

**Interview by Geraldina Colotti, of the Italian daily *Il Manifesto*,  
with comrade Basanta, member of Politburo and International  
Department of Unified Communist of Nepal (Maoist)**

*Q. After six months of impasse, the chairman of CPN-UML Jhala Nath Khanal was elected prime minister. At the last moment, seeing that he could not win this election, the Standing Committee of UCPN-Maoist has decided to cancel the candidature of Prachanda to support the candidacy of Khanal. How did you come to this decision?*

A. Yes, for about six months in the past, there was an impasse in the Prime Ministerial election in Nepal. It is clear to everybody that the six months-long standoff was the result of meddling in the internal affairs of Nepal by the Indian ruling classes who do not want any changes in favour of the Nepalese people and Nepal. Nepalese people want stability and an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist constitution that resolves the basic contradiction in Nepal. Chairman Prachanda withdrew his candidacy and supported J N Khanal when it was clearly noticed that India was meddling to form a government that would play more in the Indian interest to maintain status quo.

*Q. Khanal was elected by the votes of Maoist parliamentarians and by those of small Maoist communist parties. Have the institutional balances shifted to the left? And what will happen now?*

A. Nepal is now at a serious crossroads of revolutionary advance or status quo. The entire country is now in a process of polarisation. The comprador bourgeoisie which is leading the reactionary power has been collaborating with Indian expansionist ruling classes to maintain status quo in Nepal while our party is struggling hard to unite the entire patriotic, republican, progressive and left forces to safeguard national sovereignty and ensure people's republic. This very event of prime ministerial election is one of the reflections of this process.

*Q. The Nepali Congress criticized UML for not having supported their candidate. Moreover, three members of the Standing Committee and 51 parliamentarians close to Bhattarai have publicly expressed their disagreement, and have also accepted the decision of the Party. What forces are these parties representing now in Nepal? What are the foreign interference and to whom are targeted?*

A. Nepali congress in general represents the comprador bourgeois and feudal class in Nepal while the UML is a mixture of various classes. K P Oli and Madhav Nepal faction is close to Nepali Congress while others are not. In this situation, it was obvious for NC to criticise UML for not supporting their candidate. So far as the disagreement of comrade Baburam Bhattarai and other comrades are concerned, it was their difference on whether chairman Prachanda should have withdrawn his candidacy or not. Only when Prachanda and J N Khanal reached 7-point agreement on the issues of immediate concern then chairman Prachanda withdrew his candidacy.

*Q. Is it true that the Maoists will be given various ministries? What is the policy of UCPN (Maoist) in this regard? Which concrete proposals does it have to the main problems the country faces?*

A. Once we are a part of the cabinet we will definitely have ministries. However, the number has not yet been fixed. Our claim will be to represent our strength in the Constituent Assembly.

*Q. At what point is the issue of integration of the fighters in the army?*

A. The question of army integration is being misinterpreted by the reactionaries. We have not abandoned and will never do so with our revolutionary cause. We will in no case make the issue of army integration an

excuse to surrender PLA, which has developed at the expense of people's blood and sweat. However, we are prepared to integrate two armies and build up a national army.

*Q. The Nepalese soldiers who are part of MINUSTAH (the UN force to stabilize Haiti that is in this Caribbean island since 2004), were accused of having brought and spread of cholera in the country destroyed by the earthquake, where there have been over 4,000 deaths. What is the position of the Maoists as regards international missions that are often at the expense of the oppressed peoples in other areas of the South?*

A. In these days good or bad of anyone is measured by the amount of wealth he/she has accumulated. Poor countries are accused as a place of wrongdoings and the poor people are counted as the wrongdoers. The charge upon poor Nepalese soldiers, which are accused of spreading cholera in Haiti, is nothing other than this. Reactionaries the world over have been sending armies from the underdeveloped countries through the UN to help sustain their counterparts. We strongly oppose it. No such acts of the oppressed of one country using against those of the other will be permitted once the oppressed become the master of the state power under the leadership of our party in Nepal.

*Q. What is the situation inside the party now? Is it true that the leadership of Prachanda and his guidance on the institutional level have been challenged? And if so, about what issues?*

A. Ours is a vibrant and lively party. So it is obvious to have intensive and extensive debates and discussions in our party to make it livelier. The fact that Comrade Prachanda has been leading our party since the last 25 years does not make him immune to any mistakes. Nor it was like this in the past. Whether it be chairman Prachanda or any other leaders in our party if they come up with some ideological and political problems our party goes through a sharp debate. We had serious line struggles in the past and we do have now too. We communists regard line struggle as the motive force of a party of the proletariat. Therefore the ongoing line struggle in our party is aimed at correcting the mistakes of the past and making him ideologically and politically stronger than before to lead the party ahead.

Definitely, we are at a difficult situation now. We have to emerge victorious in Nepal from the encirclement of the imperialist marauders all across the globe. And on the other we have to convince the masses the world over on how can we accomplish, sustain and develop the proletarian revolution. To put it bluntly, we have to answer the masses of the people why the proletarian revolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century failed and why those of the 21st century can sustain. For this, we need a serious ideological work in our party. It is not a petty quarrel among the leaders but a serious ideological and political struggle to confront the challenges at present. The crux of the ongoing line struggle remains here. Thank you.

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