

Which Way Forward for the UCPN(Maoist) and the Nepali People's Revolutionary Struggle?

MLM Revolutionary Study Group

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The central question facing the Unified Communist Party of Nepal(Maoist) (UCPNM) is whether it can develop the political line, strategy and tactics to conquer state power and wield it in the service of the vast majority of the people of Nepal and the world.

This question has become the subject of discussion and debate throughout the world, ever since the Maoists in Nepal signed an agreement in 2006 to end their 10-year old people's war. Over the years of the people's war, the revolutionary forces had inspired people the world over, winning wave upon wave of victories and building both guerrilla zones and liberated areas which were beginning the work of a new society. The Peoples War in Nepal, it must be said, rekindled the spirit and hopes of revolution around the world. Their successes, winning nearly 80% of the territory of Nepal, had drawn such attention and acclaim that ending of the people's war with the peace agreements of 2006 came as a great surprise and shock to many.

The course which has been followed since has been discussed and debated--and denounced or embraced--by various forces, because the Maoists had achieved so much prior to the 2006 agreement, and had seemed to be approaching nationwide victory. Why this change of course? Was this a departure from a new democratic revolutionary strategy, or was this a sophisticated move toward successfully winning the revolutionary struggle for power?

To answer this question, it must be determined whether Prachanda and the majority of the UCPNM leadership are leading the party and the masses of Nepal to complete the new democratic revolution and build socialism, or they are implementing a disorienting strategy—leading to a political “package deal” in the next few months--that will result in a major setback for the Nepali people's revolutionary struggle.

I. Moving Towards a Package Deal in May 2010

After signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in November 2006, Prachanda and his allies in the party leadership argued that winning a majority or a large plurality of the seats in the 2008 Constituent Assembly elections would allow them to start restructuring the state by peaceful means—by parliamentary politicking backed up by periodic street demonstrations called by the party.

The UCPNM won 40% of the seats in the elections, and this led to the formation of a joint UCPNM–UML (United Marxist-Leninist Party) government with Prachanda as Prime Minister in

August 2008. It didn't last long. This government spent several months spinning its wheels, with Prachanda traveling to the US to meet with Bush and asking to be removed from the US terrorist list. Prachanda also gave a memorable interview in which he envisioned Nepal becoming the "Switzerland of Asia" and somehow achieving parity with this mountainous imperialist banking center and tourist destination in 20 years.¹ Finance Minister Bhattarai drew up ambitious budgets and investment plans that could not be implemented due to obstruction by reactionary business owners and landlords backed by India and the US.²

In May 2009, Prachanda made an ambitious move to assert his control over the state apparatus when he tried to remove Gen. Rookmangud Katawal as commander of the Nepal Army. The generals, with India and the U.S. standing firmly behind them, simply refused to follow Prachanda's orders. The UML threw its support behind the Army, causing the government to collapse.

Protest Campaigns to Apply Pressure on the Nepali Congress and UML

After that fiasco, Prachanda and the UCPN(Maoist) called five stages of protest, focusing first on civilian supremacy, then on rhetorically declaring more than a dozen autonomous ethnically-based states (when they lacked the power to do so in actual terms), and finally on asserting national independence against India. The latter campaign consisted mainly of small demonstrations at the border and against the construction of an Indian hydropower plant, a sit-

¹ <http://espresso.repubblica.it/dettaglio/1431107/&print=true>

² Bhattarai's extremely rightist political orientation comes through in a 2008 interview: "Question: Yet, the business community is not yet comfortable with the Maoist win mainly because of their experience over the past two years. Do you have words of assurance for them? Answer: We would like to assure everyone that once the Maoists come (into government) the investment climate will be even more favourable. There shouldn't be any unnecessary misunderstanding about that. The rumours in the press about our intention are wrong, there are reports of capital flight, but this shouldn't happen. And the other aspect is that once there is political stability, the investment climate will be even better. Our other agenda is economic development and for this we want to mobilise domestic resources and capital, and also welcome private foreign direct investment. The only thing we ask is to be allowed to define our national priorities." <http://www.bannedthought.net/Nepal/Leaders/Bhattarai/InterviewAfterCAElections-080416.pdf> Thus Bhattarai's interview with the WPRM in the fall of 2009, "Fusing People's War and Insurrection," is a transparent attempt to shore up his "Maoist" credentials in the party and among the mass base. <http://www.bannedthought.net/Nepal/Leaders/Bhattarai/Bhattarai-WPRM-091026.pdf>

in at the Indian Embassy, and the symbolic burning of unequal treaties with India.

What is most revealing about this campaign to assert national independence is how it was used to aim the masses' anger and struggle against India and the Indian Army, which is mainly a future threat, rather than the Nepal Army, which is a very real and present threat to the heart of the revolution.

Prachanda said on March 8, 2010 that the several thousand People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers who are slated to join the reactionary Nepal Army will create a situation in which "the Nepal Army and police are going to be our real strength now, and we are going to introduce at least 10,000 of our combatants into the security outfits soon."³ While Prachanda exhorted them to "be ready to capture state power," in reality these revolutionary soldiers will soon be in the most difficult position they have ever been in since they were sent into the cantonments 3 ½ years ago. They will be trying to survive in the barrack-lairs of the enemy.

In the course of these successive rounds of protest, the UCPNM gave the green light to thousands of landless peasants who were more than ready to seize lands from local feudals and absentee landlords. These land seizures reached their height in December 2009⁴, only to vanish (along with the street protests in Kathmandu) when Prachanda entered intensive political negotiations with the top leaders of the Nepali Congress Party and UML.

The leaders of the three major parties—with the US and India backing two of them—are working on a deadline of May 28 to produce a new constitution. The UCPNM is insisting that this new constitution be agreed to as part of a package deal that includes the integration of some of the PLA into the Nepal Army, and the formation of a new UCPNM-led government with Prachanda as Prime Minister, their primary goal.

February 2010 Statement by the UCPNM Central Committee

On February 4, 2010, the Party Central Committee released a statement that reads like a roadmap for the revisionist⁵ political path being taken by Prachanda, Vice-Chairman Baburam

³ <http://in.news.yahoo.com/48/20100308/1248/twl-be-ready-to-capture-power-prachanda>

⁴ See "Police Evict Land Grabbers in Nawalparasi" and "Maoists on Land Grab Rampage" in the December 15 and 16, 2009 editions of *Republica*.

⁵ We use the term "revisionist" here because Prachanda is advocating reformism, bourgeois democracy and denial of the necessity of the armed overthrow of the bourgeois state camouflaged by rhetorical catchphrases of Marxism and Maoism. Lenin wrote as follows about the revisionists of his time:

"A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its

Bhattarai and others. It starts off on a strange note, discussing a serious development in the party since the people's war was ended in November 2006. It describes the "dominance of high proletarian spirit of ideological consistency, resolute unity, voluntary discipline and sacrifice" during the 10 years of people's war, in contrast to the current period that has raised "the danger of individual interest-centred unhealthy competition and new factions and splits."⁶

The CC Statement prioritized the struggle for national independence and efforts to write a new "anti-feudal and anti-imperialist constitution." However, it did not explain how this can be done in practice since this would require a 2/3 majority in the Constituent Assembly, and the UCPNM has only 40% of the votes there. The only kind of constitution that can be passed with the consent of the Nepali Congress Party and the UML will not uproot the power of the domestic props of imperialism—namely the Army and other police forces, and the bourgeois and feudal forces represented by the leaders of the Nepali Congress and UML.⁷ Furthermore, such a

attitude to the final aim of the socialist movement. 'The movement is everything, the final aim is nothing'—this catch-phrase of Bernstein's expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long arguments. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chops and changes of petty politics, to forget the basic interests of the proletariat, the main features of the capitalist system as a whole and of capitalist evolution as a whole; to sacrifice these basic interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less 'new' question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it may change the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the shortest period of time, will always inevitably give rise to one or another variety of revisionism." (V. I. Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism", cited in "Lenin on the Struggle Against Revisionism", Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1960, pp. 11-12)

⁶ This dismal state of affairs did not cause the authors of the CC Statement to question whether it was correct to end the people's war in the first place.

<http://www.bannedthought.net/Nepal/UCPNM-Docs/2010/PressCommunique-100204.pdf>

⁷ In an article by a Nepali Maoist that the Kasama Project (the leading channeler in the U.S. of support for Prachanda's post-revolutionary reform path) refused to publish on Revolution in South Asia, Bisham Nepali wrote that "Nepal is not occupied by foreign military forces. There is no significant change in class equation in Nepal since the abolition of Monarchy. Nepal is still semi-colonial, semi-feudal, comprador capitalist and bureaucrat capitalist state. When we say "comprador capitalist," that means foreign capital is ruling the country through its local machinery. Hence, in Nepali case, the struggle for National Independence can be fought inside the country and it should be directed against domestic reactionary forces not the foreign one." (UCPN[Maoists]: In Contradicting Speeches and Actions," translated from the Nepali print magazine [Īikyabadyata](#).)

constitution will not be able to institute thorough land reform, as this will not be acceptable to the Nepali Congress and UML, and to the Nepal Army, India and the US behind them.⁸

The most important issue that would be faced by a Round II UCPNM-led government, with Prachanda serving as Prime Minister, would be the question of who leads the Nepal Army and national police forces. Any attempt by Prachanda to assert supremacy over the formerly royalist generals will be defeated just as it was in May 2009. It is even doubtful that Prachanda will even try to do so again, since a similar defeat would cause further erosion of his support in the party and among the UCPNM mass base.

Integration and Fragmentation of the PLA

Perhaps the most important part of the political deal is the current plan to send 5,000-7,000 PLA soldiers into the unfriendly arms of the Nepal Army of 96,000. There is also a proposal on the table to send 6,000 PLA members into a Forest Security Force, where they will work with army units to presumably combat poaching.⁹ The remaining PLA men and women would be given a "rehabilitation" package that includes education and job training. The Nepali Congress (NC),

While the thrust of this statement is correct, it must be noted that India and the US are already intervening in a myriad of ways in Nepal short of actual occupation, and thus a campaign in defense of national independence that targets all of the reactionary forces inside and outside Nepal—from the Pentagon to the Nepal Army barracks in Kathmandu—would be a positive development in this situation.

The Kasama Project, which began in 2008, initially engendered some fresh hopes and thoughts for those yearning to rebuild the communist project in the US. It declared its path to be explicitly revolutionary communist, but demarcated from the subjective idealism of the Revolutionary Communist Party, so many people tuned in to their efforts, which on many questions has been a rather free-flowing exchange of views. But a contrary course has been taken with the Kasama Project's embrace of the Prachanda post-revolutionary reform path, as they have opposed and prevented open debate and serious consideration of perspectives opposing this path on the Kasama websites. This stance is undermining the overall credibility of the Kasama Project.

⁸ A member of the Kasama Project who traveled to Nepal in March 2010 interviewed a local leader of the United Marxist-Leninists who complained that the UCPN(Maoist) had organized "his" farmers to seize his properties.

⁹ *Republica*, March 3, 2010

http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=15815

UML and the army leadership are trying to prevent this section of the PLA from joining the Young Communist League, where their military experience can be put to good use.

A People's Liberation Army that liberated three-quarters of Nepal's territory in 10 years of people's war, inflicted repeated defeats on the Nepal Army and was going over to the strategic offensive, is to be split up and dispersed politically and militarily under the terms of this deal. And during these months of protest programs, 3,000 PLA soldiers were forced out of the cantonments for being underage, while the Nepal Army received 50 Soviet-era tanks and other arms from India and a large amount of "non-lethal" military assistance from China.¹⁰

Prachanda and his allies in the UCPNM leadership have hewed closely to this dead-end course of action since the CC Statement was issued in early February. Even Prachanda's periodic threats to initiate a "final people's revolt" are nothing more than a pressure tactic to bring about the formation of a new government with the NC and UML, with him as Prime Minister. Bhattarai let the cat out of the bag in his recent tribute to Girija Koirala, the late leader of the Indian-backed Nepali Congress and a former President in 1990 and 2006. Bhattarai called Koirala a "father figure" who stood for "peace and democracy" for all people "cutting across political and ideological persuasions."¹¹

Renewing the Revolutionary Struggle

The CC Statement and Prachanda's recent actions are yet deeper steps into the morass of reformist politics and negotiations to form a "national unity" government with bourgeois-feudal parties that are backed to the hilt by India and the U.S. Such a government cannot guarantee Nepal's national independence. Genuine national independence and the achievement of liberation for the people can only be achieved by overthrowing the principal roots and branches of imperialism and Indian influence in Nepal—the NC-UML government and the Nepal Army and national police forces.

This requires the renewal of the people's war and the re-establishment of the base areas, as the 2009 Communist Party of India (Maoist) Open Letter to the UCPN(Maoist) proposes.¹² While the

¹⁰ *Republica*, December 17, 2009 (50 T-72 tanks); Nepal News, January 16, 2010 (80 allegedly empty Indian military trucks cross border at night); DNA India, November 26, 2009 (China pledges Rs100 million in military assistance).

¹¹ *Republica*, March 21, 2010

¹² This critique as well as other CPI (Maoist) documents are available at Banned Thought. www.bannedthought.net. The Open Letter is worth rereading in light of the critical situation in Nepal today. It is organized into sections on the character of the state in Nepal today; formation

development of a base of popular support in Kathmandu and other cities since 2006 is a positive development, there has to be a fundamental reorientation towards re-establishing the people's war and repudiating Prachanda's line among these new party recruits and supporters in order for the revolution to advance.

Fundamentally, two political lines and two paths are contending in Nepal today. This is being fought out among the leadership and cadre of the UCPN(Maoist) and among the revolutionary masses. Unlike previous party reports, the CC statement makes no reference to two-line struggle and simply says that the statement was adopted unanimously. As any political observer of the news from Nepal knows, the political struggle in the party, Young Communist League and PLA is continuing and is continuing to break out into public view.¹³ The resolution of this

of a coalition government with the NC and UML; disbanding the PLA and the base areas; 21st century democracy; the UCPNM's understanding of Indian expansionism, a South Asian Soviet Federation and proletarian internationalism; Prachanda Path; and the concluding section: "Only through a resolute struggle against the right opportunist line pursued by the leadership of the UCPNM can a revolutionary line be re-established and bring the Nepalese revolution to its consummation."

¹³ Articles in the mainstream press about struggles inside the UCPNM must be viewed critically. However, the analysis presented in a *Republica* article titled, "Hardliners Push for Revolt, Delay in Integration," on January 29, 2010 appeared to have a rough grasp of the main political fault lines in the party. It reported that "sharp differences have surfaced in the UCPNM over the party's next strategic move and direction. The party's hardliners led by Senior Vice-Chairman Mohan Baidya have pitched for declaring India the main enemy and going for an immediate revolt. Baidya has also called for delay in the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants to help start preparations for a revolt. Another vice-chairman, Dr Baburam Bhattarai, backed by some of the party's influential leaders, has, however, staunchly pushed for writing the constitution and completion of the peace process. The shimmering intra-party differences have come to the fore at the ongoing Standing Committee meeting that began on Tuesday.

"Responding to Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal's analysis of the current political situation and the party's future strategy, Mohan Baidya argued that the party should identify foreign forces, particularly India, as its main enemy and launch an immediate revolt to achieve the party's ultimate goal — dictatorship of the proletariat. "Our main contradiction is with India, and it should be termed the party's chief enemy.... We should also immediately go for a revolt to achieve the party's goals," a party leader quoted Baidya as saying at the Standing Committee meeting Tuesday. He argued for delay in the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants since the party would need them for the revolt."

struggle will have a decisive impact on the future of the revolution.

A Parallel with Indonesia—or El Salvador?

Prachanda's line is essentially a Nepali variant of the "peaceful transition to socialism" advanced by Khrushchev and the revisionist Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the 1960s. It is understandable why many comrades have made comparisons between the situation in Nepal and the disastrous experiences with attempts at peaceful transitions to socialism in Indonesia in 1965 and Chile in 1973. This resulted in the complete destruction of the Communist Party of Indonesia and the Communist Party of Chile and the murder of between one and two million people, mostly in Indonesia.¹⁴

The more relevant comparison is with the experience of the Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador, an alliance of five pro-Soviet and pro-Cuban parties including the Communist Party of El Salvador. After a decade of fighting a guerilla war to a stalemate with the US-backed Salvadoran army and death squads,¹⁵ the FMLN leadership negotiated a peace agreement that allowed them to demobilize their guerilla forces and reconstitute themselves as a legal electoral party. After winning the election for Mayor of the capital city, the FMLN candidate, Mauricio Funes, was elected to the Presidency in 2009.

However, this has not changed conditions for the vast majority of the people in El Salvador, who continue to be exploited and oppressed by big landlords and capitalists with deep ties to US

Interested readers can compare and contrast statements and interviews over the past two years by Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), Bhattarai, Narayan Shrestha (the former leader of the NCP-Mashal which opposed the initiation of the people's war in 1996) and Hisila Yami (Parvati) on the one hand, and Mohan Baidya (Kiran), CP Gajurel, Netra Bikram Chand (Biplap) and Indra Mohan Sigdel (Basanta) on the other at www.bannedthought.net. Biplap's article, "The Differences of Opinion Within our Party," November 16, 2008, is particularly useful.

¹⁴ See the paper by the MLM Revolutionary Study Group, "The Destruction of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965 and the Road Not Taken." www.mlmrsg.com

¹⁵ A significant difference between the situations in El Salvador and Nepal is that the member organizations of the FMLN all along had the orientation of fighting for the limited goal of a share of state power. This was a form of "armed revisionism" that was in part justified by the proximity of the El Salvador to the US. In contrast, the Maoists in Nepal upheld the line and practice of people's war with the goals of new democracy, socialism and communism from 1996 to 2006.

imperialism.¹⁶ Today, the US-trained and armed Salvadoran army continues to be a major barrier to any thoughts the FMLN might have of making fundamental changes in Salvadoran society.

II. The Real Obstacles and Challenges for the Revolution in Nepal

The situation in Nepal demands serious study and analysis among communists and anti-imperialists all over the world, and there must be focused discussion and debate over what it will take to rebuild and advance the people's struggle in Nepal toward eventual victory. There are very real obstacles facing the revolutionaries in Nepal in today's world.

The Threat of Indian Intervention

Foremost among these obstacles is the largely covert political, military and economic support for the forces of reaction in Nepal by the US and by India, a major regional ally of the US. This will become a sharper question, and could lead to Indian troops crossing the border, if the revolutionary struggle is rebuilt and the Nepalese Army and the bourgeois-feudal forces represented in the Nepali Congress and the UML face a serious political and military threat from the masses and their revived Maoist leadership. In that event, the principal contradiction in Nepal would change to pit the overwhelming majority of the Nepalese people against the Indian aggressors and those sections of the bourgeoisie and landowners allied with the Indian government.

It must be stressed that India would not have unlimited freedom to invade Nepal. Troops crossing borders is a major event in the world, even if you are the US, Israel or Russia, and it would invite condemnation at the UN and in the streets worldwide. Furthermore, the Indian Army and paramilitary forces are more stretched out than they have been since the war with Pakistan in 1971--occupying Kashmir and most of the Northeast. They have recently mustered over 200,000 troops to attack the adivasis (indigenous peoples) of eastern and central India, code-named Operation Green Hunt. The US imperialists are also overcommitted, with the number of their troops in Afghanistan over 100,000 and rising. They are also in the throes of the deepest economic crisis since the 1930s Great Depression.

¹⁶ One of Funes' first economic and foreign policy pronouncements was that "integration with Central America and strengthening relations with North America will be the priority of our foreign policy." Funes also promised to keep the U.S. dollar as El Salvador's official currency.

In this situation, the Indian military is more likely to employ economic warfare (cutting off fuel and construction materials), political means (propping up the Nepali Congress, UML and reactionary parties in the densely populated Terai region), spreading millions of rupees around to whichever political forces are willing to be bribed, and military aid to the Nepal Army and national police forces *before* it invades Nepal.

If India were to invade Nepal to stop the growth of a new Maoist-led people's war, this would make it possible to form a very broad united front to resist the Indian invaders and their Nepali collaborators, as was done successfully in China during the anti-Japanese war period from 1937-1945. This would be a difficult and protracted struggle--which is precisely why the political/military doctrine developed by Mao is called protracted people's war.

Another reason why people's wars can be protracted concerns the question of whether a correct line is leading the revolutionary struggle. In China, for example, the new democratic revolution covered a period of 22 years and went through two civil wars and the war against Japan before seizing nationwide political power in 1949. From its founding in 1921 to the Central Committee meeting in 1935 at Tsunyi while on the Long March, the Chinese Communist Party was hamstrung first by a rightist line of uniting with Jiang Kai-Shek and the Guomindang, and then by a "left" line of trying to capture the cities prematurely from rural bases. The first political error led to the massacre of tens of thousands of communists in the streets of Shanghai and other cities in 1927; the second resulted in the loss of the red base areas in southern China in the early 1930s.

When it is following the strategy of protracted people's war, a revolutionary party may advance and retreat, negotiate to win over new forces and buy time, but it does not call off the people's war when it believes that victory cannot be won in the near future. A revolutionary party cannot turn a people's war on and off like a water faucet. It persists in organizing and leading the masses in revolutionary struggle so that it is in a position to make major advances, including the final push to victory, when favorable conditions appear.¹⁷

¹⁷ In the Philippines, the Communist Party of the Philippines has waged armed struggle in the countryside and a militant legal struggle in the cities since 1969. It has established more than 120 guerilla fronts on all 11 major islands of the archipelago and has announced plans to move from the middle phase of the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate with the US-backed Philippine Army in the next five years.

In Turkey, a lower-level armed struggle has being waged by the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist (TKP/ML) and the Maoist Communist Party of Turkey and North Kurdistan (MKP) in Kurdistan and the Black Sea region since 1972.

The strategy of protracted people's war is also closely linked to the orientation of reliance on the masses of people and of self-reliance. A revolutionary party can make use of contradictions among its enemies, and at times aim its spearhead at one group of reactionaries or another, but it cannot compromise its political and military independence and initiative by allying itself with imperialists or reactionary forces.

Another important issue: While there are no socialist states in the world that can provide military assistance to the Nepali Maoists as the Soviet Union did for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the anti-Japanese War,¹⁸ this is not a barrier precluding success to the strategy of protracted people's war. As part of the Civil War from the end of 1917 to 1921, the Bolsheviks and their armies fought troops from 14 imperialist states (including the U.S.) which were dispatched to suffocate the newly born Soviet Union, without aid from other countries.

Winning Over the Middle Forces

Some comrades have argued that the Nepal Maoists need "more time" to win over the middle forces in Kathmandu and other cities before they attempt to seize state power. This question deserves serious attention.

By dint of intensive political work once the party was allowed to operate in the open in late 2006, the UCPNM has developed greater support in Kathmandu and some other cities, concentrated among hotel and food processing workers, youth, students, teachers and other sections of the progressive petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the UML and Nepali Congress have significant support among the rightist and middle-of-the-road petty bourgeoisie such as shopkeepers, small business owners and some government employees.

¹⁸ There was a negative aspect to the CCP's relationship with the then socialist Soviet Union. Stalin and the Comintern placed a great deal of pressure on Mao and the CCP to form a coalition government with Jiang and the GMD, since Stalin did not believe the CCP and its armies could wage a successful military campaign against the Japanese imperialists. Even after the defeat of Japan, Stalin told Mao that he should unite with Jiang since he did not think that the CCP could defeat the GMD, which was being armed and backed by the U.S. imperialists.

In a 1948 interview with Dimitrov, Stalin said: "We told them bluntly that we considered the development of the uprising in China had no prospect, and that the Chinese comrades should seek a modus vivendi with Chiang Kai-shek, that they should join the Chiang Kai-shek government and dissolve their army. The Chinese comrades agreed here with the views of the Soviet comrades, but went back to China and acted otherwise. They mustered their forces, organized their armies, and now, as we see, they are beating the Chiang Kai-shek army. Now, in the case of China, we admit we were wrong." (Robert North, *Moscow and Chinese Communists*, 1953, p. 233, quoting *Tito* by Vladimir Dedijer, 1953.)

With a revolutionary line and strategy in command, the UCPNM has sufficient forces in both the countryside and the cities to re-establish the people's war and base areas. If it waits to win over more of the middle-of-the-road petty bourgeoisie and basic masses (farmers and workers) before undertaking revolutionary work, the UCPNM will never take power. These middle forces can and must be won over and neutralized to the greatest extent possible *in the course of a struggle for power*. Appealing to them to support a UCPNM-led government and vague promises of reform may generate more of a following among middle-of-the-roaders, but it will demobilize the more advanced, who are always the main force driving the revolutionary process forward.

The middle forces must instead be won over to a "new democratic"¹⁹ program of land reform, building a centrally-led people's army and a decentralized people's militia that can achieve and defend Nepal's national independence, and the nationalization of companies that are economically and/or politically dependent on India or the Western imperialists. These comprador companies are often able to outcompete and ruin small shopkeepers and business owners.

Achieving this new democratic program requires the defeat and disbanding of the Nepal Army and the various national police forces; the deconstruction of the Nepali Congress and most or all of the UML as presently constituted; and the replacement of the government bureaucracy and courts by official servants of the people.

In this regard, it is useful to look at the revolutionary processes that were carried out successfully by the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917-21 and by the Maoists in China in the 1930s and 1940s.

The Russian Revolution

After Lenin returned to St. Petersburg in April 1917, he focused the party's attention on building up Bolshevik strength in the soviets (workers' councils) that were being formed in the factories. In these soviets the Mensheviks²⁰ greatly outnumbered the Bolsheviks at first, but due to dogged political work, the string of defeats that the Russian Army was experiencing in one-sided

¹⁹ For a more detailed explanation of the concept of new democratic revolution, a stage of the revolution in countries dominated by imperialism that paves the way for the socialist revolution, see "On New Democracy" by Mao (1940) and other of his writings between 1937 and 1949 that are available at www.marx2mao.com.

²⁰ While the Bolsheviks (led by Vladimir Lenin) were an organization of professional revolutionaries, the Mensheviks (led by Alexander Kerensky) were a loose reformist organization that joined the Provisional Government after the February 1917 Revolution that overthrew the Tsar.

battles with the German Army, and the growing exposure of Kerensky and other Menshevik leaders doing the bidding of the British and French imperialists to stay in the war, a situation favorable to the Bolsheviks began to develop.

Still, in the late summer and early fall of 1917, the Bolsheviks had almost no support in the vast countryside, other than the peasant-soldiers that they were organizing and recruiting at the war fronts. The Socialist-Revolutionaries were the party of the peasants, particularly the middle peasants, and were the largest party in Russia. The Mensheviks and other bourgeois parties still commanded the allegiance of the bulk of the urban petty bourgeoisie.

This caused some Bolsheviks, including some Central Committee members, to argue against attempting an insurrection in 1917. Kamenev and Zinoviev, two leading CC members, made the plan for the insurrection public in an attempt to stop Lenin and his followers. In Lenin's view, once the Bolsheviks won over a majority in most of the Soviets in the big cities, the Bolsheviks recruited a sufficient number of Red Guards (groups of armed workers), had won over some units of the army and neutralized others, and the economic, political and military crises had reached a peak, it was time to put the party and its mass base on the line and launch the struggle to seize state power from the Provisional Government.

Lenin also believed that the Bolsheviks could successfully hold power, even without assistance from a successful revolution in Germany, which all of the Bolsheviks expected and counted on immediately after the October revolution. He and Trotsky mobilized the proletarian base of the party to raise the Red Armies that were able to defeat the White Armies and imperialist invaders. And in 1918, he broke with Trotsky and the Socialist-Revolutionaries to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the German imperialists, giving up considerable land and population in order to keep the German armies from crushing the new socialist state.

The Chinese Revolution—the 1945-46 Peace Offensive

As World War II was drawing to a close in Asia in late 1945, Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership launched a "peace offensive" (described in Section III below) aimed at winning over many of these middle forces in the White areas controlled by the Guomindang (GMD), and where communist political activity was very difficult and dangerous. In the course of nearly a year of on-and-off negotiations at Chongqing with Jiang and the US, the CCP gained millions of new supporters and were able to put the onus on Generalissimo Jiang Kai-Shek and the US imperialists for the outbreak of nationwide civil war.

These negotiations were part of the CCP's preparations to defeat the "US-Jiang regime" (as Mao called it), not a strategic and naive attempt to set up a "national unity" government with a fascist general backed by US imperialism—as is essentially being attempted by Prachanda in Nepal today.

In early 1946, the CCP did not have the support of the majority of the population in the country, and thus it can be argued that it should have done more preparatory political work before resuming the revolutionary war. Mao's view was that it was possible to win over many of these middle forces in the course of the armed struggle, including large number of peasant GMD soldiers, who deserted and came over to the Red Armies in large numbers after they suffered serious defeats.

Revolutionaries and communists everywhere need to study these experiences, which have been concentrated in the theoretical knowledge and practice of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, with current problems and questions in mind. Doing so is not a formal and sterile exercise in dogmatism, but a necessity to advance today's revolutionary struggle on the basis of the deepest understanding and sharpest revolutionary tools available.

III. Revolutionary vs. Revisionist Negotiations in China, India and Nepal

When Prachanda and the UCPNM leaders at the time signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006 (Kiran and Gajurel were being held in a Tamil Nadu prison then), they claimed that they were using the same tactics employed by Mao and the Chinese Communist Party in its 1945-1946 negotiations with the Guomindang's Jiang Kai-shek and a US delegation led by Ambassador James Hurley. However, a closer look reveals crucial differences between the strategies employed by Prachanda and Mao.

Meeting with Jiang and Hurley in Chongqing in southern China, Mao made a number of proposals, including one to form a coalition government with the GMD and to give up some small base areas in the South that were hard to defend, in exchange for legal status for the CCP and the right to compete in elections. Mao was confident that Generalissimo Jiang would reject this proposal. In any case, Mao had no intention of giving up the political and military independence of the People's Liberation Army and the communist-led base areas, which contained nearly 100 million people after the defeat of Japan.

These peace negotiations helped win over large numbers of people in the huge areas of central and southern China controlled by the Guomindang. They paved the way for the resumption of the people's war when negotiations broke down in 1946 and Ambassador Hurley left in a huff. The US-Jiang regime demanded merger of the PLA into the larger GMD armies and the abandonment of the base areas. Mao and his close ally at the time, Zhou Enlai, rebuffed this demand and resumed the revolutionary war, which he called a "war of self-defense."²¹ As Mao

²¹ See the MLM Revolutionary Study Group paper, "The Political, Military and Negotiating Strategies of the Chinese Communist Party (1937-1946) and Recent Developments in Nepal" for a detailed discussion of this history and its lessons for Nepal and other countries today at www.mlmrsg.com. Also see Mao's "Smash Chiang Kai-shek's Offensive with a War of Self-Defense," July 20, 1946, Selected Works, Volume IV.

stated at a Central Committee meeting in 1938 and repeated at other Party meetings: "Without armed struggle the proletariat and the Communist Party would have no standing at all in China, and it would be impossible to accomplish any revolutionary task."²²

A Different Situation in Nepal

For the past 3½ years in Nepal, the UCPN(Maoist) has been negotiating without any independent military strength, having demobilized 19,000 battle hardened and politically conscious members of the People's Liberation Army in 2006. This has stripped them of the ability to wring crucial concessions out of the other side.

Due to this strategy, the political capitulation of the UCPNM is looming ahead--unless there is a quick and decisive reversal of course by the party.

In contrast, a *revolutionary* approach to negotiations with the enemy is being practiced in India today by the Communist Party of India(Maoist). As the Indian state has launched an unprecedented nationwide military offensive involving over 200,000 military and police forces (national and state) over the past few months, the Maoists have initiated a bold and politically astute peace offensive. In late February 2010, Kisenji, a Maoist spokesperson, responded to the Indian government's call for a 72 *hour* cease fire *conditioned* on the Maoists abandoning their arms, with a counter-proposal for a 72 *day* cease fire that would allow peace negotiations to take place *without any preconditions*.

A 2½ month cease fire would allow the government to place its proposals to end the conflict on the table. At the same time, the Maoists would be able to present and publicize their own peace proposals such as:

- Ending fake "encounter killings" (assassinations of suspected Maoists and Maoist supporters);
- Freeing tens of thousands of political prisoners being held for decades without trial or medical care, and often tortured to extract false confessions;
- Ripping up the Memoranda of Understanding between the Indian capitalists, multinational mining and industrial enterprises and the Indian states; and
- Withdrawing military and paramilitary forces from the seven states of Chhattisgarh, Orissa, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh where Operation Green Hunt is underway or in the final stages of planning and deployment of forces.

Many intellectuals and rights activists and organizations including Arundhati Roy, the PUCL

²² See page 6 of the above cited article.

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(People's Union of Civil Liberties), GN Saibaba of the Revolutionary Democratic Front and the recently arrested Dr. Darshan Pal of the People's Democratic Front, have come out publicly in support of this offer. This is helping break through the wall of silence in the bourgeois media about the terms of the Maoist offer.

The website of the International Campaign against the War on People in India (www.icawpi.com)²³ has continuing news coverage of these efforts to expose Union Minister Chidambaram and Prime Minister Singh's war mongering, place further obstacles in the way of Operation Green Hunt, and build political support and sympathy for the CPI(Maoist).

IV. Two Arguments by Prachanda Apologists in the U.S.

1. Prachanda and his supporters have a secret plan to make revolution

A common argument heard from the Kasama Project in the US²⁴ is that Prachanda's "real political line" is to prepare the party and the masses to stage a final people's revolt to seize power and complete the new democratic revolution—but that he can't say this in public.

This is a very appealing argument for some people because it doesn't require them to actually mount a serious and factually based defense of the reformist and revisionist political line that Prachanda is following, as well as the actions and consequences flowing from that line such as the virtual disintegration of the PLA., Instead they simply forecast a coming struggle for power, imply that the Young Communist League has stockpiled guns on a widespread scale and is engaged in secret military training, and suggest that the people's militias were never disbanded and are growing in the countryside—despite all contrary indications.

Mike Ely of the Kasama Project has asserted that the periodic mass demonstrations—which the UCPNM calls in order to build pressure on the NC and UML leaders, and calls off when negotiations are underway—are really "dress rehearsals" for revolution. In this inflated and wishful view, UCPNM street marches are scoping out potential targets for insurrectionary activity.

In late January 2010, Ely wrote that "To put this as bluntly as I can: The Nepali Maoists are preparing right now (I mean over the next few weeks) for what-may-be a decisive military/political confrontation with the reactionary government and army. The insurrection they have been preparing so carefully and so long may take place over the next two months.

²³ Other useful and informative websites include Sanhati (<http://sanhati.com>), Indian Vanguard (www.indianvanguard.wordpress.com), and Banned Thought (www.bannedthought.net), which carries statements and interviews from the Communist Party of India(Maoist).

²⁴ Many of Kasama's views are held by members of the Workers Party in New Zealand and the Green Left Party in Australia.

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The Maoists are seeking to mobilize the people (based on the understanding that their enemies will be wanting to act closely with Indian intrigues, and can be isolated by exposing those intrigues.) Their Indian, Nepali and American enemies understand this. Their revolutionary core base knows this. And we need to know it. I will be ringing this bell loudly, and more loudly... and I want you to join me in ringing this bell. Everyone we know and meet should start to consider how they can discuss and explain this important revolution in (what may be) its most bold and desperate hour."²⁵ This hyperbole promotes a serious misreading of the political situation in Nepal

Another attraction of this argument is that it can't be definitively disproved. How do you disprove a "secret plan" when by definition you can't know its details? Serious communists and revolutionaries around the world judge communist parties and the leaders of their parties by what they say and most importantly by what they do in practice.

Prachanda and his allies are doing precisely what the recent February 2010 CC Statement said the UCPNM planned to do: Bring the peace process to a conclusion by writing a new constitution, integrating part of the PLA into the Nepal Army and dispersing the rest, and forming a new government with Prachanda as Prime Minister. This government-in-the-making may stand in words for civilian supremacy over the army generals and for national independence from India and imperialism. However, as explained above, neither of these two goals are reachable without defeating the US/India-backed Nepal Army and seizing power from the present reactionary Nepali Congress-UML government.

Prachanda is not preparing the party and its mass base for revolutionary action. To think otherwise is sheer delusion.

The choice is clear: Either you support this revisionist path of political capitulation and integration into a bourgeois democratic political system, or you can take a stand against it and support attempts to develop a revolutionary alternative and push forward the revolutionary struggle of the masses in Nepal.

Fundamentally, those who are trailing behind Prachanda mirror his strategic pessimism about the capacity of the party and the masses of people in Nepal to seize and hold power, complete the new democratic revolution, and proceed to build socialism in Nepal as part of the world revolution. They are hoping to find an illusory short cut to revolution without waging protracted people's war, with all the sacrifices and uncertainty that strategy requires. This is an important political basis for revisionism and right opportunism in both the UCPN(Maoist) and the international communist movement today.

The adoption of a revolutionary line and program by the Maoists in Nepal would give them a

²⁵ <http://kasamaproject.org/2010/01/24/nepal-ringing-the-bell-loudly>

fighting chance to mobilize the masses to defeat the Nepal Army, resist Indian intervention and emerge victorious. There are never guarantees of victory for revolutionaries, and it is possible for revolutionary movements to be defeated principally due to an unfavorable balance of forces.²⁶ However, to not even wage a revolutionary struggle in Nepal, as Prachanda and his allies are doing, is a gross betrayal of the people's interests.

2. Who are you to criticize the Maoist Party in Nepal?

Some comrades have argued that communists and revolutionaries in an imperialist country such as the US cannot criticize the leadership of a party in an oppressed nation such as Nepal.²⁷ This is entirely wrong. All communists have the responsibility of supporting revolutionary and anti-imperialist struggles in other countries; and communists in the imperialist countries have a special responsibility to oppose and build towards the revolutionary defeat of their own ruling classes.

Because communists, while struggling amidst the conditions in our particular countries, are

²⁶ The most noteworthy examples are the Paris Commune of 1871, the German communist uprisings in 1918-19 and 1923, and the defeat of the Maoists (including the so-called "Gang of Four") in 1976 in a coup d'etat by Deng Hsiao-ping and his allies in the military.

²⁷ A similarly incorrect argument could be made that the Indian Maoists should not criticize Prachanda and the UCPNM because, since the Indian government poses a threat to invade Nepal, a revolutionary Indian polemic against the Prachanda line would give aid to the Indian government. This is an argument to proscribe international debate and criticism.

Some from the Kasama Project have charged that public criticism of the political line and actions of the UCPN(Maoist) is akin to the attack that the U.S. Progressive Labor Party launched against the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Vietnam Workers Party (VWP) in 1969, at the height of the Vietnam War, on the basis that nationalism, even revolutionary nationalism, is reactionary. However, the situations in Vietnam and Nepal are not even remotely comparable. In Nepal, the UCPNM ended the people's war and dismantled their revolutionary governments in the base areas. In Vietnam the NLF and VWP, while they became increasingly reliant on Soviet aid and eventually embraced Soviet-style revisionism, did not throw the armed struggle overboard through several cycles of peace negotiations, and emerged victorious in 1975 with the decisive military defeat of the US-puppet forces in south Vietnam.

A more apt parallel with the situation in Nepal would have been if the Vietnam Workers Party and the NLF had signed a comprehensive peace agreement with the US before 1975 that returned the North Vietnamese regulars to the north, placed NLF military units in camps, integrated the NLF into the South Vietnamese puppet army, and formed a coalition government with the Diem-Nguyen-Ky forces that the US had created and propped up in south Vietnam.

partisans of *humanity* and *have no country*, we bear the responsibility for the struggle everywhere—to cultivate and nurture its seeds everywhere, to assist and enable its advance throughout the world, and to guard and defend it against its enemies. This responsibility includes making investigations, proposing initiatives, and, when needed, waging struggles of criticism when confusion or abandonment of communist principles and of the interests of the proletariat—*anywhere*--endanger the direction and future of the revolution for humanity's liberation. When errors and tendencies harden into lines of abandonment or betrayal, the responsibility for such struggle becomes paramount. When retreat becomes influential, it must be exposed and defeated. This is all part of caring for the future in the course of the present—and of being internationalist, concerned for the path of humanity, as we struggle in our local conditions.

V. Genuine Internationalism and the Revolutionary Struggle in Nepal

Today, internationalism and support for the revolutionary struggle of the Nepali people requires criticism of the revisionist line of Prachanda and the dominant right opportunist forces in the UCPNM leadership. It also requires support for new political initiatives and mass struggle by the revolutionaries in the party and their mass base. A thorough analysis of the ideological and political features and roots of the revisionist line leading the UCPNM is a necessary part of our internationalist duties to the revolutionaries and oppressed peoples of Nepal.

This new variant of a "peaceful path to socialism" needs to be understood deeply and rejected as a revisionist betrayal of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The "Prachanda Path" of 2006 to 2010 is a repudiation of the strategy of protracted people's war in an oppressed nation dominated by imperialism. The outcome of this confrontation between revisionism and revolution in Nepal is of great importance for communists and anti-imperialists around the world, and for the prospects of making new revolutionary advances in the 21st century on many continents.

This political and ideological criticism of the revisionist line of the UCPNM must be undertaken at the same time as we carry out two important tasks. First, we must expose and demand an end to Indian, US, European Union and United Nations political, military and economic interference in Nepal. This includes demanding that the US imperialists take the UCPNM off the State Department terrorist list-- as well as the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

We must also support and spread news of land seizures, strikes, demonstrations against police brutality and rape, refusals of "rehabilitation" by PLA members disqualified by the UN²⁸, and

²⁸ See this interview with a 7 year veteran of the PLA about her rejection of a rehabilitation package at www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=88008, and the statements by disqualified PLA soldiers that they are ready to continue the revolutionary struggle outside the cantonments

other acts of resistance by the Maoists and the Nepali people as their struggle advances once again. With a revolutionary line in command, they can re-establish and wage a protracted people's war that will complete the new democratic revolution and move on to build a socialist Nepal that will be a beacon for the proletariat and oppressed peoples of the world.

The Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Revolutionary Study Group is not affiliated with any party in the U.S. We advocate the development of a broad struggle against the U.S. capitalist system and government and the worldwide imperialist system as a whole; and the building of a dynamic and vibrant revolutionary movement that pays special attention to the political action and organization of the most exploited and oppressed sections of people in the U.S.

We anticipate that serious revolutionaries who share an internationalist perspective and mass orientation will undertake the building of new communist organization to concentrate and develop capable revolutionary leadership of the basic masses, and to chart the pathways for revolution in the U.S. We encourage such a project and will work to assist its development in every way we can.

The revolutionary struggle and communist movement in the U.S. must be solidly anchored in internationalism, in active unity with people's movements everywhere against all forms of capitalist/imperialist rule, and particularly with Maoists and all revolutionary forces that are battling to achieve socialism (proletarian rule) and ultimately the complete liberation of humanity in a communist world.

We believe that the revolutionary mission of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism needs to be reaffirmed and its fundamental principles identified and promoted. Its scientific method of dialectical materialism must be further developed and wielded in both summing up the positive and negative experiences of revolution and socialism in the 20th century, and in guiding the next wave of communist revolution in the 21st century. We hope to take an active

at www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Leave-taking+PLAs+warn+of+waging+war&NewsID=225665

part in the great debates sweeping through the international communist and revolutionary movements on these questions.

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