



Youth, including many women, jump at the chance to be part of an organisation that breaks tradition's chains and fight class oppression.

A WORLD TO WIN 2001/27

Nepal

The Future is Bright, The Road is Tortuous

In the first half of 2001 the political situation in Nepal developed with dizzying speed. While it was the massacre of the royal family in June that caught the most world attention, at the centre has been the increasing strength of the People's War in that country, the incorporation of ever broader sections of the masses and the serious defeats inflicted on the reactionary armed forces, especially the militarised police forces that had been carrying out the main suppression against the revolution in Nepal. The advance of the People's War has been the main factor driving Nepal's ruling class into a profound political crisis. It is instructive to look at some of the news immediately prior to the royal family massacre in June 2001.

In the first two weeks of May, the

people's armed forces captured 100 rifles, and quite a few enemy were killed and captured. In May alone, 9-10 police posts were completely overrun. In the first week of April two major engagements resulted in 70 enemy killed. The Party had only formed its first military company six months previously. [A squad in the people's armed forces generally consists of nine men and women. A platoon consists of three squads, and a company of three platoons. The platoon is currently the main unit of the people's army.] The people's forces now consist of thousands of organised soldiers, in addition to thousands more armed masses. Now there are several permanent companies. This means that the one hundred or so soldiers in a company manoeuvre as a basic unit, not simply gathering and dispersing. Thus the companies are able to deal with relatively large units of the enemy. Recently the Party had its first experience operating on a brigade level (three companies), but the brigades are not permanent formations at this time.

The military advances of the people's armed forces laid the basis for organising a new political power of the people. In May, the formation of people's governments was announced in huge mass meetings in Western districts of the country that had been the stronghold of the People's War (see the back cover for a photograph of one such meeting).

The militarised police, who in fact have been trained and equipped by the Royal Nepal Army, proved incapable of resisting the people's strength. The Western imperialists and neighbouring India became increasingly alarmed at the growing possibility of a Maoist victory. The Prime Minister of revisionist China, Zhu Rongji, also came to Nepal on 12 May to protect Chinese interests amidst an increasingly turbulent political situation. It was widely reported that the Maoist insurgency was high on his agenda. A leading US State Department official arrived in Kathmandu and began to issue orders. His main point was that the Maoist insurgency must be stopped, and he publicly barked orders to this effect to the then willing Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Koirala.

In the important Terai region of Nepal, the flat agricultural belt lying along the border of India that stretches from one end of the country to the

other, the Party's work has been achieving good results. Most of the country's grain is produced here, and it is home to 40 per cent of the population. The class enemies had hoped in vain to make use of long-standing contradictions between Nepalese of "hill" origin and those of "Indian" origin (most of whom have been in Nepal for generations). In May, for the first time, a heavily armed police post in the Terai, with dozens of defenders, was overwhelmed by the people's armed forces. Most of the landlordism in Nepal is located in this area, and it is key for carrying forward the proletariat's policy of "land to the tiller". The royal family itself is among the biggest landlords in this region.

ENGAGING THE RNA

It was clear that the only obstacle standing between the Maoist People's War and the capture of nation-wide political power was the Royal Nepal Army (RNA), whose main forces had still not been fully engaged in this fight. Indeed, the full mobilising of the Army was the main demand of the US and the Nepalese Prime Minister.

But calling out the RNA is not as easy as the imperialists and other reactionaries would wish. The People's War had reached such a breadth and depth, and the people's armed forces had developed to such an important degree, that, even to the reactionaries, it was by no means sure what the outcome would be. The "commandos" of the military police, were, in fact, disguised operatives of the Royal Army. Would the soldiers do better than the commandos they themselves had trained and equipped? Further, the Royal Army (and behind it, the royal family) had been putting forward conditions to the whole Nepalese ruling class. On 20 April, Army Chief of Staff General Rana stated: "...But we must not forget that without clear policy goals and directions from His Majesty's Government, and without strong support from all political parties, it is difficult to ensure the success of any national security or development programme. Therefore, if the army is to be used in internal security and development programmes, then there must be strong and long-term support from the common people and all political parties." Translated, this means that the Army would dictate its terms to the

ruling class political parties.

It was in this tumultuous situation that the world was stunned when a massacre took place at the Palace, killing most of the royal family, including the King and the Crown Prince (who was accused of killing his parents and family in an insane rage over a love affair). Very few people in Nepal accepted the rapidly shifting story of the government. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) laid the responsibility for the massacre with US imperialism and the Indian secret services and pointed to King Birendra's reluctance to order the Royal Nepalese Army to directly combat the People's War.

The new king was quick to reveal his colours when the editors of a leading Kathmandu daily were arrested and initially charged with treason for having published an article by Baburam Bhattarai, a senior member of the Political Bureau of the CPN(M). In his article, comrade Bhattarai calls upon patriotic elements in the army to refuse allegiance to the new king and to make common cause with the people of Nepal. A press release issued by the CPN(M) concerning the massacre of the royal family is reprinted in this issue of the journal.

Throughout the war, and increasingly so in the more recent period, the CPN(M) has struggled to make its voice heard throughout the whole society and to take a direct role in the political debate and struggle. The Party refers to this as a policy of "political intervention at the central level", which it considers a necessary complement to the armed struggle for power itself.

The strength of the People's War has meant that the Party's political propositions have been at the centre stage of the country's political life. The Party has not only put forward its basic programme for a New Democratic Nepal, but also proposed immediate solutions to the crisis the country is facing. Even before the massacre of the royal family there were frequent debates in the ruling circles of Nepal as well as widespread interest among urban intellectuals and some other sections of the masses regarding the CPN(M)'s proposal for negotiations with the government under certain conditions. One formal meeting between the CPN(M) Central Committee representative and the Deputy Prime Minister had taken place in late 2000.

Also before the royal family mas-

sacre, the political crisis of the regime was reaching extreme heights. Parliament was paralysed, unable even to meet. The ruling class had been unable to solidify its ranks and unite in a focused attack on the People's War, despite insistent calls from many quarters for exactly such measures. It was already clear, before June, that the *status quo ante* (the previously existing balance of forces) could not be maintained and new dramatic political reconfigurations were inevitable.

It was in this context of heightening crisis that the Party put forward the slogan for a conference of all the institutions in Nepal to scrap the existing constitution, form an interim government and discuss the political reorganisation of the country. After the royal family massacre the Party analysed that the "traditional Nepalese monarchy had come to an end" and called for the resignation of Prime Minister Gijira and for all political forces to join in efforts to form a new interim government.

In the immediate aftermath of the royal family massacre, the armed forces led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) further intensified the struggle. For example, separate raids were carried out on 6 July on the police posts in three different districts, Lamjung, Nuwakot and Gulmi, killing 41 militarised policemen and injuring many others. People's guerrillas stripped all the camps and equipped themselves with all the arms and ammunition and blazed the posts into ash. Altogether nine Maoist fighters were martyred in those separate battles.

While the military actions were shaking the country the Party carried out other forms of struggle as well. A very successful nation-wide strike, or "bandh", was held on 12 July.

The struggle was heading to a crescendo when 70 policemen were captured by the Maoist-led armed forces in a daring attack on 12 July at Holleri police post in Rolpa. After two hours of fighting, the guerrillas captured an inspector and 69 others from amongst the 72 stationed there. The Girija government, with the support of the new King Gyanendra, promised to "rescue" the captured policemen with the help of the Royal Nepal Army. Press releases were issued claiming that 150 Maoist fighters had been killed and that their defeat in the symbolic stronghold of Rolpa was imminent. The reality was

quite a bit different; there had been no casualties on the people's side. At that moment, the soldiers of the Royal Nepalese Army were unwilling and/or unable to defeat the Maoist armed forces, and the prisoners were released only after giving a pledge not to take up arms against the people.

In this climate, Prime Minister Girija, sharply criticised from within his own party for his inability to deliver on his promises to destroy the insurgency, and discredited among the masses, announced his resignation. He gave a farewell speech in which he singled out the Maoists as the greatest "problem" facing the nation.

With the people's forces storming one stronghold after another and the reactionary armed forces unable to stop the tide, a new prime minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, was chosen from within the ranks of the Nepal Congress Party, one of the main pillars of the reactionary ruling class. Within days of taking power, Deuba called a unilateral cease-fire and called for negotiations with the CPN(M). Chairman Prachanda responded by instructing the Party's armed forces to hold off on any offensive actions but remain on the alert. On 29 July, the state released 15 Maoist prisoners, and a few days later ten more, and hinted they might release others.

THE US AND INDIA

The bulk of the Nepalese ruling class seems to have lined up behind Deuba's call for a cease-fire and negotiations. Even the newly appointed United States Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca, whose predecessor had pushed for calling out the Royal Army, quickly rushed to Nepal to express support for the new government's policy. It was clear that the ruling class options were quickly evaporating and that the rulers and their imperialist advisors felt that, at least for a while, military and political considerations made negotiations an unavoidable step. But it was also clear that negotiations would be just one more arena of combat. Articles in the ruling class press in Nepal predicted prolonged and fierce discussions before any serious negotiations could be held.

A reporter from the *Nepali Times* asked Baburam Bhattarai, "Is your armed struggle going to be a continu-

ous strategy or do you see the real possibility of that ending for, say, a negotiated settlement?" He responded sharply, "Whether the armed struggle will be waged till the very end or not, depends not on our pious wishes but on the objective and subjective conditions of the revolution, particularly on the policy of the ruling classes. Our openly stated goal is total state power for the oppressed masses. Nothing more, or less. Will the reactionary ruling classes hand over state power through a 'negotiated settlement'? You should ask them."

Indeed, while the revolutionary process has been shown to be rich and complex, the basic task remains the same as it was when the CPN (Maoist) boldly initiated the People's War on 13 February 1996 — the capturing of political power by the proletariat in alliance with the whole people, especially the poor peasantry. As Mao put it, "the seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution". It has also been proven all over the world, time and again, that the ruling class will never step down from the stage of history voluntarily. On the contrary, despite whatever tactics the ruling class might adopt at one time or another, the closer they feel to their doom, the more ferociously they will fight to hang on to their privileges as exploiters. While the divisions in the ruling class are sharpened by the blows of the revolutionary people, fear of revolution will also tend to unite them against the people.

Furthermore, Nepal cannot be seen outside of its international context. The People's War in Nepal is advancing amidst an upswing in the revolution in nearby India, the centrepiece of the semi-feudal, semi-colonial set-up in the whole region. India has long considered Nepal its "protectorate". It is not a question of whether or not India will intervene, but only how and in what forms. India is intensively reinforcing its entire lengthy border with Nepal under the thin pretext of preventing the entry of "Pakistani infiltrators". Permanent paramilitary posts, each containing 30 to 40 personnel, are being established at a distance of 3 to 5 kilometres apart. But the Indian ruling class, although a formidable enemy, is not all-powerful. Indian expansionism is widely opposed by the Nepalese people. The communist revolutionaries in

India are making common cause with the comrades of Nepal, and Maoist-led insurgencies are advancing in Andhra, Bihar and Dandakaranya in India. The Indian ruling classes, which have serious difficulties maintaining their rule over areas such as Kashmir, Assam and northeast India (the scene of massive movements demanding an end to national oppression by the central Indian state), would find it no easy matter to trample on Nepal.

STEERING REVOLUTION TO VICTORY

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) is keenly aware of its responsibilities to the revolution on an international and regional scale. The CPN(M) sees regional co-operation not only as necessary for seizing power but also from the longer-term viewpoint of holding onto power in the face of imperialist and reactionary encirclement, building a socialist economy and transforming all of society. In this light they are calling for the creation of a Soviet Federation of South Asia. This bold orientation is also certain to meet with increased attention by the class enemies in the region and internationally. No doubt the revolutionaries of the region will be carefully considering this proposal and the orientation that lies behind it. The recent meeting of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties and organisations of the South Asia region showed a resolve to strengthen co-operation among the proletarian revolutionary forces of the region (see their Statement reprinted in this issue).

China, which also shares a long border with Nepal, is closely monitoring events. While revisionist China is thoroughly integrated into the imperialist world order, its own reactionary state interests put it in conflict with India. At the same time, the Chinese revisionist rulers, who overthrew the revolution in their own country, fear and hate Maoism reappearing like a phoenix on their own border.

In short, there are many sharply contradictory phenomena both inside Nepal and in the regional and international context that give rise to a complex and dynamic revolutionary process. This rich experience has also generated vibrant discussion inside the Party. Throughout the war, the CPN(M) leadership has paid attention to unfold-

ing two-line struggle. Throughout this whole process the far-sighted leadership of Comrade Prachanda has been affirmed. At the recent Second National Conference (excerpts of the Conference document are reprinted in this issue), the Party consolidated its understanding that the formulation of a "set of ideas" that it calls "Prachanda Path" was an historic accomplishment of the Nepalese revolution. Comrade Prachanda was elected Chairman of the Party. In an interview with *A World to Win*, Chairman Prachanda explains the thinking of the Party on a number of vital questions.

Communist revolutionaries throughout the world are following the developments in Nepal with the utmost interest. Surely it is time that our international movement made some real leaps in building proletarian political power, and the advances in Nepal are filling comrades all over the world with enthusiasm and underscoring the power and vitality of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Furthermore, it is clear that the CPN(M) is grappling with a series of difficult and complicated questions that come with the responsibility of directly leading millions of people and steering the revolution to victory. For most Maoist parties and organisations these are new problems with which the movement still has little recent practice. Through the close interaction between the CPN(M) and the rest of the international communist movement, especially RIM, we can expect that the whole movement will deepen its understanding as it learns about and struggles over the new experiences coming out of Nepal.

It is, of course, impossible to predict the next developments in the unfolding People's War. Reaction in Nepal, India and among the world imperialists is one of increasing alarm at the rapid growth of Maoist-led revolution, and these enemies will use any and all types of covert action and conspiracy, military intervention, political and economic bullying and other means to try to prevent the emergence of proletarian political power on a nation-wide level. The wounded and cornered beast will certainly lash out. But it is just as certain that the revolutionary struggle will press ahead despite whatever twists and turns it must go through toward the unfolding bright future. ■

