but do not leave countrywide struggle too; give priority to guerilla actions, but do not leave political exposure & propaganda too; give priority to propaganda work within the country but do not leave worldwide propaganda too; give priority to build army organisation, but do not leave to build front organisations too; give priority to rely on one’s own organisation and force, but do not miss to forge unity in action, to take support of and help from international arena too; it is only by applying these policies carefully that the armed struggle can be initiated, preserved and developed.”

In fact, this orientation of our party was a decisive rupture from the reformist and revisionist legacy of the Nepalese communist movement but not an evolutionary development from the past. This historical third expanded meeting that chalked out a comprehensive orientation of strategy and tactic, based on the concrete objective situation, of the new democratic revolution, represents a major landmark in the history of Nepalese communist movement. All of the policies, plans, campaigns and particular actions at the time of initiation of people’s war and its continuation till now have been basically guided by this orientation. The qualitative leaps of people’s war one after another validate the correctness of this ideological orientation on the development of political strategy and tactic of our party.

Creative application:

Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is a science, which is an ideological leader of proletarian revolution. But it must be applied creatively in consistence with the particularities of the given concrete situation, national and international. This was why Lenin used to very often emphasise on ‘concrete analysis of the concrete condition’. In agreement with concrete objective situation of Nepal, our party, since before the initiation of people’s war has been creatively applying some specific tactic to

advance revolution. Some of them have been discussed below.

Political and military offensive:

Armed struggle is an inevitable means to bring the political goal of the proletariat to fruition. Hence the first is subordinate to the second, although their principal position changes at times. However, there have always been problems in discerning the interrelation between these two in the international communist movement. We find mainly two trends in this respect. The first trend that does not consider the armed struggle as an inevitable part of political struggle for power but one-sidedly emphasises on the political offensive or relegates preparation of people’s war in various pretexts is outright reformism and right revisionism. While the second one that emphasises more on military offensive but ignores the political one or equates war with politics represents militarism. Right revisionism is the principal danger but militarism too has not harmed less in the political struggle for power in the contemporary communist movement. Only the correct handling of the relation between war and politics can propel the revolution forward.

Ever since the preparation of people’s war to now, we have been trying to maintain a proper sequence between political and military offensive, i.e. politics and war. Before the initiation of people’s war we carried out political offensive from the streets based on various pro-people issues and finally with 40-points demand, a general outline of new democratic program. Not only this, we did not miss opportunity even for a brief period to carry out political offensive against the futility of the parliamentary system right from the rostrum of the parliament itself. In fact, we prepared people’s war from all fronts, namely the class struggle in rural areas, mass struggle in the cities including the capital and parliamentary struggle as well. Of course, our main thrust was on the first.

This political offensive was a part of people’s war to create a favourable objective situation in which our next offensive, i.e. military offensive could be justified among the wider section of oppressed masses. At a juncture when the enemy by launching ‘Romeo opera-

tion' created an obstacle to go ahead politically we initiated people's war. The initiation played an instrumental role to attract more people towards our party because it was politically justified. Had not we been with the masses and raised their necessities in the form of political demands to heighten their revolutionary consciousness no wider support towards people's war could have been garnered. In fact, the political struggle that we carried out before the initiation of people's war helped create an objective base from which we could make an armed offensive.

Also, it is not that we waged mass struggle in the peace time only. But, a proper sequence between political and military offensive has been the specificity of Nepalese people's war ever since its preparation. In our case, every political offensive has been carried out to create such a political situation in which the subsequent military offensive is justified. In the same manner, every military offensive has been carried out to remove the obstacle on its way so that we can further consolidate people's power in the liberated areas, develop fighting capacity qualitatively and intervene in the central politics from a newer height. What we think is that the proper handling of the interrelation between war and politics has been one of the main reasons behind the speedy development of people's revolution in Nepal.

Initiation of people's war:

The initiation of people's war in our country does not go along the way our class did in other countries. It resembles neither with Russia nor with China and Peru. It should be noted that our initiation was a kind of rebellion from every nook and corner of the country with more than 5,000 big or small militant actions. It was not our subjective wish to make the initiation rebellious but the objective situation, as quoted before, that demanded to prepare the plan of initiation in that way. In fact, this plan of initiation resembles more with the line of insurrection than with that of protracted people's war. Only after successful implementation of rebellious plan of initiation the second plan that was introduced with a slogan of 'develop guerrilla war in a planned way' followed the basic course of protracted people's war. Initiation in a rebellious form but contin-

uation in a protracted way is the specificity of the Nepalese people's war. It is, of course, a creative application of the line of people's war in our particular condition.

Question of model:

Ever since the preparation of people's war, the way we have been applying MLM in our context does not fully correspond to the practice of the contemporary communist movement. Nor does it agree fully with the practice of our class in the past. We don't think it is wrong. For, no revolution can be a mechanical replica of others. A certain model cannot be subjectively fitted in a different objective situation; on the contrary, a different objective situation demands a different kind of model for revolution. For this reason, October Revolution could not be a replica of Paris Commune, nor could the Chinese Revolution be a replica of October Revolution. Rather the fact was that Lenin, synthesising the entire experiences of working class movement including the Paris commune, creatively developed scientific strategy and tactic for the socialist revolution in Russia. In the same manner, Mao developed strategy and tactic of the protracted people's war to accomplish new democratic revolution in China.

The imperialist system is not an inert entity but a dynamic one. This is the dynamism that makes it survive and develop. Imperialist economic policy of globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation has substantially changed the class relations both in the imperialist and oppressed countries. Growth of metropolitan cities, development of bureaucrat capitalism, information technology, transportation network etc are the noticeable changes that one can easily see in the third world countries. These changes necessarily have an effect on the strategy and tactic of revolution. It was in this respect that the strategy and tactic we developed before the initiation of people's war does not fully correspond to the one Mao had developed in the Chinese context. In fact, it is a creative development from what Mao did.

Ever since the preparation and initiation of people's war to now the strategy and tactic we have been adopting does not fully correspond neither to the model of protracted people's war, nor that of insurrection. It has

been developed by incorporating some tactics of insurrectionary strategy into those of protracted people's war. We call it fusion. This fusion does not mean to mechanically mix up two strategic and tactical lines together but to apply either one that fits in the given concrete objective condition irrespective of which model it came from. The main thing it means is that one should not remain ideologically restrained within the framework of certain modality because it holds down one's hand to jump into a suitable tactic when the objective situation demands.

Democracy and patriotism:

New Democratic Revolution is anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution. In the present era, imperialism spreads its tentacles of exploitation through their agents, the feudal and bureaucratic comprador bourgeois class, in the oppressed countries. Yet, in order to grab bigger share in power, the feudal class raises, in general, the issue of patriotism and vie with comprador bourgeois where as the later with the tool of democracy does so with feudal. In fact, both of these classes serve their common master, the imperialism and enjoy with the crumb of exploitation they extract from the masses. Strategically unity is principal between them but tactically they remain divided for their bigger share in power and the crumbs of imperialist exploitation. The ruling class, in Nepal, has for long been able to confuse and divide the masses with this deceitful stratagem. Not only the masses, but also the communist movement in Nepal has had this confusion for long in the past. It is a bitter truth that a section of the movement had trailed behind feudal monarchy in the name of patriotism and other behind the parties representing comprador bourgeoisies in the name of democracy. Indeed, they use their respective political tools to exercise class dictatorship over the broad masses and serve their imperialist master and so both are class enemies of New Democratic Revolution. Nevertheless, there remains a possibility to tactically play in this contradiction to advance the revolution in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country.

In fact, democracy and patriotism are the two faces of the same coin, the New Democratic Revolution. But,

one becomes principal at a certain juncture of history. In our case, for the initial five years, when Nepali Congress, the representatives of comprador bourgeois class, was at the forefront to exploit and oppress the masses, we independently waged class struggle against them with the banner of patriotism. Later, when the feudal gangster, Gyanendra Shahi, usurped absolute power by means of dissolution of the parliament, followed by the palace massacre, we intensified class struggle with the banner of democracy. This tactic has helped us keep them divided, though tactically, despite all efforts of the US imperialism and the Indian expansionism to unite, against our party and the revolution we are leading. The tactical alliance between parliamentary parties and ours, which took its shape through the 12-point understanding, was possible because of this contradiction.

It was with this divide and hit tactic that we were able to expose the deceitful stratagem of both of the feudal and comprador bourgeois classes that divided masses under their fake words of patriotism and democracy. In the past, the consequence has been positive. This tactic, by exposing the reactionary ploy against the people, has helped strengthen the unity of the vast section of masses and rally around the real banner of true patriotism and true democracy, our party has upheld. However, given the development of revolution and mainly after the April uprising, the last year, alliance between these two classes in our country is tightening because both of them know that the force of revolution is going to prevail over them all together. True democracy and true nationalism comes up to fruition only when both of the classes, the feudal and comprador bourgeoisie, are overthrown from power by the force of revolution and new democratic revolution has been accomplished.

Incorporation of women, nationality and Dalit movements with the class struggle:

Though small in geography, our country Nepal, which is inhabited by various castes and nationalities, is a big one in terms of its diversified cultural heritages, traditions and religions. But, the centralised state power, not only has treated them as second class citizen of

the country, but has done everything to suppress this section of the population under high caste chauvinist ideology, the Hinduism, ever since the unification of Nepal about 250 years before. Naturally, this section of the masses was down weighed by two fold oppressions. It was, firstly, the class oppression and secondly, the patriarchal, national and caste oppression based upon high caste Hindu chauvinism. In face value, the second type of oppression appears to be non-class. But, in fact, it is essentially a part of class contradiction because it rests upon the reactionary ideology that the ruling class and their state power uphold.

With this correct ideological grasp, our party, from the beginning, tried hard to develop specific policies, plans and programs to mobilise this section of the masses in the forefront of class struggle. They came forward extensively in support of the people's war, when our party put forward, apart from class program, a policy of equal right to women in all aspects of social activity, including property, mobilised various nationalities under the programme of autonomy, including their right to self-determination and placed the agenda of Dalits to put an end to all sorts of social discriminations, including 'untouchability'. What we think is that, it was another form of applying mass line under the policy of 'unite those who can be united with to isolate the one'. If our party did not have concrete policies, plans and programs to mobilise women, nationalities and Dalits against specific oppression upon them, simply the class line and conventional form of protracted people's war could not have mobilized this section of the oppressed masses so intensively and extensively to develop people's war.

Negotiations:

In general, the terminology, negotiation or compromise, is a bitter word to hear at. It is so, because, there is not a common point, in a strategic sense, between the diametrically opposite class interests of two classes, the oppressor and oppressed. If negotiations are made to relinquish the class interest it is really bitter, intolerable and utterly wrong. But, in a tactical sense, sometimes negotiations are necessary. Brest-Litovsk treaty with

Germany to which Lenin himself had once termed as a regressive one and Chanking

Negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek in which Mao agreed to reduce a big number of PLA and abandon some bases areas were both imposed by the situation and were necessary to take up. No one in the international communist movement has yet dared to say that they were wrong. Therefore, it is relative to why it is done.

In the history of our class struggles, there have been negotiations at times. Firstly, our partial participation in the parliamentary election in 1991 was a kind of political compromise, a tactic. But our party did not entrap oneself in parliamentarism but utilised that participation to prepare for people's war. Was that wrong? Secondly, we had a negotiation with the enemy in 2001. During that period we mobilised millions of masses in the support of people's war, developed strength of our People's Liberation Army that enabled us to launch a biggest ever military attack at Dang. Was that too wrong? Thirdly, we had another negotiation in 2002. During that period of negotiation too we mobilised masses more extensively than before, developed our PLA further and consolidated our base areas in the remote countryside. But, after the breaking of ceasefire, we launched urban guerrilla warfare all over the country and pushed the enemy in a defensive situation even in the capital itself. Can one say this too was wrong? Fourthly, our party is now in the process of negotiation and through this is preparing for the seizure of central power. Then why is it wrong? So far as the question of danger is concerned there cannot be a single revolution that has no danger at all. But this danger is accompanied by great opportunity. It is a historical fact that the parties that are scared of facing danger have never been able to seize opportunity.

In the course of 11 years of people's war in Nepal, what has been proved in practice is that when the armed struggle reaches at a certain point it cannot keep on developing in a qualitatively higher form. To make a qualitative leap a higher level of preparation is required. Concretely speaking, had not we gone through the process of negotiation in 2001 and 2002 to comeback with a higher level of preparation the subsequent leaps in

people's war could not have been expected. Likewise, if we had not gone to negotiate with seven-party alliance through 12-point understanding no April uprising could have been imagined too. In our case, every negotiation so far has been used to accumulate energy to raise our revolution to a qualitatively newer height. But a strange [thing], our comrades raise their temperature when we enter into the process of negotiation to accumulate energy but get cooled down when they come to see a qualitatively higher leap in the revolutionary process. We are confident that if we could use parliament in the past to prepare for the initiation of people's war why cannot we use the present legislature and even the interim government too to make a final offensive for the seizure of countrywide power? It is also a question of correctly applying strategic firmness and tactical flexibility.

On negotiations Mao has taught us, "How to give 'tit for tat' depends on the situation. Sometimes, not going to negotiations is tit-for-tat; and sometimes, going to negotiations is also tit-for-tat. We were right not to go before, and also right to go this time; in both cases we have given tit for tat. We did well to go this time, for we exploded the rumour spread by the Kuomintang that the Communist Party did not want peace and unity."^{*}

However, in our situation, we have applied negotiation not only as a tit-for-tat tactic but as an important part of the ideological and political line to develop people's war qualitatively.

Diplomacy:

Revolution in Nepal is being accomplished in a different world situation than that was at the time of Socialist Revolution in Russia and New Democratic Revolution in China. The specificity of the present international situation that the collapse of socialist base after the counterrevolution in Russia and mainly China, end of the cold war, emergence of the US imperialism in the form of a globalised state, development of global military plan in the name of war against terror, augmenting hold of imperialist finance capital in the third world countries as a result of globalisation etc. must

be taken into account while developing a comprehensive strategy and tactic of revolution in the twenty-first century. Certainly, the inter-imperialist contradiction is intensifying, imperialism mainly the US is getting isolated from the world opinion, which is developing a favourable situation for proletarian revolution in a strategic sense. But the revolutionary force is still weak internationally to take advantage of this.

It is a fact that old methods cannot resolve new problems created by the new situation. Not by hitting at in all directions but by diplomatically neutralising a big section of enemy camp can a revolutionary party divide the enemy to the extent possible internationally. Based upon this ideological understanding what our party thinks is that diplomacy also should be made a part of the tactic to propel the movement forward particularly at the time when the revolution is at the doorstep of seizing central power. It is not that diplomacy is necessary to make the revolution victorious only but it is so mainly to sustain and develop revolution in the present world situation.

Development of revolution and the revolutionary theory:

Every practice is guided by theory. So the revolutionary practice is guided by a revolutionary theory, the Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Practice develops from simple to complex, so does the theory. With the development of revolutionary practice the revolutionary theory develops which in turn helps develop the practice to a higher level. This goes on in a spiral way. This was how Marxism developed to Marxism-Leninism and Marxism-Leninism to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. It is nothing other than the dialectical relationship between theory and practice that develops both in a spiral way.

Development of revolution is related with how correctly and creatively the revolutionary theory, the MLM, has been applied in practice. One can apply theory creatively only when it is grasped scientifically. However, when we are involved in revolutionary practice it comes with newer problems, which cannot be resolved with the theory we already have. New experiences come up in the course of applying MLM to resolve

* Mao, On Chunking Negotiations

newer problems. It does not mean that social practice automatically and spontaneously develops to theory. It needs to be developed through a correct process of synthesis. For this very reason, the development of any revolution is linked with correct grasp, creative application and development of ideology, the MLM. Without development, it cannot keep up its living character as a science of revolution.

In our case, the application in practice of the ideological and political line on the one hand justified its correctness by making qualitative leaps one after another and on the other started generating newer ideas to advance revolution further. After five years of initiation of people's war, we re-examined the entire experiences of the line struggle and class struggle under the leadership of our party, the experiences of the 20th century revolutions and those of contemporary ICM as well. In this arduous process we reached at a conclusion that a set of new ideas have transpired while creatively applying MLM in the particularity of Nepal. In the second national conference, 2001, we synthesised those set of ideas in the form of Prachanda path, which we believe has enriched the theoretical armoury of MLM.

Noteworthy to mention here is that following this synthesis, the pace of people's war developed intensively and extensively for it helped resolve the ideological and political problems that the revolution in Nepal was then confronting. Within a short span of time this revolution became an international issue giving rise to great opportunities and severe challenges. The latest expression of the strength of Prachanda Path that was culminated in the height of April uprising, 2006, is not hidden from anyone. In fact, this uprising, never seen in the past, was a result of correct grasp and creative application of the relationship between people's war and mass movement, in the Nepalese revolution. The CC meeting, following this uprising, further concretised the whole set of strategy and tactic that is necessary for the New Democratic Revolution in Nepal to succeed. On this, the CC document writes, "... it is indispensable to have a proper coordination and balance of armed people's war, powerful mass movement, negotiations and diplomatic manoeuvring for the success of

Nepalese people's revolution."* It has in fact developed strategy and tactic of Nepalese revolution to a newer height. We believe this synthesis of ours can contribute to developing people's war in other countries too in the present world situation.

On the other, the ideological synthesis, we have put forward, has initiated ideological debate and criticism within the international communist movement. It is not bad but good. It should go further. However, the way how some of the parties in the ICM are raising arguments to criticise PP [Prachanda Path] does not focus on the crux of the issue but oppose in different manner. We find two opposing trends in this respect.

One of the trends argues that what we have to do now is to mainly apply MLM in practice, not to engage in developing theory. It says we are far behind in practice from what Mao did in his lifetime. Criticising Prachanda Path, comrades say that it is not our generation, but the future one, if finds it was a development in MLM, will synthesise accordingly. It is of course a wrong way to deal with the matter. Whether or not it is an appropriate time to engage in synthesising ideology must not be the main thrust of the question. But, the correct way to focus the debate on is whether or not the line, when applied in practice, has developed newer set of ideas to advance revolution in Nepal. The way how comrades are arguing things is in fact not merely an opposition to Prachanda Path but is so to the question of ideological synthesis itself. In our opinion, this trend on the one hand does not grasp the dialectical relationship between theory and practice and on the other plays down the role of ideology in the development of revolutionary practice. As a consequence, this way of thinking cannot develop practice itself. For, the theory developed in one context cannot resolve the problems emerged in another context. So, it is entirely wrong and represents metaphysics and pragmatism.

The second trend argues that the science of revolution, the MLM, which we already have, is not sufficient enough to address the newer contradictions in the present day world. And, therefore, in order to make it able to address them the MLM should be developed beforehand without which no revolution can

* CPN (Maoist), CC meeting, Kamidanda

advance. As a result, this argument makes development of MLM the first task and revolutionary struggle the task to be taken up later so that the theory is sufficient enough to resolve the newer contradictions of revolution in the twenty-first century. Keeping practice aside parties with this trend advise other revolutionaries too to engage in academic exercise and play dogmatically with words to 'develop' MLM. In fact, it goes against the theory of knowledge that Mao has put forward. He writes, "The dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge places practice in the primary position, holding that human knowledge can in no way be separated from practice..." In this way, this trend represents metaphysics and enjoys in eulogising the past successful revolutions. It leads to dogmatism and sectarianism.

Conclusion:

Ever since the preparation of people's war to now, the way how our party has been applying MLM in the particularity of the Nepalese society does not agree with any model we find in the history of communist movement. What we firmly believe is that no revolution can be a replica of the past, nor can the line of any party be developed based on someone's subjective wish or prototype application of any model but it demands creative application of MLM in agreement with the objective condition. This is the creative application of MLM that has made people's war develop in leaps one after another. And, the development of revolution in Nepal is an obvious result of development in ideology. In fact, a new model of proletarian revolution and the theory it leads is getting developed from Nepal in the beginning of the twenty-first century. This is the crux of the matter where some of our fraternal comrades cannot reach at.

According to our synthesis, Prachanda Path is a set of new ideas developed in all the spheres of ideology, politics, political economy, culture and military science while applying MLM in our context. In fact, MLM and Prachanda Path has been a torch-bearer of Nepalese New Democratic Revolution, in the present context of the world situation. Also, we believe it has strength to serve world proletarian revolution, but we don't claim

that it has already attained universality. It is through healthy ideological struggles within the international communist movement against wrong trends and creative application of MLM in one's particular context that can advance revolution and develop revolutionary theory leading it precisely because no revolution can be replicated but developed

** Mao, On Practice, page 297

Compare and Contrast on Nepal

Posted at KasamaProject.org on March 24, 2009

In our main discussion of the polemics over Nepal, a commentator named “Epistemology Indeed” made the following comparison:

Revolutionary Communist Party in Revolution #160:

“The organs of people’s power built up in the countryside of Nepal through the revolutionary war have been dissolved, the old police forces have been brought back, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), although never defeated on the battlefield, has been disarmed and confined to “cantonments” while the old reactionary army (formerly the Royal Nepal Army, now renamed the Nepal Army) which previously feared to travel outside its barracks, except in large heavily armed convoys, is now free to patrol the country—with the blessing of a CPN(M) Defense Minister.”

International Crisis Group Report on Nepal (Feb. 19, 2009) “Nepal’s Faltering Peace Process”:

“Control over the security sector remains at the heart of the power struggle; the impasse over the question of People’s Liberation Army (PLA) integration and the broader issues are discussed in detail below. Many other aspects of the peace deal remain unresolved or unimplemented. Apart from a few exceptions, the Maoists have not fulfilled their repeated promises to return property seized during the conflict, nor have they fully dismantled parallel structures. Local government is yet to be re-established, although cross-party consensus on creating interim bodies appears close.” (p. 2)

One commentator has conducted extensive on the ground investigation, another has read diplomatic agreements as if they were exact representations of reality.

Letter of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (June 2006)

TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY, USA

FROM CC CPN (M) JUNE 2006

DEAR COMRADES,

The letter your Party had written on 1 October 2005 to ours had reached to our hand quite late, and it was necessary on our part to reply to it quickly. But, we failed to do so given that we were very busy with the speedily changing political situation in our country and the need to lead it closely. However, firstly, we appreciate the initiative your Party has taken up to put forward criticisms and raise questions on our ideological and political position and the tactics we have adopted in recent years and, secondly, we make an apology for being late in replying to your letter. We firmly believe that the exchange of opinion will undoubtedly help identify the points of unity and disunity among us that, through comradesly struggle, will help develop a higher level of unity between us by narrowing down the gap. We are in no doubt that this process of line struggle based on the ideological unity we already have will help both of our parties learn more from each other and elevate our ideological grasp to a higher level, which in fact can be one of the important cornerstones for developing MLM in the twenty-first century. Definitely it will have far-reaching significance.

Nevertheless, the letter has raised serious criticism on the ideological and political line and tactics we have adopted to accomplish New Democratic Revolution in our country and pave the way for socialism and communism. Not only this, your letter has accused us of sliding towards revisionism, though not mentioned directly. In this sense, the letter shows that we have serious differences in our ideological and political grasp, which calls for thoroughgoing struggles. This reply of ours can only be the initiation of that struggle, not the end.

Historical Context

Your Party, the RCP, USA, is very much aware that we were trying to develop our ideological and political line in an adverse international situation.. We had shouldered this historic responsibility when the International Communist Movement was facing a serious setback the world over following counter-revolution in Russia and China, when our philosophy of MLM was facing all-round attack from the imperialists and revisionists, when the world imperialist system too had undergone a change in which inter-imperialist rivalry had weakened and the unipolar imperialist plunder, mainly of US imperialism, was escalating all across the world in the form of a globalized state. In addition to this, the Peruvian People's War, which was the most inspiring movement for our Party in the 1980s, had suffered a serious 'bend in the road', and when other ongoing revolutionary armed struggles, quite a few in numbers, were gaining no momentum but were cycling around the same circle year after year. On the other hand, the development of technology, mainly in the field of information, was making this world a small unit, and the growth of bureaucrat capitalism in our semi-feudal and semi-colonial country had brought about a certain change in the class relations of society. All of these questions were pressing us to think more creatively about how a revolutionary line in our Party could be developed. The semi-Hoxhaite dogmatic legacy of the MB [Singh] school of thought, which was deep-rooted in our veins, was also creating obstructions to going ahead creatively. It was really a challenging task subjectively for us to come out from the aforesaid adversities. We came to realize that the traditional way of thinking and applying MLM is not sufficient to face the new challenges created by the new situation. However, we were confident that a firm grasp of MLM and a proletarian commitment to revolution could face this challenge.

Taking into account all these particularities of the new situation, our Party creatively developed its ideological and political line. Of course, the way we tried to apply historical and dialectical materialism in the particularity of Nepalese society from the very beginning of developing our line and preparing for People's

War, from the early 1990s, was to a great extent different from how other communist parties did before and were doing then in the world. The firm grasp of MLM, the 'concrete analysis of concrete conditions', the 'correct application of mass line' and the creative application of historical and dialectical materialism, the philosophy of revolutionary practice, in the particularity of Nepalese society were the basis with which we fought back alien ideologies and reactionary and revisionist attacks against us, which in turn prepared the ground for us to initiate People's War in 1996. What we have achieved during the past ten turbulent years of class struggle is before the world's people.

In fact, the past ten years have not been years of smooth sailing for us. We have gone through twists and turns, ups and downs, and rights and lefts.. Every revolution does so. When we applied our line in revolutionary practice, it not only developed People's War in leaps but also started generating new ideas so as to enrich the philosophical arsenal of MLM. It is known to your Party that the experiences and the set of new ideas that we gathered from the revolutionary practice of the initial five years had already been synthesized as Prachanda Path in 2001. It is heading towards a higher level of another synthesis.

From the time when we established our proletarian internationalist relations with your Party through RIM, though we have basic unity between our two parties, we have not found your Party satisfied with our political line and tactics at different historical turning points. Even now, your Party, RCP, USA, is looking at our Party mainly with the same eyes with which it used to see 15 years before. Frankly, RCP never correctly understood our Party, its political line and the tactics we adopted at times. The traditional way of thinking and the dogmatic understanding of MLM that the RCP is suffering from has made your Party unable to understand ours at every turning point of history. Just for example, when we had united with Lamas, in 1991, your Party reached a conclusion that the unity was wrong and it was a deception to the proletarian revolution in Nepal. When we partially used parliamentary elections, you thought that we were bogged down in parliamentarism. In your Party's opinion, MB Singh, who

opposed our Party unity as revisionist and partial use of parliamentary struggle as parliamentarism, was correct. When we sat for two negotiations with the enemy you thought that we were finished. But, the objective reality never proved your judgment to be correct, because it was the result of your dogmatic analysis and subjective synthesis. Now, we understand that you don't agree with our present tactics of ceasefire, interim constitution, interim government, constituent assembly election and democratic republic to be established by extensive restructuring of the state. It is because your way of thinking is subjective and does not follow the mass line. The present letter is a proof of that.. However, it is our firm belief that with the correct grasp of MLM and its creative application in our particularity we will be able to establish a new democratic state under the leadership of the proletariat, possibly soon in our country, which will objectively prove your disagreement, serious criticism and indirect accusation of revisionism raised in the letter to be utterly subjective and wrong.

Experience Of History And Our Effort

History is a witness that the proletariat class had succeeded in establishing its power in almost one-third of the globe, with the breath-taking sacrifice of millions in the twentieth century. The imperialist world system of war and aggression for loot and plunder of the poor nations and people of the under-developed countries was under threat from the socialist system. Poverty, deprivation, corruption, unemployment, etc. – the general phenomena of the capitalist mode of production – had been basically eliminated from those socialist countries.

But questions have come up as to why those proletarian powers turned into their opposites without any bloodshed, right after the demise or capture of the main leadership? Why did Comrade Stalin fail to control the emergence of revisionists from within the Party he had led, despite that he did his best, including forceful suppression against them? Why did the CPC under Mao's leadership, despite that it launched the Cultural Revolution, fail to stop revisionist Deng and his clique from grabbing power after his demise? Why did the Russian Red Army that was able to defeat

the fascist Hitler and his powerful army with the sacrifice of about 20 million Russian patriots, fail to retain proletarian power after the death of Comrade Stalin? Why did the Chinese PLA, which was able to defeat Japanese imperialist aggression and 5.5 million in the Chinese reactionary army, turn out to be a silent spectator when the revisionist Deng clique grabbed power? Why did the Vietnamese people's army, which was able to defeat the US army, the strongest army in the world, and equipped with the most sophisticated weapons, fail to notice the transfer of proletarian power into its opposite? These and alike are the questions for which we are trying to find correct answers. Only cursing the revisionists does not solve the problem.

It goes against dialectics to believe that we are immune to committing any mistakes while translating MLM into practice. Therefore, we not only welcome but demand suggestions and criticism from our comrades the world over. In this sense, we very much welcome your creative suggestions and criticism.. But, we have been very much frustrated by how you understand us, and your effort to teach us the basics of MLM as if we don't know them at all or we have derailed from it. We clearly observe inconsistency between what ideological and political assistance we need from our international comrades and what they, presently the RCP, are providing to us through this letter. We need assistance in our effort to try to connect the missing links in the ICM by which our class had to lose its power in the twentieth century, but your letter is trying to draw us back to the struggle around the basic and classical questions of MLM. We want debate on the aforesaid questions to overcome the problems our movement faced in the 20s, when we have got no undisputed answer to date. Your letter does not focus on those ideological and political questions, but mainly teaches the ABC of Marxism. It is frustrating us.

Historical and dialectical materialism is the philosophy of revolution; it not only applies to society but also in human thinking. The unity and struggle of opposites is its fundamental law. It means every entity divides into two, and each of the two aspects transforms into its opposite. We think the latter is the principal aspect for us communists.

It is our opinion that the ICM, in general, failed in the past to grasp the totality of this law of dialectics. Our class paid more attention to 'one divides into two' in the past and is doing so at present, but knowingly or unknowingly it has skipped grasping and applying in practice the transformation of one aspect into its opposite, the principal aspect. Because of this mistaken grasp, in practice at least, our class applied the dialectics of negation in two-line struggle so as to create splits among our own ranks instead of helping to unite by creating the material environment to make the wrongdoing comrades transform. In other words, our class practiced unity-struggle-split, not unity-struggle-transformation. The fatal consequences that the communists are confronting to date justifies [proves] this fact. Our ranks must correct it, and our Party is trying to do so.

Now the question comes up, how can we help the fellow travellers to correct their mistaken ideas? Definitely, we don't have any magical rod. Firstly, and importantly, it is the correct grasp and appropriate application of dialectical materialist principles in the practice of two-line struggle within the proletarian Party that can correct the mistaken ideas of given comrades. And secondly, it is the masses of the people, the proletariat and oppressed class, that can help their leaders transform by supervising, controlling and intervening, if necessary, upon them and the institutions they work in. We say, "Revolution from within the revolution", and of course believe that it is the developed practical manifestation of and so the development of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, as propounded by Mao. In other words, it is the process of making mass action against the mistaken leaders a regular phenomenon under the dictatorship of the proletariat. We believe this is how the Party of the proletariat can help the wrongdoing comrades to transform in the service of the oppressed people and thereby check counter-revolution from within its ranks. We will discuss later on how we are trying to develop the mechanism and methodology to achieve this goal.

State, Democracy And Dictatorship Of The Proletariat

It is the ABC of Marxism that state power is an inevitable means to apply dictatorship upon one class by another in a class society. In a letter, dated 5 March 1852, to Weydemeyer, Marx says, "What I did that 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..." In the same way, in his famous work, *State and Revolution*, Lenin says, "Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

For those who claim to be communists to think that both of the hostile classes in a society enjoy equal rights under the existing state power is sheer nonsense and unscientific. The fact is that the class in power enjoys democracy and applies dictatorship over the enemy class. Hence, democracy and dictatorship are two opposites of a single entity, state power. That is why there can be no absolute democracy in a class society nor can absolute dictatorship exist there. It is entirely true for both of the states, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. When classes cease to exist in society, then the state power too ceases to exist, and consequently both dictatorship and democracy wither away. Where should we focus on is how our practice of democracy and proletarian dictatorship can lead to the abolition of state power and the withering away of both democracy and dictatorship from society.

Of course, our Party's serious concern is how the proletarian class, when it reaches power after the violent overthrow of its enemy, can strengthen the dictatorship over its antagonistic class so that it can continue towards the abolition of the state by preventing counter-revolution. We believe that the more democracy for the oppressed classes is guaranteed, the stronger will be the voluntary and principled unity among them, which as a consequence will strengthen the dictatorship over the bourgeois class. When democracy does not take root in the entire oppressed classes, then bureaucratic tenden-

cies emerge in the Party, state and the society as well that consequently weaken the dictatorship of the proletariat. The history of the ICM and our own practice of people's power, though in an immature form, have demonstrated us this. This is why we have been emphasizing developing democracy under the proletarian dictatorship.

Now, we would like to see how our pioneering leaders looked at democracy under socialist society and the state. The Communist Manifesto, on page 57 writes, "... that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy."

In his famous work, "The Socialist Revolution And The Right Of Nations To Self-Determination (Theses)", Lenin writes, "The socialist revolution is not one single act, not one single battle on a single front, but a whole epoch of intensified class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e. battles around all the problems of economics and politics, which can culminate only in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a fundamental mistake to suppose that the struggle for democracy can divert the proletariat from the socialist revolution, or obscure, or overshadow it, etc. On the contrary, just as socialism cannot be victorious unless it introduces complete democracy, so the proletariat will be unable to prepare for victory over the bourgeoisie unless it wages a many-sided, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy."

Let us quote Mao from his "Speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China". (Vol. 5, 15 November 1956). He says, "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."

From the above quotations we find the Communist Manifesto, Comrade Lenin and Comrade Mao urging for democracy. But we find the past practice of proletarian democracy was inadequate, particularly in the lack of a specific mechanism and appropriate meth-

odology to institutionalize it, which as a consequence weakened the dictatorship of the proletariat. We are not arguing for something new, not in MLM, but what we are suggesting is to connect the missing link of the past to make both democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat more effective. So, we don't think your Party should be afraid of the democracy that we are talking about. Rather, we want your Party to concentrate more on how the genuine democracy of the proletariat can be established so that the voluntary unity of the whole oppressed classes can exercise effective and real dictatorship over their class enemy.

Of course, we have put forward some proposals to develop a methodology and mechanism within the state so that it can effectively help implement the dialectical relation between proletarian dictatorship and democracy in society. We have seen Chinese practice, the latest, where we find eight different political parties of various sections of the masses, not of the enemy class, playing a co-operative role in the people's government. We think it was mechanical and formal, so it is inadequate. What we have proposed is to raise this multiparty co-operation to the level of multiparty competition in the proletarian state within an anti-feudal (or anti-bourgeois) and anti-imperialist constitutional framework. The RCP's criticism that the CPN (Maoist) is sliding towards the abandonment of the proletarian dictatorship by adopting bourgeois formal democracy reflects your Party's unawareness to reach at the crux of the problem we are raising. So, instead of accusing us of having adopted bourgeois democracy, we request RCP to take it seriously and launch debate from the height we need.

Now a question arises, what the Party of the proletariat will do if it is defeated in elections under multiparty competition, which we think is your main concern. We believe this question is less serious and less dangerous than, what will the proletarian class do if its Party in state power degenerates into revisionism? These are the questions related to how to develop a methodology and mechanism to continue the revolution until communism amidst various internal and external threats of counter-revolution. This is why we have proposed that the constitution, which is put into

action after the proletarian class seizes power, should provide the right for the oppressed classes, not the enemy, to rebel against the Party, if it turns revisionist, and to form a new one to continue the revolution under the given circumstances.

On the other hand, the Party's necessity to go for the people's mandate makes them more responsible towards the masses of people. If they are not to face competition among the masses to remain in the leadership of power, then there remains a material basis, in which the relation between the Party and the masses becomes formal and mechanical, consequently it provides an opportunity for bureaucracy to breed up from within the Party itself. Past experience justifies this. Hence, we believe multiparty competition for the people's government and, along with this, the people's right to supervise, control and intervene, including the recalling of their representatives from power, provides a kind of hook in the hands of the masses that can drag the wrongdoing comrades into their court. This process makes the relation between the Party and the masses livelier and vibrant, which creates a helpful objective environment for the wrongdoers to transform, either in a positive or negative direction.

Criticizing our position, your letter writes, "We feel that to make the most essential question one of formal democracy, and its expression in elections, competing political parties, and the like, is a serious mistake and will strengthen tendencies toward the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, or its outright overthrow by counter-revolutionaries." We don't think the question is as simple as you have placed here. Everyone knows there was no multiparty competition, and the like, in Russia and China, which according to you is the main source of strengthening tendencies towards the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Then why did Russia and China fail to sustain the revolution and continue with the dictatorship of the proletariat until communism? Multiparty competition is not the only way by which imperialism can play a role to reverse the revolution. We request comrades to focus the debate on what positive and negative consequences it can lead to if such a competition is put into practice under the proletarian dictatorship, but not to

reject it outright by accusing it as formal democracy of the bourgeoisie. Simply criticizing our proposals, based on logical arguments, does not solve the problem that our class is confronting now. We think the fate of the proletarian revolution in the twenty-first century relies on our generation, mainly our two parties at present. We request RCP to dare to break the traditional way of dogmatic thinking and raise the level of struggle to meet the need of the day.

We would like again to quote two sentences from your letter. It writes, "China did not just gradually become more and more capitalist, more and more 'totalitarian', as the state grew stronger and stronger. In order for capitalism to be transformed state power had to be seized by the capitalist roaders, which they did through a coup d'état after Mao's death." Firstly, this kind of interpretation doesn't represent dialectical materialism, because it negates the inevitability of quantitative development for a qualitative leap. There was a material basis mainly in the superstructure for the counter-revolution to take place, which was constantly developing from within the socialist state itself. Had there been no such situation, why had Mao to struggle against various evils like, for example, the three excesses and five excesses and finally launch the GPCR against the revisionist headquarters? Had there been no such material basis, counter-revolution could not have taken place in a single stroke on the wish of revisionists.. Rather, the fact is Mao was late to foresee this situation.

Secondly, this kind of argument leads to the conclusion that it is the revisionists alone who are responsible for counter-revolution. This way of thinking does not go into the depth of the problem but skips the question of why revolutionaries failed to prevent the emergence of revisionists from within a revolutionary party. Revolutionaries must not remain self-content only by cursing revisionists for the damaging consequences, but should emphasize more what mistakes they made in the past and what measures they should take to correct them at present. The trend of cursing others for a mistake and enjoying oneself from such acts does not represent either a proletarian responsibility or culture.

Democratic Republic – A Transitional Form

Let us initiate our discussion on this topic by quoting a sentence from your letter to us. It writes, “The role and character of the ruling classes and their political representatives, such as the parliamentary parties, are determined fundamentally not by their relation to the monarchy but by their relationship to imperialism and feudalism.” Strategically, it is very much correct. But, in our case, even though there is no fundamental difference between monarchy and the parliamentary parties strategically on the question of their relation to feudalism and imperialism, in a tactical sense there are some conflicting aspects existing between them. It was for this reason that we have been able to take advantage of their conflict during the past ten years of People’s War. This conflict is not yet resolved. Our political tactics of an interim government, constituent assembly and democratic republic of this conflict.

The political resolution that our Central Committee Meeting adopted unanimously in 2005 clarifies our position on this tactical slogan. It reads, “Now the slogan of interim government, election of the constituent assembly and democratic republic that our Party, taking into account the international and domestic balance of power, has formulated is a tactical slogan put forward for the forward-looking political way out. Remaining clear on the principle that the tactics must serve strategy, our Party has viewed the democratic republic neither as the bourgeois parliamentary republic nor directly as the new-democratic one. This republic, with an extensive reorganization of the state power as to resolve the problems related with class, nationality, region and sex prevailing in the country, would play a role of transitional multiparty republic. Certainly, the reactionary class and their parties will try to transform this republic into a bourgeois parliamentary one, whereas our Party of the proletarian class will try to transform it into a new-democratic republic. How long the period of transition will be is not a thing that can right now be ascertained. It is clear that it will depend upon the then national and international situation and state of power balance. As for now, this slogan has played and will play an important role to unite all the forces against the ab-

solute monarchy dominant in the old state, for it has been a common enemy for both revolutionary and parliamentary forces.” We don’t think more explanation is required to clarify our position on this tactic.

The question of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is very much linked with this tactical slogan. Clarifying our position on the PLA, a unanimous resolution of the CC meeting held in 2006, writes, “In the present context, when domestic and foreign reactionary elements are conspiring against the Nepalese people’s aspiration of progress and peace, the whole Party from top to bottom must give maximum emphasis to the question of consolidating and expanding the People’s Liberation Army and keeping them prepared to go any time into the war front. In the present sensitive stage, when imperialism and reaction will struggle to disarm the People’s Liberation Army, and our Party will struggle to dissolve the ‘royal’ army in the front of talks, if the Party failed to consolidate and expand the People’s Liberation Army and keep it prepared 24 hours for war, the Nepalese people would suffer a big defeat. The Party can have a lot of compromises in the domain of politics and diplomacy, but will never give up the real strength, the People’s Liberation Army and the arms they possess that the Nepalese people have gained with the blood of thousands of martyrs. Its name and structure can be changed in accordance with the verdict of the people, but even its name will not be changed as to benefit the imperialists and reaction and their wishes and demands. The Party will never tolerate any vacillation in this basic class and theoretical question.”

In general, tactical political slogans are materialized less in practice. This is because reactionary think tanks understand that it has a direct link with the strategic goal of the revolutionaries, and they know that the proletarian class takes advantage of it. But sometimes they are compelled to agree with it because the next alternative remaining for them becomes worse than that. In this sense, revolutionaries must not put forward tactical political slogans with the assumption that they are not being put into action. That is why our tactics has been so adopted that in both cases, whether it is being put into action or not, it can be linked with the strategic goal for a higher level of offensive against

the enemy. The main thing it needs to have is the political strength to weaken and isolate the enemy by rallying people around this slogan. When the politics of the proletarian class gets established among the masses, then the masses will have no hesitation to rally around the Party raising that slogan. We believe this slogan has been doing this.

The democratic republic can take its shape only after the restructuring of the state, which the document has clearly mentioned. It will be structured so as to resolve the basic problems of the oppressed classes, nationalities, sex and regions, the content of the new-democratic revolution. In whatever ways we manoeuvre in between with this terminology, it does not make any difference in the essence of the strategic goal. What we can say now to your Party is, just be patient – to wait and see.

Strategy And Tactics

Dialectical and historical materialism, the revolutionary ideology, is a science, and revolutionary politics is the art of developing tactics in favour of the proletarian class interest. Tactics cannot be copied from a book, nor can anyone away from the knowledge of objective reality suggest it. It is creatively developed on the basis of the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. In this sense, one should be very flexible in tactics, because the objective situation goes on changing. But strategy represents a specific target or goal so as to resolve the basic contradictions in the given society. The revolutionaries must remain firm on strategy till the basic contradictions of the society are resolved. And tactics must serve strategy.

Memorizing things from books and interpreting for hours and hours on their basis is one thing, and applying them in living practice is qualitatively another. Frankly speaking, it is very easy not to commit any mistakes in strategy. But it is extremely difficult to take up and apply appropriate tactics in the service of strategy. It is dangerous too. Where there is more danger, there is more opportunity, this is dialectics. The test of revolutionaries, including your Party, is best taken by tactics, not strategy. Therefore, the fate of the revolution depends fully not on the strategy alone, but on what

kinds of tactical moves one adopts at various junctures of the revolution to attain the strategic goal.

We can confidently say that we have been correctly applying the dialectics of strategic firmness and tactical flexibility in our revolutionary practice, since before the initiation of the People's War. It is open to the world's people, including your Party, that we had united with revisionists, we had been in parliament with 11 MPs, we already had two rounds of negotiations with the enemies, and the third round is going on. The Interim Government and constituent assembly election are on the immediate agenda. Comrades, if we were wrong in handling the dialectics of tactical flexibility and strategic firmness in our practice of waging class struggle, we would have been finished quite before. Any one of these tactical moves was enough to make us revisionist, the whole set was not necessary.

Yes, there is always a serious danger of tactics eating up strategy or policy eating up politics, the synthesis of MKP according to your letter. Tactical flexibility without strategic firmness creates this danger, and its ultimate consequence is reformism and revisionism. It is manifested in the form of 'fighting to negotiate', not 'negotiating to fight'. But, there is other danger too, which you did not mention in your letter. It is: strategy becoming tactics, in other words, having no tactics, or politics eating up policies. To say this in another way, it is strategic firmness without tactical flexibility, of which the end result is dogmato-sectarianism.

Those who are drowned in the quagmire of tactical flexibility without strategic firmness understand our Party as dogmatic, whereas, those who are suffering from the jaundice of strategic firmness without tactical flexibility see us moving towards reformism and revisionism. Confidently, what we can say is that both of these accusations are wrong, but we are correct, because we have been applying in our practice strategic firmness and tactical flexibility dialectically. The qualitative leap of the People's War in the past ten and a half years justifies this fact.

Our Party is very keenly trying to learn from the experiences of revolutionary struggles and tactical moves of the International Communist Movement, in general, and the latest experiences of Peru and Nicara-

gua in particular.. We believe that both ways of adopting tactics, in Peru and Nicaragua, were wrong. We are confident that we can protect our movement from the mistakes committed in these two countries.

On the basis of our experience of unity and struggle with your Party in the past in general and your letter at present in particular, we believe that your Party is deeply suffering from the dogmato-sectarian trend. Therefore, we are not surprised to receive from your Party a warning bell through your letter in which it has doubted that our revolution is sliding towards revisionism. We know it is not your wish to indirectly accuse us of revisionism, but it is your way of thinking that has led you to this conclusion. Nevertheless, we don't claim that we are immune to committing any mistakes in our path. In this sense, your letter has contributed significantly to alerting us to the possible dangers ahead on our journey.

New Democratic Republic Of Nepal And The Army

What our present position is on the PLA in the context, when your letter has suspected us of dissolving it, has been clarified in the part of the document excerpted before. We don't think it necessary to elaborate on this more. But, given our geopolitical situation, we are developing some concepts about the strength of the army in the New Democratic Republic of Nepal. It is a geographical fact that our country, inhabited only by 25 million people, is sandwiched between two giant nations, India and China, each of which has more than one billion inhabitants. Chinese military strength is being developed so as to counter US imperialism. The Indian army is known to be the fourth-strongest army in the world. From the resources we have in our country and the strength of our PLA, even if we recruit all of the youths within it, we cannot think of defeating either of the armies neighbouring us, let alone the US imperialist army, to defend our geographical integrity from foreign military aggression.

In this objective situation, we have to maintain our army not to fight foreign military aggression, but so as to provide military training to the general masses in the form of the militia. Only the armed sea of the masses,

equipped with revolutionary ideology and politics, can defend our geographical integrity. Just for example, we have a brilliant history of heroic struggles in the past. The Nepalese masses equipped with domestic weapons and aged from 11 to 65 years had, under the leadership of patriotic army generals like Bhakti Thapa and Balbhadra Kunwar, defeated British aggressors attacking from the South, in Nalapani. Based upon the aforesaid historical facts too, we think that some thousands of the PLA will be sufficient to train the general masses so as to defend her geographical integrity under the New Democratic and Socialist Republic of Nepal.

Our Party has developed this concept on the basis of the bitter experiences of the past revolutions too. This means it is related to how the relation between the army and the general masses can be maintained as cordial as it was before the capture of power. But, after the seizure of power, if the PLA are set in big permanent army barracks, objectively this would cut off the previous vibrant relation of 'water and fish' and 'soil and seed' between the general masses and their army, and consequently a bureaucratic set-up would start getting its shape from within this. This is why we are for developing a new methodology and mechanism by which bureaucracy could be frustrated from within the army, so that a strong people's relationship with them is maintained. We think this way of maintaining the People's Army can democratize it more, can involve them more with mass activities and strong ideological and political unity, which so develops among their ranks and the masses, and enables them to fight unitedly against both threats, internal and external. This can also be a new concept for maintaining the army in the socialist countries, in the 21st century, to fight international imperialism. We want to debate from this height.

Miscellaneous points

Let us excerpt some of the important parts of a sentence or sentences from the latter part of your letter under different headings like, "A Questionable Proposal", "On The International Community", "Nepal and the Imperialist World Order", etc. These are as under:

"And, it must be pointed out, if the enemies were to accept such a 'political solution' it could well be coupled with, or be a prelude to, relying on

military means to enforce a military solution, as we have seen far too often in history (Indonesia, Chile, Iraq in 1965)."

"...it is equally true that the existing world order will not tolerate a genuine people's revolutionary state."

"...an unwritten consensus in the international community that the Maoists must not be allowed to come to power. ... We think it is very accurate."

"...the 'international community' — will bitterly oppose you and do everything they can to prevent you from coming to power in the first place, and to overthrow your rule, if you do succeed in coming to power, and this will very likely involve different types of military aggression as well as economic sabotage and blockade, espionage activities and the financing and training of counter-revolutionaries all of which is "business as usual" for the imperialist states and India as well, for that matter."

First of all, we would like to say that your concerns expressed in these excerpts is very much correct, so we share them. Imperialism will not tolerate any revolutionary to rule in any part of this earth as long as they can.. It was not true that the CPSU and CPC first made imperialism happy with their politics and tactics, and then collected support to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in their countries. Also it was not true that they successfully established the dictatorship of the proletariat because they were superior to imperialism militarily. The fact was that the Party of the proletariat was superior in mobilising people around it, handling contradictions among the enemies and using them in one's favour dialectically, because their outlook was scientific and they were far-sighted. The same is true for now also.

From the whole of your letter, it implies that imperialism will not allow any revolutionaries to have a political settlement in a peaceful way and will conspire with 'business as usual' to destroy revolution.. And it also implies that what our Party is doing now tactically is wrong and nonsense. Therefore your letter has suggested us to go straightforward in a military way, with 'business as usual'. We appreciate your concern; but we understand imperialism will not tolerate us in power at

all, as long as they can, even if we go with 'business as usual' too. That is why, whether imperialism will tolerate us or not is not the question at all behind our tactics; with which tactics we can defeat imperialism in the present context is the only question. We are not self-assured on the question that imperialism will allow resolving the civil war peacefully in the way our Party wants, but we are confident that we can defeat imperialism and their puppets in the military front by going through this tactic only. This is the question of applying the mass line correctly.

Yes, there are some confusing positions in our interpretations, in several contexts. We think sometimes they are necessary. If we can confuse our enemies and the international community with our tactical dealings, it can divide them to a certain extent, which will benefit our revolution. Problems will arise only if the Party of the proletariat itself is confused. So long as the ideological and political line is clear and the Party is committed to accomplishing its strategic mission, it can lead the masses in all circumstances. Revolutionaries can lead the masses ahead from the height of consciousness they acquire from the class struggle in society, not from the height of consciousness the Party of the proletariat has. It is a question of not dictating to them to do what we want, but of being together with the masses to deal with the situation and applying the mass line to develop their consciousness.

Your letter has very apprehensively raised one question. If the enemy accepts your demand, just for example, a constituent assembly, you are obligated to agree with it; otherwise you will lose the confidence of the masses. We appreciate your anxiety. But we understand that a constituent assembly in itself is not a solution, but its political content can be. For example, if the constituent assembly can ensure the dissolution of the royal army, the reorganization of the national army under our leadership, the implementation of revolutionary land reform based upon the policy of land to the tiller, the right of nations to self-determination, an end to social discrimination, development and prosperity, etc., why should one oppose it? By this, we mean that the constituent assembly is decided by its political content, not by its form. It is not an inert thing but full of

contradictions, only what is required is our capability to use those contradictions in favour of our strategic goal.

The masses never compromise with their necessities but prefer peaceful execution. It is the task of the revolutionary parties to prove through practice that their necessities are not met by peaceful means. And only by doing this can the Party of the proletariat lead them to violent struggles. We understand that the enemy will not allow us to attain our strategic goal in a peaceful way, but we can lead the masses in violent struggle to overthrow them with such political tactics.

Conclusion

This is our short response to your letter dated 1 October 2005. We hope we succeeded to place our position clearly, mainly on the questions you have raised in the letter.

We understand that our two Parties have a convergence of views on the need to synthesize the positive and negative experiences of the past successful revolutions. Also we have convergences of views on the need to develop MLM to confront the challenges before our class in the twenty-first century. We believe that MLM can be developed in the course of applying historical and dialectical materialism in the practice of class struggle in society, two-line struggle among the entire revolutionary ranks all across the world, and the correct synthesis of past experience. Our two parties have a good opportunity to wage struggle, both being together in RIM. As an internationalist class, both of us have an important responsibility to fight unitedly for our class in the USA, in Nepal and the world as well. We take this response of ours as a first step towards that direction.

WITH REVOLUTIONARY GREETINGS!

**FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE,
COMMUNIST PARTY OF NEPAL (MAOIST)**

Outrage: Obama Keeps Nepal Maoists on Terrorist List

Posted at KasamaProject.org on May 1, 2009

As Kathmandu filled with people demanding popular control over the national army, the Obama Administration added its voice to those (like the Indian Ambassador) who have been encouraging the Nepali Army to resist the creation of a New Nepal.

Citing the continued radical activity of forces like the Maoists' Young Communist League, the Obama Administration announced that it would keep the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) on its international Terrorist Watch List.

This decision is revealing and outrageous on many levels.

First, it is unjust and even absurd to put a mass revolutionary and popular movement on such a "terrorist" list — and it amounts to a public decision to dishonestly equate any radical movement for change with "terrorism." It is, in addition, an encouragement to extreme, royalist and reactionary forces in Nepal who are seeking a way to thwart the powerful popular will for radical changes in this heavily feudal country. And finally, this decision represents a clear legal threat to the members and leaders of the UCPN(M) — threatening them with international sanctions, surveillance, travel restrictions and even kidnapping-by-governments. In a world where Guantanamo Bay prison still exists, and where CIA rendition has not been publicly exposed and repudiated — the placing of organizations on a "terrorism" watch list is also a threat of future kidnapping and torture by U.S. government agents.

This outrage needs to be widely known among the people of the world — and among progressive the people of the United States. And this requires an energetic effort to break through the media blackout on Nepal and its revolutionary movement.

* * * * *

From the Times of India:

KATHMANDU: As Nepal's ruling Maoist party amassed its cadres at the heart of the city for a May Day rally Friday and threatened to quit the government if army chief Gen Rookmangud Katawal was not dismissed, an unexpected blow came from Washing-

ton that said the Obama government would continue its predecessor George W Bush's policy of keeping the former rebels on its watch list of terror organisations.

The US Department of State's 2008 country reports, released in Washington late on Thursday, said that though the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) won the Constituent Assembly election in 2008 and took control of various government ministries as well as the prime minister's position, it remained a US-designated terrorist entity under the Terrorism Exclusion List.

The report on Nepal blamed the Young Communist League (YCL), the strong arm of the former guerrillas that has been dubbed the Young Criminal League by the opposition, for much of the continuing violence despite the end of the Maoist insurgency three years ago.

"Although the Maoist party ended a 10-year insurgency in 2006 and entered into the interim government in April 2007, factions of the Maoists continued to engage in violence, extortion, and abductions," it said. "The Maoist-affiliated YCL, which included former members of the People's Liberation Army and grew increasingly prominent during 2007, carried on the Maoist militia's tactics of abuse, abduction, murder, intimidation, and extortion in cities and villages."

The YCL violence, according to Washington, triggered further violence from the other political parties "In response to continued violence by Maoist-affiliated youth, other political parties condoned the use of violence for their youth wings," it said. Washington also felt that its antiterrorism assistance was "constrained by the presence of the Maoists within the government".

The new Democrat government's decision to keep the Maoists on its terrorist list comes despite their hectic lobbying both in the US and at home. Last year, Maoist Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda attended a dinner hosted by Bush and after consultations with Richard Boucher, assistant secretary for Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, had exuded confidence that the terror tag would be lifted.

There was no immediate response from the Maoists as their top leaders were busy attending May Day rallies where they continued the war on the army chief.

Maoist Finance Minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai said at a massive meet in Kathmandu's Tundikhel open ground that his party would pull out of the government if its coalition partners refused to sack the controversial general.

Nepal: “We are ready to capture Nepal Army HQ”

Posted at KasamaProject.org on April 23, 2009

Ka Frank gathered these press clippings.

We are ready to capture Nepal Army HQ: Maoist leaders –TGW

The Maoists affiliated peoples’ organizations organized rallies in several parts of the country supporting the government’s decision to seek clarification from the Chief of the Nepal Army Mr. Rukmangad Katawal.

The Maoists’ sister organizations have been organizing rallies in support of the government move since last two days. The protestors were mainly demanding the government to immediately sack CoAS Katawal.

On Wednesday, April 22, 2009, the Maoists’ cadres not only chanted anti-Nepal Army slogans but also criticized their own government for the delay in sacking the Nepal Army Chief. The Maoists’ leaders addressing the rallies also demanded immediate resignation from Katawal for his role in murdering the Maoists’ cadres during the revolt and at time of the Peoples’ Uprising-II.

Yuba Raj Chaulagai, the vice president of the Maoists’ affiliated Students’ union told the mass that the Maoists are all prepared to capture Nepal Army headquarters if needed to remove Katawal.

“We know how to fire bullets, if the Prime Minister orders we will begin fighting instantly”, he added.

Ferment in Nepal: A Dynamic Vortex of Revolutionary Change

Posted at KasamaProject.org on April 10, 2009

The following report appeared in LINKS. Kasama posts materials that are of interest, but such posting does not mean endorsement of the specific analysis.

By Bill Templer,

January 3, 2009 — One remarkable laboratory that discussion in much of the world’s progressive press tends to neglect is the dynamic vortex of revolutionary change in Nepal. Since spring, Nepal has something that may be making genuine history: a Maoist people’s movement, that, led by the CPN (Maoist), and the struggle of the People’s Liberation Army over a decade, has come to state power through the ballot box. As Tufts University historian Gary Leupp wrote last April:

“It ought to be the ballot heard ’round the world. It ought to be front page news. [...] This moment may in the not distant future be seen as another 1917, another 1949.”[1]

Leupp has been one of the very few in the left media in the geopolitical North to call attention to this momentous change, and its current developments, albeit with little echo. Editors of some well-known journals refuse to consider an article that mentions Maoism, however contemporary, in a favourable light.

Washington-based trade union organiser David Hoskins has been one of the few on the Marxist left in the US to stress the world-historical significance of the struggle in Nepal:

“The state of the revolutionary movement in Asia takes on new significance in light of the recent advances made in Nepal and the rising global capitalist crisis. [...] It is our responsibility as US revolutionaries to offer our unconditional support to the Nepalese revolution.”[2]

That solidarity was also voiced by the Party for Socialism and Liberation in the United States:

“The election of Prachanda is an achievement that deserves the support of revolutionaries around the world. A struggle over Nepal’s new constitution is bound to pit conflicting class interests against each other in the months to come. International solidarity will play a key role in facilitating the victory of Nepal’s workers and peasants.”[3]

The present article assumes one can be critical of certain historical aspects of socialism under Mao while still keeping an open mind about the Maoist-led social and political transformation now going on in Nepal, with all the internal upheaval and debate it is generating — and perhaps learning from its actual tactics and internal controversy. Whether you agree with CPN (M) analyses and strategies or not., blocking out any sustained focus on the Nepali revolution, labelling change there as “Stalinist”, “bolshevik” or “authoritarian”, can only preclude analysis and critique. This is all the more pertinent at this extraordinary juncture in the planetary capitalist economic collapse, where conditions worldwide are changing the minds of many. Fred Goldstein notes: “Globalization, capitalist restructuring, the hardships of low-wage capitalism, and growing racism and national oppression are creating the material basis for a new era of rebellion and class unity.”[4]

Convergence in diversity

The recent mass anti-repression insurrection in Greece is one point of working-class upsurge, what really fuelled Barack Obama’s presidential victory from below is another. And the April 2008 election victory of the CPN (M) in Nepal is still another. These nodes of people’s ferment reflect that “convergence in diversity” of the oppressed and exploited from all walks and continents united in opposition to the neo-reactionary order which economist Samir Amin sees as the nucleus for a new stage in the revolutionary project today, “recognizing the diversity, not only of movements which are fragmented but of political forces which are operating with them, of ideologies and even visions of the future of those political forces.” In his projected scenario for grounded socialist change, he sees the Left finding a critical mass and “moving into the masses to defend, not in rhetoric but in fact in action and through action,

their real economic and social interests”.[5] That is at the core of the struggle in the street and inside the government in Nepal today.

Emergent dynamic agendas for struggle like Prachanda Path — and the very vigorous internal party debate on how to move forward without sacrificing revolutionary vision — belong more centrally on our own horizons of discussion. The revolution in Nepal faces what can threaten to become a quagmire of compromise, reformism and defeat. Internally, this is a struggle between hostile class enemies for control over the Nepalese state. It also is confronted with sustained efforts by political elites in Washington, Delhi and other quarters, and by opponents like the bourgeois Nepali Congress on its home turf (second-largest party), to undermine the revolutionary process. The other major Marxist party in the coalition, with some 15% of the National Assembly, the CPN-UML (United Marxist-Leninist) remains highly critical of the Maoist leadership, a long-standing rival, and could, in fierce rivalry, seek to topple the present government.[6] The Madeshi civil rights movement in the southern plain remains a powerful divisive force struggling for ethnic rights and greater autonomy, and members of the Madeshi People’s Rights Forum were involved in heavy clashes with the CPN (M) in March 2007. Demands for more autonomy in the Terai/Madesh south continue.[7] The Asian Human Rights Commission has issued *The State of Human Rights in Nepal*, which paints a complex picture in a highly diverse country with legacies of multiple ethnic oppression.[8] Yet nowhere else in the world has a movement oriented to Marxism and contemporary Maoist thought achieved the effective reins of democratic power, projecting its visions of “21st century socialism”.

This article suggests some sources for looking more openly from afar at what’s happening in Nepal, in a spirit of critical solidarity, getting better informed to enable grounded judgement. All footnotes are hyperlinks to relevant reports, largely in the Nepalese media.

Revolution in a “least developed country”

Nepal is a prime landlocked “least developed country” of 29.5 million, with some 80% of Nepalis labouring as poor agriculturalists. Literally sandwiched between Asia’s two giants, the famous dictum by Prithvi Narayan Shah, founder of the Shah monarchy in the 18th century recently abolished, was that “Nepal is a yam between two stones”. Much of the country is barely accessible by road, remoteness takes on an almost surreal quality in the hills and mountains north of the narrow southern plain of the Terai (Madesh). Space there is a largely vertical topography where a hundred languages flourish, where villages in one valley are totally cut off from settlements in the next. The top 5 per cent of landholders own 27 per cent of agricultural land, the bottom 44 per cent occupy only 14 per cent of the land. Land reform is crucial for the Nepali masses to dismantle the multiple structures of the feudal system that now still dominate the country.[9]

The literacy NGO Room to Read is active in building village libraries: “A child growing up in Nepal faces some of the worst living conditions in the world. Roughly 50% of Nepalese live in poverty — on less than US\$1 a day. Of every 100 children in Nepal, 84 live in villages, 47 are malnourished, and 40 belong to extremely poor families [...] While 35% of males are illiterate, 57% of females cannot read or write.”[10]

A steady torrent of migrant workers continues to pour into India to the south, with nearly 70% finding menial labour as porters, security guards and restaurant help. A recent study of trafficked Nepalese girls, most in their early teens, working in debt bondage and near slavery in Indian cities pointed up the desperate plight of young Nepalese women seeking to survive, and often disowned by their families back in the impoverished villages they were raised in.[11] Estimates are that some 200,000 Nepalese girls are working as prostitutes in virtual bondage in Indian cities, nearly a quarter under the age of 16.[12]

Production for profit or for use?

Some fanciful neoliberal development speculation sees Nepal as the future entrepreneurial link between China and India, with trans-Himalayan highways, IT

parks, vast investment in fibre optics, arguing that “The rising middle classes — close to a billion — in the two countries can be a bonanza for Nepal” — at the same time turning the country into a huge Himalayan megaresort, an illusory capitalist pipe dream.[13] Revolutionaries in the CPN (M) are guided by alternative visions of economy, society and workers’ democracy. But whether they can move forward to a major break with the capitalist cash nexus and, beyond subsistence agriculture, an array of forms of production for use, not profit, remains to be seen. After decades of disdevelopment, for example, Nepal faces the worst national electricity crisis in Asia, with power cuts lasting up to 10 hours daily, with load shedding up to 16 hours a day projected by early spring 2009.[14] That shortfall is also impacting on tourism, especially in towns like Pokhara. Some lateral socialist brainstorming is needed on practicable schemes for solar, hydro and geothermal energy. Transformation and people’s power are needed literally from the ground up. Experimentation with LETS (Local Economic Transfer System) in rural areas may be one avenue for cooperative change, building community support networks and mutual aid.[15]

Below I touch on some of the contemporary discussion inside the CPN (M) and suggest online material and web sites to explore the dynamic changes in Nepal, largely through indigenous voices in the struggle, refracted in part through the lens of socialist theorist Samir Amin, a chief architect of the 2006 Bamako Appeal[16], and in basic solidarity with revolutionary developments on the ground in Nepal.

Prachanda on the CPN (M) path

As a point of departure, instructive is the interview with CPN (M) chairperson Pushpal Kamal Dahal (aka “Prachanda”), conducted earlier in 2008 by people from the IPS in Washington, visiting in Kathmandu, on video as Part 1 [17] and Part 2.[18] Candid and concise, Dahal lays out the vision of the movement in the early weeks of its ascendance to state power. This is lived experience over a long struggle, with a powerful legacy of liberation that is distinctive to Nepal but applicable far beyond:

“As the CPN-Maoist has already declared its decision to write a 21st century Communist Manifesto, it has also started a debate and discussion in the Communist spirit, not only in the country, but also in the world.”[19]

This can be supplemented by Chairman Dahal’s address, “A Maoist Vision for a New Nepal,” given at the New School University on September 26, 2008, followed by an extended question and answer period, along with the text of his earlier address that same day to the UN General Assembly. Likewise of interest is the historic interview with Prachanda by the US left journalist Li Onesto at the height of the People’s War in the spring of 1999.[20]

“All the bases belong to the old class power”

Yet the compromises that now entails has deepened debate and divisions within the party on future anti-capitalist strategy in transforming Nepal and concrete tactics as the major formation in power, repeatedly frustrated by the actions and rhetoric of the Nepali Congress Party. Part of that discussion is on the dangers of succumbing to the pull of reformism. Netra Bikram Chand, aka “Biplap”, a member of the party’s central committee, provides critical analysis on “The differences of opinion within our party” in the biweekly English paper of the CPN (M), *The Red Star*. [21] Biplap discusses the tactics necessary to destroy the existing “bases and the bodies of the comprador capitalist power and shatter them.” In his view:

The class character of the democratic republic is of a bourgeois class character. After the constituent assembly, the monarchy has been abolished and the republic has been established, however, there is no change in its class character. The party has reached up to the super structure of the state power, the constituent assembly government; but all of the bases belong to the old class power.

He differs with the party’s leader on the shape of a road forward, and fears that if the CPN (M) follows the program proposed by Prachanda, “our party will be drowned into the swamp of reformism up over its head”.

“On the brink of the change of an age”

The debate on the future path forward in Nepal came to a head in a national convention of the CPN (M) in November 2008, where, after pretty heated discussion, some solid basis of unity was achieved. The core issues are outlined by Indra Mohan Sigdel (aka “Basanta”). [22] A decision was reached to move toward a “people’s federal democratic national republic” as the longer-term goal, and that among the “three fronts of struggle” – the constituent assembly, the government and the street – “the street struggle would be the principal one”. [23] The street struggle also means involving the masses at the grassroots in the dynamic of discussion, experiment and change. Kumar Dahal has warned of possible counter-revolution, and likewise stresses the need for struggle “in the street”: “The workers should advance ahead to guarantee and establish the working class as the decisive force in the state. Workers should advance ahead to take the major responsibilities in the policy-making place.” [24]

Part of that struggle in the streets and villages is being carried forward by the CPN (M)’s Young Communist League, with nearly half a million members. It is organising neighborhood cleanup campaigns, programs to counter youth unemployment, communal development initiatives in agriculture, initiatives against corruption and crime. [25] They remain controversial because accused of violence, and are often in a critical spotlight, but their mobilisation of the Nepalese young and hands-on contribution to social betterment cannot be denied. Agitating on campuses, the All Nepal National Independent Students Union (Revolutionary) is the student wing of the CPN (M), struggling to democratise education at all levels. [26] It has also been involved in strike action against conservative university administrations on a number of campuses, and in clashes with other student organisations.

In early November 2008, Finance Minister Baburam Bhattarai announced the government’s intention to put an end to private primary and secondary schools in Nepal in the near future, because of the privilege that breeds. This is perhaps the only principled statement in any country to enact policy to eliminate privatisation and commercialisation of education in the name

of educational equity. About a third of Nepal's schools are now private, catering largely, though not exclusively, to children from families with higher incomes. Bhattarai also outlined the government's intention to issue some kind of academic certificate to men and women who fought in the people's liberation forces and sacrificed their schooling.[27]

Through all this, the CPN (M) is determined to stick to its principles. Stressing the unwillingness of the party to participate in a coalition government that frustrates the basic promises of radical change made to the Nepalese people, Prime Minister Dahal threatened in December 2008 that his party might leave the government by mid-January to struggle in opposition rather than compromise its program: "Steps of struggle still remain to fulfill what we want. We are on the brink of the change of an age." [28] D. Bastola notes: "As long as the rooted feudalism and comprador bureaucrat capitalism is not abolished, the Nepalese people cannot be free, and the national economy cannot be built up." [29]

"Plain living, hard struggle"

In December 2008, the party prepared a battery of new "codes for simple living" for all Constituent Assembly members, with guidelines for type of vehicle (battery-driven Chinese bicycle preferred), simple clothing, use mainly of public transport, and a limit of two cell phones. The codes are in response to "criticisms that Maoist leaders were starting to lead opulent lifestyles opposed to their proletarian philosophy". [30]

A new democratic space

Writing that "Nepalese society is committed to fulfill the dream of a new Nepal through an epoch making ideological, political, economic, and cultural transformation, raising the banner of mass insurrection against semi-feudal and semi-colonial conditions in the country", the new minister of culture and state restructuring, Gopal Kirati, issued a concept paper in late 2008 for public discussion detailing new ideas for a radical transformation of local and regional organisation, and ethnic autonomous structures, including an "Autonomous Sherpa State". In this revolutionary design, 800

districts are proposed. Outlining a new concept of ethnic pluralism and national consciousness, Kirati notes: "By abandoning the renegade definition of Nepal as a 'yam between two rocks', the Peoples of the Republic of Nepal will establish a strong definition of nationality. This definition will be a 'dynamite' between the two rocks in 21st century rather than a yam," grounded on "proletarian internationalism." [31]

A new international?

Flanking a spectrum of debate and self-criticism inside the party, Roshan Kisson and Chandra have a new two-part interview with Samir Amin, "We need a new international" [32] and "Maoism is needed everywhere in the world", [33] first published in *The Red Star*. Samir Amin is current chair of the World Forum for Alternatives. [34] The interview also echoes arguments from his new book *The World We Wish to See*. [35]

In fundamental solidarity with the CPN (M), he stresses that: the Nepalese have, at least, succeeded at the first chapter of basing their struggle in peasant revolt and then making, becoming, a force able to overthrow the regime, the King and his comprador servants; and then coming in to negotiation, agreement, with other possible partners in the building of a national, popular, democratic, hegemonic alternative block; alternative to the comprador ruling class submitting to imperialism and neo-liberalism. [36]

He develops a strong argument for the need for the left in the West to look carefully at what is happening on the ground and inside the revolutionary echelon in Nepal. His book *The Future of Maoism* (Monthly Review, 1981) can now be read in the light of recent events.

The Cultural Revolution revisited

Bastola stresses that the November 2008 national convention of the CNP(M) was an exercise in the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution", bringing the masses back into the dynamic of transformation. Changing perspectives on the legacy of Mao's vision of transformation for China, and the actual reality of the Cultural Revolution, "counter-narratives" to the usual

take on that era, are being re-explored in the West. A December 2008 symposium on “Rediscovering China’s Cultural Revolution: Art and Politics, Lived Experience, Legacies of Liberation,”[37] was organised at NYU in Manhattan by Revolution Books, an affiliate of the Revolutionary Communist Party[38], and Set the Record Straight project, with input from Monthly Review and others. Typical of the widespread blackout on any renewed exploration of the Cultural Revolution in the progressive media of the global North, that symposium received scant coverage. Among its speakers, historian Dongping Han introduced his new book *The Unknown Cultural Revolution: Life and Change in a Chinese Village* (Monthly Review, 2008), that deals with his own experience as manager of a collective village factory during the Cultural Revolution, and his views on Mao’s thought and its vital relevance to struggles today worldwide.[39]

Dongping provides an insider’s view of how farmers in China were empowered through education during the Cultural Revolution, and the special structures of communal democracy that were created: “Chinese farmers had a strong sense that they controlled their own destiny at the time. [...] most Chinese, not just farmers and workers, but professors and artists, were sincerely convinced they were building a better society for themselves, and not just for the working class. They had a new life.” Based on his research and personal experience, Dongping is certain that “despite the efforts of the last 30 years to bury the Cultural Revolution, this era will stand out for people in China, in other Third World countries, and in Europe and in US and the rest of the developed world as well. [...] Mao’s Cultural Revolution should be the most important event in human empowerment in humanity’s 2000-year history.”

Revised views of the Cultural Revolution also emerge from the volume edited by X. Zhong, W. Zheng and Bai Di, *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing Up in the Mao Era* (Rutgers UP, 2001), here reviewed in depth by a Maoist-Third Worldist.[40] “Prarie Fire” stresses:

“The Cultural Revolution, whether intentional or not, was the greatest instance of youth liberation in history. [...] Authority at almost every level could

find itself challenged by youth. This did not just affect the public realm, but also the private realm of the family. In the Manifesto Marx wrote, “Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty.” The early Cultural Revolution, more than any other period, realized the communist goal of youth liberation. [...] Some of Us, despite its own bourgeois outlook, challenges typical, one-sided bourgeois narratives.”

Bai Di is director of Chinese and Asian Studies at Drew University, and also spoke at the December 2008 symposium on the Cultural Revolution at NYU. Another speaker was Li Onesto, whose book *Dispatches from the People’s War in Nepal* (Pluto Press, 2004) was the first account by a foreign journalist of the Maoist insurgency from the inside, as she travelled deep into the liberated guerrilla zones. [41] Perhaps an aspect of the Eurocentrism endemic in some quarters of the Northern left is the refusal to even engage with these voices and dissident perspectives. Why?

Staying better informed

Progressives interested in keeping informed about developments in Nepal can regularly read the biweekly *The Red Star*. [42] A daily more ‘mainstream’ bourgeois political and economic news on Nepal is eKantipur.com. [43]

The website *Revolution in South Asia* provides a solidarity window onto the rapidly unfolding events in Nepal and the broader South Asian region. [44] An Indian Maoist insurgency is spreading in Orissa and Chhattisgarh states, largely unreported outside India. [45] Policy analyst Sean Deblieck, in a bourgeois analysis of how to cope with and neutralise Maoist insurgencies in South Asia, gives an overview of Naxalite movements in India and the CPM (N) in Nepal. He concludes:

“The reason that Maoism was able to take root in India and Nepal stems largely from the failings of politicians and their political systems. It is clear that the lowest castes and classes in these two countries have been largely ignored by their representatives, and development has passed them by.

The Maoists on the other hand are the only party that seems willing to venture into remote areas and to work with the poor. Chairman Mao was unique in recognising the latent potential of such rural peasants, and left behind powerful tactics and a vague ideology that continue to be of use to this day.” [46]

The activity of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), of which the CPN (M) is a part, is a broader frame in South Asia.[47] Yet some currents of “Third-World Maoists” remain fundamentally critical of the RIM, the North American Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), its chairperson Bob Avakian, and RCP solidarity with the CPN (M) strategy to abandon the armed struggle at this juncture and form a coalition government. [sic] [48] This argument will rage on, part of a vibrant debate.

Press freedom and social democracy

One recurrent flashpoint of controversy within Nepal is press freedom, especially the role of the bourgeois press in its criticism of the CPN (M). *United We Blog! For a Democratic Nepal*, established in 2004 by Nepalese journalists during a period of great repression, continues to be a site for broad discussion of issues and developments.[49] Nepal Press Freedom is reporting on intimidation of journalists and fighting to protect and promote “free, fair, and vibrant journalism”.[50] In late December 2008, cadre from the CPN (M) attacked the offices of Himalmedia, which publishes three magazines, after an article appeared critical of the Young Communist League. The Revolutionary Journalists’ Association Nepal and CPN (M) activists condemned the violence, which left many Himalmedia staff injured.[51] Naturally, such conflict, involving the independent media, draws particular media attention. The FES-Nepal (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung), reflecting a longstanding German cultural presence in Nepal,[52] offers a more social democratic view on the path forward and the current situation.[53] So there is a rich heteroglossia of voices and opinions in a dynamic public sphere, as reflected in analytical commentary by political scientist Dev Raj Dahal (head of FES-Nepal) on the “multiple transition” the country is now facing.[54]

Beyond the current clash of diverse camps, an alchemy of radical democratic synergy may emerge.

Working-class protest

In any event, the level of militant popular protest by the people is remarkable. On January 2, 2009, in an unprecedented protest action, local people in the town of Kirtipur outside Kathmandu, the home of Tribhuvan University, the oldest campus in the country, shut down the town and university over demands for compensation for land appropriated from their families to build the university 50 years ago and giving locals more employment opportunities on campus. They vandalised the Tribhuvan University central offices the day before.[55] That came amidst widespread labour protests by workers in various sectors across the nation, in part due to the severe power crisis.

People are learning the power of acting collectively, to address critical grievances. Speaking to workers, Prime Minister Dahal stated that “pretty soon, the government will make an important announcement, which will help usher the nation in a new era”, stressing that the feudalistic mindset of political leaders had affected the performance of the Maoist-led government. He noted that previous political misrule was to blame for the prevailing power crisis: “During [their] 15-year-long rule, dishonest leaders never thought about the looming power crisis. People are suffering now because of their inaction.”[56]

Progressive Nepali Forum in the Americas

The newly formed PNEFA aims to “support activities intended to do away with unjust social, economic and political discriminations and exploitations upon the historically marginalized, working-class Nepalis”.[57] centering in particular on eliminating caste-based discrimination against some 4.5-5.5 million Hindu Dalits (Untouchables) in the new Nepal.[58] Their plight is extreme, and they may make up nearly 20% of the total population.[59] They voted heavily for the CPN (M) in the April 2008 poll.

Other social hegemonies

However remote geographically, Nepal is one of the major laboratories for social and political transformation, and socialist discussion anywhere in the geopolitical South. The ferment of discourse and praxis developing there are relevant far beyond that country's borders, wherever you may stand on the socialist left. Amin is optimistic about a coming upsurge in the tide of counter-globalisation:

conditions are ripe for the emergence of other social hegemonies that make possible a revival of development conceived as it should be: the indissoluble combination of social progress, democratic advancement, and the affirmation of national independence within a negotiated multipolar globalisation. The possibility of these new social hegemonies is already visible on the horizon.[60]

Nepal's transformation may yet augur those emergent "new social hegemonies" at the very top of the world. In India, a segment of the comprador class may harbour growing fears that Nepal, with a huge impoverished rural agricultural population similar to India's, could provide a radical example on the nation's very doorstep for "revolutionary change in the countryside and self-determination for the great majority" (ibid.), as the global crisis in imperial hegemony deepens and a Maoist-led alliance to the north consolidates its position. [61]

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