

Interview with Bastola on the Prospects for Seizing State Power

Posted June 2008 on WPRM (Britain) website. A lengthy section of the interview concerning the Constituent Assembly elections has been omitted.

Q- What is the situation in Nepal?

A- Regarding the Constituent Assembly elections, they did not expect that results in the election would be like this. The biggest party, the CPN (Maoist), is in such a position that if you aggregate even the number of elected persons of the Congress [Nepal Congress party] and the UML [United Marxist-Leninist party] they are smaller in number than the [Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)] CPN(M) candidates in the elections. Why did this happen, when they didn't want to be in a position to hold the election unless they are ensured that they would win? That was the situation. What happened then? News agencies were investigating as to who was going to win the election and these agencies were suggesting that the Maoists would win just ten to fifteen seats. They predicted that Maoists in any condition would not win more than twenty seats. That's what the critics were expecting.

From the Maoist point of view, just by forming the government, the state-power would not be in the people's hand. The system is in a process of crumbling, it is weak, rotten and it has been shaken, but not uprooted. And by forming the government the social system won't be uprooted, it has to be taken out forcefully and overthrown and this task is still there to be done.

The Congress, the UML, India and the US understand what the Maoists have said. We Maoists, think that even if we formed the government, the system is still not being uprooted and there are still more steps to fulfil this task, to overcome this problem. In reality, if the Maoists formed the government, this process will move two steps ahead, that's why they don't want the Maoists to form the government under any circumstances.

Now the Congress Party and UML have put forward a 7 point demand. This 7 point agenda includes: the government should not control the army, all properties that are seized, including land, should be returned, the (local) people's revolutionary government should be dissolved, the peoples' courts should be dissolved, though half of them were dissolved two years ago. Now they are demanding that the people's government must be dissolved, the peoples' court be dissolved, there should be an atmosphere so that these political parties and class-forces could return to the countryside.

Their proposal can be synthesised in three main points. First, the army should be kept intact as was the Royal Nepalese Army. It should not be democratised or changed. Secondly, the economy should not be changed at all. For example we are talking about progressive land reform not revolutionary land reform, but progressive land reform is basically bourgeois land reform and even this, they dread. Even though it is said that "progressive" is a Maoist claim. It does not matter if it is progressive or not progressive; it is a Maoist claim. So they are not even ready for this progressive land reform. They demand, 'Give the land back!' Yesterday they did not really raise the question. Today they are raising this question to new heights, saying 'Give the land back!' This means they are not willing to change the semi-feudal mode of production, they want to keep it intact and therefore, thirdly, restructuring of society is not possible.

Maoists say that the Nepalese society should be restructured on the basis of national and regional autonomous republics, there should be federalism. Then there should be the federalism of Soviets, national and regional Soviets which have regional autonomy and free states, voluntary unity in one country. And also abolition of feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism. The proletariat should have the upper hand so it develops the economy, politics and culture and abolishes regional and national chauvinism.

This is a very serious issue because the bourgeoisie wants to instigate national chauvinism, regional chauvinism and parochialism by mishandling agendas of the people's right to self determination. They provoke people towards regional chauvinism or national chauvinism, which is happening now. One example of this is the propaganda among the Madeshis, which says, 'We have the land, we should be rich and we don't care about other people.' This kind of chauvinism: "We have influential people and we have the resources, if we block the supply of food and grain then Nepal would be under our control" This kind of sentiment is increasing now in the minds of these people.

Maoists want to eliminate this type of backward sentiments and ultimately raise the society's political consciousness to abolish regional and national chauvinism and bring unity to the entire people in the country against oppression by imperialism throughout the world. Maoists say that there would be autonomy for the people, and the people will decide what they want to do in their own region, therefore, the country would be divided into national and regional autonomous regions.

Thus, they are focusing on these three points, which are their main ploys to block progress and turn society back to the old situation. In the debate around these issues, they are failing day by day because they don't have a scientific approach, so they can't really challenge us and therefore they retreat. When they retreat, their masters such as the Indian expansionism and US imperialism pull their big tails, and then they start to shout again. There is no logic in what they say and do so they concoct a different kind of logic and come back at us again.

For example, now they say that the leaders of the opposition parties should also have the right to be in the National Security Council, which is not the case in other countries. Some say, it has happened in history and the opposition party has the right to be in the National Security Council, but even in the bourgeois parliamentary system, this is never really implemented. This is a class question. Because they think, if the government is formed by the Maoists, under the leadership of the Maoists, their state power will crumble and in that case they still have to be in the apparatus of the National Security Council.

These are the kind of struggles that are going on. Now if the Maoist Party gives up these three: the army, land reform, economic restructuring, the other parties have no problem to let the Maoists form a government taking the posts of the President, the Prime Minister and even ministries of the entire. So, this is a very serious and dangerous phase of class struggle, class war basically. At the same time they are taking advantage of the fluctuating situation in the transitional period that we are in. Reactionaries are trying to divide the country, make it like Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Cyprus, Vietnam, etc. This has happened time and again whenever there was a conflict within a country, they split the country.

Also in Nepal, attempts are being made to split the country and break away the whole Terai region. This doesn't mean that India wants to annex it outright. The point is if they are able to split the country that means the people are separated and this will be a big problem for revolution. They might say, the people from the hilly regions need visa to go to Terai and there would be a lot of problems. If there was a hydro-electric project, India might spend twenty or thirty billion rupees to ensure that electricity would be consumed by the Indian wealthy while the whole of the hilly regions of Nepal will remain in the dark.

The 'divide and rule' politics is due to their necessity, because Nepal will not be a strong country, it will be broken and weak. And the separated regions might be annexed to India because it could be sustained by India and it could get sustenance from other powers too. They could say, if it was sustained by Nepal, it must rely on villages and it would remain poor, and hence there would be many great difficulties. The imperialist powers promote these ideas trying to split the country.

The other aspect of this process is that at this stage, the revolution has not achieved its goals yet, though there had been ten years of People's War. Within the process of this People's War there had been ten years of armed struggle and now this process has been interrupted. Yesterday there was a process of armed struggle, today there is a process of dialogue.

The latter is more dangerous than the former. Yesterday the enemy was on the other side and the Party was on this side. There was armed struggle and the question was of either kill or to be killed. In that

situation, we planned our attacks and they (the enemy) too planned their attacks against the Maoists. Yesterday, we carried out this type of fighting and we knew that if the enemy had been encircled it would be annihilated. That indeed happened many times.

If you don't assess the strength of the enemy properly, then you might be annihilated and if you know the situation of the enemy you could win the war and we experienced that. But today its, very difficult because you are walking hand in hand with the enemy. You don't know when they will drag you down into the pit - it is very difficult to predict. Yesterday, the war seemed very difficult but in essence it was easier to prepare. Today, it looks easy, but in reality it is more difficult.

We are walking hand-in-hand with the enemy today and we don't know their plans or what's going on behind our backs. Yesterday, even if we did not know their plans or what was going on behind our backs, once we knew their plan, it was easy to defeat the enemy. But today, even if the Maoists knew their plans it is very difficult to overcome them. We are facing this kind of danger today so in that sense, the war is not over. The war is on-going and we are working on full preparations. The people have to be fully prepared too.

Another point is on the question of the army, there is a debate going on about merging the two armies. In history there has never been a merging of reactionary and revolutionary armies. There cannot be two armies merging and standing as one, it cannot happen.

For example, recently there were uprisings within the Armed Police Force in three places, where the lower ranks stood up to the upper ranks for three days and demanded dialogue with the government. Eventually, they (the mutineers) were released after a settlement was made. They were very tense situations, but in terms of political consciousness, very good for us. One can also learn certain lessons from these incidents because they merged two forces - the lower ranks were from the police and the upper ranks, from the Nepal Army.

These two forces couldn't be welded together, similar to trying to weld two different types of metal. In such units, either the police had to eat up the army or the army devoured the police. This meant that whether the army had to be trained according to the police or the police had to be trained according to the army. Only on this basis the unity of the merged force could be realised, otherwise their unity could not be realised. We have never experience merging of two armies of opposite classes and it has never been seen in history.

Here, we are talking about politically merging or fusing two armies. First, one state cannot have two armies; one state must have one army. Second, the question comes up that which army is the legitimate army? In fact, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is the legitimate army and the Nepal Army is not the legitimate army. Because of the PLA the country has brought the democratic republic and it is the PLA which is pushing the country towards the New Democratic Revolution and socialism, hence paving the road towards communism.

The Nepal Army is decadent, it is dying out, so the leadership of the Nepal Army has to be dismissed, and its structure has to be smashed and it should be developed according to the new experience of history. So one army has to eat up the other one, in fact it has to be like that. That's what the Congress is agonising over. So too, the UML, India and the US. This is not a secret, everything is in the open, and everything is laid bare.

Everybody knows what's going on. For example, the US, India, the Congress and the UML are thinking, if the Maoists came to power there would be a fusion of two armies. By fusing the Nepal Army (NA) to the Revolutionary Army we would form a patriotic force fighting against imperialism, and expansionism, safeguarding national unity. If the new army stood for that purpose then the reactionaries would be isolated and there wouldn't be much room for them to advance politically and that's what they fear most.

But if they keep the power intact in their hands, as most army chiefs believe, the PLA's role would be reduced to industrial security watchmen. The role of recruiting officers in the army (NA) is to ensure that

debates and freedom of expression are prohibited hence preventing mass disobedience and rebellion in the army. They don't want to recruit radical people for the army. Each candidate has to be verified whether he is loyal to customs of the old culture, obedient to the officials and capable of implementing reactionary instructions without question.

Regarding fusion with the PLA, they say that the PLA don't have the capacity to join the NA because they are too young, their chests are too small and they cause trouble. Also they have been injured so they have bullets in their bodies. Moreover, they are not fully professionals; they haven't been trained well, etc. These are some of the points that they put forward.

Some of them even say the number of brigade members in the PLA is not equivalent to the number of brigade members in the Nepal Army, so a PLA's brigade cannot be considered as a real brigade. And the PLA's brigade commander should be considered as a platoon commander, which is three levels below the actual PLA ranking. These arguments they are putting forward actually reflect their class outlook. In fact, they want to destroy the PLA and establish an army similar to the old RNA. They don't want a patriotic army. The situation has thus developed into a very complicated one.

On one hand, it is a complicated situation; on the other hand they have lost their institutions. The monarchy has been dethroned, but there will be attempts to bring the monarchy back. Because the monarchy is historically outdated; one can say that this is the beginning of the end of the monarchy and even if they try to reinstate the king, people will not accept it. He will not be accepted by anyone in Nepal now, it is not 17th or 18th century.

Now there are great opportunities to complete the revolution. On the question of the revolution, the party has to lead the revolution, exercise dictatorship of the proletariat. So our Party has to create a situation to seize power, exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat and continue with the revolution. This is what basically should happen.

In Nepal, now the situation has reached a point where the party, having gained victory in ten years of armed struggle, is also gaining victories in the war of diplomacy. These gains have brought significant legitimacy not only for the revolutionary movement in Nepal but also for the international proletariat. It has shown that the Maoists are capable of fighting the enemy and carrying out tit-for-tat struggles wherever they want. Now it can be said that the Maoists can fight the enemy, striking tit-for-tat in any battle by applying the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and defeat the enemy in a given condition towards accomplishing the socialist revolution.

What are the results so far? The Constituent Assembly elections have established the validity of ten years of People's War and three years of political struggle by the proletariat. The reactionaries treated our armed struggle as terrorism, but CPN (M) has established that the Maoist armed struggle is based on the people's right to rebel. It's right to rebel! That's what Mao said. Thus, the legitimacy of its right to rebel has been established.

People learnt to fulfil the 40-point declaration by the Party through armed struggle and then through the peaceful struggle. But even during the peaceful struggle we have beaten the enemy. We beat the enemy in the elections against all their conspiracies. We also dealt with the question of elections where the enemies have been blaming revolutionary communists for the last one hundred years. They have claimed that the communists cannot win elections, they don't like elections and that's why Lenin dismissed the Constituent Assembly in 1918.

Now, it has been proven otherwise and their smearing tactics have been thrown out by the elections in Nepal. It has been shown that Maoists can fight the elections and if they do so it would only be in the interest of the people, only then elections have legitimacy. But it is not the communists who highlight elections. It is the bourgeoisie which extol elections.

Lenin was correct to dissolve the Constituent Assembly because in Lenin's time people like Girija were in control. Similar to what Lenin did we may need to dissolve the Constituent Assembly if it does not work

for the interests of the people. If it disrupts our progress time and again then this kind of Constituent Assembly has to be dissolved. Because it is not a question of the legitimacy of the elections, but whether or not it works in the interests of the people. This question has also been established, so it's like a miracle - from armed struggle to elections. Such is the way things are moving in Nepal.

Q- You said there was a political alliance between Nepali Congress, UML, India, China and the US, would you elaborate?

A- The alliance was predictable and as we expected, all the time they concentrated on how to defeat the Maoists. This was the central point of their concentration when they came to accept the 12 point agreement after they were defeated in the armed conflict. There was no way they could defeat the Maoists militarily and therefore, they changed their form of struggle and entered the peace process. They thought, because the Maoists were not smashed by war and by their army they could be defeated in elections and as things developed they failed in that too.

The point is that it is not only the Congress and the UML that are planning, it is also the US and India that are preparing, especially to have the decisive battle with the CPN(M). In fact, on one side of this battle is the CPN(M) and on the other side there is India and USA. So long as fighting continued they got defeated repeatedly, one after another and their plans failed.

In the present situation, their plans have fallen apart; they have been on a downfall and are crumbling as there is disunity among them. They are making assessments as to how they can reverse the process and crush the Maoists. This is their main objective. Whatever they do, their main objective is to find ways to destroy the Maoists.

The US thinks that now the old pro-Indian leadership is incapable of tackling the Maoists, it should still be done by the pro-Indian forces but according to US plans. The US thinks one way of tackling the Maoists is to pick US puppets from three or four parties to form the government, create a different kind of situation to attack the Maoists.

But India thinks the US solution is not the correct solution. Because it means that the Indian puppets will be isolated and the US ones will take over and they will lose their interest here. The Indian rulers think as long as the US, India, the Congress and the UML get together and fight against the Maoists that is fine. China thinks the Maoists, UML and other leftists should unite and control the country.

The Chinese think there is a possibility if these parties get together and create a majority then many things can be decided and public support can be won. However, they are very slow and sluggish and don't want to interfere directly, but just observe from outside and see how the situation will develop. But the US and India are actively and openly interfering.

Q- What role is the YCL playing now?

A- YCL plays a very important role. It safeguards the interest of the masses and makes people fearless. At the same time it unites the masses against any kind of reaction. Now, the masses can stand against any kind of reaction because they have this force. The organised force of the YCL is there; their own sons and daughters are the defenders of the proletariat who can make good judgements against the reactionaries. This has a psychological, organisational and political effect. YCL gives so much energy to the people that they stand fearlessly against any kind of reaction. This is a vital role that the YCL is playing now.

Q: How does the CPN (M)'s tactic of Constituent Assembly relate to fulfilling its strategy?

A: This is a very important political question. The first question is that without using force can you deal with a regime that is dependent on force? Without using force no revolutionary organisation can deal with a regime that depends on force. This is why Peoples War is necessary. But the Peoples War is a total war. You cannot fight on one front and defeat the enemy, this can never happen in a war, either

revolutionary or reactionary. If we look at the US war machine in Iraq, we can see the example of total war, including ideological-political, psychological, economic, military, propaganda and diplomatic aspects. All kinds of war machines were mobilised to attack and occupy Iraq. The difference is the class content of the war; either it is revolutionary or reactionary war. In the same way, revolutionary war has to go through a process of total war against the enemy. We fight a total war according to the specific necessity of a specific time. We carry out armed struggle because the reactionary state is based on weapons and military strength.

At the same time, it becomes necessary to use other methods such as the Constituent Assembly. This is because the general norms of democracy are much propagated and deeply rooted in society. It is necessary to establish a kind of democracy so people are freely allowed to choose what kind of society they want. And if we help the people to choose freely they will choose the revolutionary society, because people always want progress, change and development. On all fronts, economic, political and cultural, they want freedom.

In that sense, democracy is necessary for the people. But what happens in the name of democracy? The reactionary class imposes dictatorship, a very narrow and parochial, chauvinistic bourgeois dictatorship which they exercise, limiting the ability of the people, controlling the rights of the people. They call it democracy, because it is democracy for them. The ruling class feeds from the different sources of fundamentalism: national, religious or racial, etc., and by exercising this kind of power they exploit and control people. When we are waging war, these issues become very important. These issues come to the forefront in such a way that they become vital. In our case, to prove that people are free, that people can choose what they want, and to help them to do that, we used the election of the Constituent Assembly as one front of war.

But whether the election to the Constituent Assembly is good or bad can be determined by whether people have power or not. If there were not ten years of People's War and People's Liberation Army, Base Areas, political consciousness of the masses, in the case of Nepal, the elections to the Constituent Assembly would be useless. It would be like a drama. Sometime ago, there was a line from Mohan Bikram Singh then the General Secretary, who raised the slogan of elections to the Constituent Assembly during the 1990 movement. Our party at that time, CPN(Mashal), refuted that idea, saying it was a useless demand. Then it was necessary to organise a revolutionary war so we could build the strength of the masses of people upon which they could freely express their will. Otherwise if the enemy is standing there with guns, how can the people express themselves freely?

Firstly, people can't even vote, and secondly even if they vote it can be easily manipulated. That happened in 1980 in Nepal? There was a big struggle that started from the student movement that pushed for a referendum. The issue in the referendum was whether we want reform or multiparty democracy, and the voting was overwhelmingly in favour of multiparty democracy. But under the control of the King, the feudal monarchy, it was manipulated in such a way that the outcome became reforming the old Panchayat system. In the same way, if the election to the Constituent Assembly had taken place without the strength of the masses of the people the outcome would be the same. But now this election has happened first of all on the foundation of Peoples War, ten years of armed struggle. And secondly, on the basis of the people's political power, people's strength as a nation, and political consciousness.

Now people have chosen a new society, they feel that the new president of this democratic republic should be Chairman Prachanda. If it does not happen these people will also smash this republic because they have a right to do that. Because they have elected this house, they also have a right to demolish it if it does not work for them. This is how the tactic relates to the strategy. This election of the Constituent Assembly, if it does not work to restructure the society in the direction of New Democratic Revolution and socialism, the masses will smash it, just as the Leninists smashed the Constituent Assembly in 1918.

Q: How are the masses of people in Nepal getting involved in advancing the revolution now?

A: This is a very important point. People are politically conscious now, and they see how things are going ahead, what kind of power is playing around. The people are demanding that the Maoists form the

government. An argument is made that people have given a mixed mandate, this is a false argument. What the people gave was a mandate for change. In this Constituent Assembly election, people did not simply vote for the UML, the Congress or the Maoists, they voted for change. In principle, in declarations, every party is somehow committed to change. But this has solely been brought about by the Maoist line, agenda and the fact of the Peoples War. These parliamentary parties have also declared to the masses that they are going to do the same thing; establish a republic, abolish feudalism, develop national capital and build a new Nepal.

So the voting of the masses is for a new Nepal. The masses are closely looking over and testing the parties. At the same time, the sentiment of the masses is towards the unity of the mission in order to build a new Nepal. Therefore the people are playing a vital role. At the same time, the people are also punishing some others. For example, look at the daughter of Girija Prasad Koirala, who contested the election from a so-called stronghold of the Nepali Congress! Of course, many people voted for Nepali Congress in the last election. But now, those people voted overwhelmingly against that Sujata Koirala. Why? Because people are very conscious, they did not just seek Nepali Congress, they look to find who would bring change.

The same thing happened to Madhav Kumar Nepal (the former leader of UML). He contested the election from two places and lost in both. Similarly with Bramdev Gautam, he stood for election in one place and was defeated. These prominent leaders were defeated because people made the judgement that these sorts of people cannot take the country forward. The Home Minister did not get defeated, as one of the top Congress leaders he won, but only in a marginal way, and in some certain way by technicality. For example, the Finance Minister, Ram Sharan Mahat, won by a very small margin but in an unfair way. During the elections there was a rule that certain types of votes should be rejected. Because of that rule, some votes were cancelled. If those votes that had gone to the Maoists as calculated, Maoists would have won. Even though the Maoists won the seat, it was declared lost.

In spite of all that some of these prominent figures lost in the election. This shows that the people want change, and they are monitoring the situation very closely. At the same time the people are very conscious that if the Constituent Assembly works then that's fine, but if it does not work they also know how to destroy it. Because they have already destroyed the whole reactionary state structure in the Base Areas and have brought the whole state into this interim or transitional stage. This is how the Nepalese people are working, looking further and trying to change things.

Q: Is there a possibility of seizing nationwide political power peacefully?

A: No. That's not possible. Theoretically, no revolutionary movement can seize political power peacefully. Even the reactionary class cannot seize political power peacefully. We can see this from the cases of China and Russia. We can see that the power can't be seized peacefully. Already our history is not peaceful. In the course of the Peoples War there have been ten years of armed struggle. Our revolutionary movement has not developed peacefully, it emerged from armed struggle. And if anything happened it took place on the foundation of armed struggle, not on the peaceful movement. Maybe there will be such a possibility in the future, that things can move peacefully too.

Either there is a dictatorship of the proletariat or a dictatorship of the bourgeois, and once this dictatorship is established it will inevitably bring turmoil. A big upheaval where one class has to overthrow the other class, it cannot be done peacefully. First of all, the foundation is already not peaceful; it has come through armed struggle, through violently overthrowing one class by the other one. The proletariat has overwhelmingly weakened the reactionary class because of the armed struggle and the reactionary forces have killed 13,000 people. Again, the acceleration of this political phenomenon is based on the armed struggle, so there is also the possibility that a kind of uprising can take place in the future.

Q: In the current international situation, it seems that there is no prospect of seizing power in other countries. How do you see the question of seizing power in Nepal in relation to that?

A: First of all, I don't agree that there is no prospect of seizing power in other countries in the current international situation because every current situation is not automatically favourable for seizing political power in any period of time. Even if we look at Lenin's time, it was a very difficult time to seize political power. If we look at Mao's time, it was also several times more difficult than in Lenin's time. And if we look at the People's War in Peru, this was a much more difficult time than it was during the time of Mao. Because while Mao was fighting, there was a socialist state in Russia. Stalin was there. No matter how much the Comintern was interfering negatively, still it was a revolutionary force.

When the Nepalese revolution was initiated, there was a big problem. On one hand the revolutionary movement in Peru had suffered a defeat, its leaders had been arrested and there was much propaganda about capitulationism. The Asumir document had already come out, and demoralisation of the proletariat had begun again. The world reactionaries were cheering that there is no Marxism-Leninism or communism. So in any concrete situation, seizing political power is not necessarily in a favourable condition. This understanding that there is no prospect of seizing power in other countries, I don't agree to that. I believe it's a wrong approach. This is a wrong tendency in the world communist movement.

The point is whether Maoist revolutionaries are able to apply dialectical materialism to the objective situation, as Lenin said concrete analysis of the concrete conditions.

Understanding dialectical materialism means human beings can consciously identify the law of motion of things. How much they are free to see the necessity. This is the crucial question. If they are capable of seeing the necessity, they are free to make a revolution and to seize political power, no matter whether this is the United States or France, in Britain, in Scandinavian countries, no matter how much their per capita income and social security. It cannot happen overnight but there are possibilities. If the proletariat is capable enough to build its political strength in these countries there are prospects of seizing political power there.

In the context of Nepal, this process is already underway and the war is underway. But it is not just a question of time, other important aspects of class struggle has to be developed too. One example is creation of a revolutionary crisis, which happens when the reactionary class cannot sustain itself and the people do not support the existing situation, and therefore the revolutionary party cannot continue its behaviour in the same way. Thus the struggle has to advance to a different level. It's very risky. If the party fails to tackle the revolutionary crisis the revolution may not happen. That's the case in every country. It doesn't matter how much the struggle is going ahead or not going ahead. The question is how prepared the party is and how much the objective and subjective conditions are ripe to seize political power. In the case of Nepal the Party is prepared for this eventuality. We can't predict the date but we can predict and be certain that the proletariat will seize political power.

Q: How will you move from the current transitional stage to the completion of New Democracy?

A: There is a vital struggle going on, concentrated on the question of the state. The reactionary class which has lost power and is basically vacillating as we are concentrating on three main points: the army, economic restructuring and restructuring of the state. The reactionary parties have put forward a 7-point agenda, where out of this 7-point agenda you can synthesise 3 points. They demand to dismantle the PLA, and keep the Nepalese Army and bureaucracy out of the reach of a Maoist led government. In fact, if the Maoists form the government these would be out of reach of the government.

They demand the army (NA) should remain intact as it is, that is the status quo must be maintained .[They demand that] the NA should not be democratised, changed and revolutionised. It should not be linked to the heroic legacy of the past, for example Viusha Thapa Balgat Reforun. This was the legacy of the Nepalese Army, the heroic defenders of the Nepalese nation, Nepalese people, fighting against British imperialism and planning to drive them out of India and the whole of Asia. This army has the legacy of history, but through the King and Queen of the 1816 Segauli Treaty this army was paralysed and turned into a mercenary army, which has the job of killing people, raping women, wrecking the nation and betraying the people. These things have happened for almost 200 years. Now the ruling class does

not want to link the history of the new army to that heroic army, it wants to limit it within reactionary history. So this is one problem.

Another thing, the Koirala-led government does not want to abolish the semi-feudal, semi-colonial production relations. They want to consolidate the existing feudal mode of production as well as bureaucratic mode of production. They don't want to restructure the state in a way that the people get their right to self-determination, build their own destiny by their own hands and establish national and regional autonomous republics. For the ruling classes, a federal republic of Nepal is a kind of unity of landlords and gangs, who are free to fight each other, exploit the people and make their own gangster laws on their territory. What we want to do is abolish feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism, and enhance the people's lives economically, politically, socially, by leading them to win their rights thereby making a strong nation, a base area for the international proletariat through voluntary unity of the proletariat and peoples. So these three things are the centre of the fight now, and in that context it's very tough, but its moving ahead in that way basically.

Q: How are you preparing for the possibility of external or internal military attacks against the revolution?

A: Are the masses politically prepared? This is the main question, and how are the people politically prepared for that? Once the masses are politically prepared, ideologically and politically prepared to establish a new society, then any kind of terrorist aggression can be defeated. The Nepalese people are prepared to fight against any kind of aggression. At the same time this is related to our military strategy, to fight against the agents of reactionaries and also to establish the kind of relation which can block the external reactionaries from coming into the country. This requires an extended unity of the proletariat. In a major way it is necessary to have a unity of the masses of people and of the proletariat around the world to safeguard the base area of the proletariat.

This preparation has to be carried out. It's not fully prepared but it has to be fully carried out and prepared well. Nevertheless, since the beginning of the People's War the preparations have been underway, to unite the revolutionary forces, to have relation with the masses of people, either revolutionary or democratic, or nationalist or human rights type forces, to have relations the world over and unite the masses in understanding that the Nepalese people really want change, progress and to establish a completely different society, a radically changed society, which will keep on radically changing for the interests of humanity. So in that way we are trying to mobilise the forces all around the world to defend the socialist state that will be established.

Q: In Worker #10, the organ of the CPN(M), there is a document about central committee resolutions, discussing revolution within the revolution. How is this contributing to the advance of the class struggle in Nepal?

A: This revolution within revolution is a very important part of making revolution, because one revolution is not enough to overthrow the reactionary system and sustain proletarian power. Secondly, without revolution within the revolution it is also not enough to seize political power, and now in Nepal, nationwide political power is not seized. Because people want change the situation cannot stay stable. They will try to find this or that alternative, and therefore it is necessary to continue the revolution within the revolution, ideologically, politically, culturally, economically and socially. That is Cultural Revolution. Revolution within the revolution is basically Cultural Revolution.

This method is always needed because as we need to understand the enemy from outside the party, we need to understand the enemy from inside. We need to educate people to a new level of understanding and fulfil the necessity. For example when we make revolution people don't have mobile phones, or don't have refrigerators at home but they will not tolerate living in a primitive society. Revolution should develop people's material needs, but under the control of, and in the interests of the masses of people. For this purpose people need revolution within revolution, continuous ideological-political revolution.

At the same time, revolution should suppress ideas of private property, capitalism, individualism. We need to fight continuously against these tendencies, which would come back with the mask of revolution. These people say, 'I am a revolutionary, I have to rule and therefore properties belong to me.' Clearly, this is not a proletarian line, so the proletariat needs to fight against this kind of tendency. These kinds of problems are emerging in society now, so it is necessary to continue revolution within the revolution. Even though the revolution has not been completed, still it is necessary to carry it out inside the revolutionary party.

Q: What is the party's strategy?

A: The grand strategy is to establish New Democratic Revolution, socialism and to advance towards communism. The tactics aim to fulfil that strategy.

Q: What are the differences between the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution democracy and the multiparty democracy that is being proposed by the CPN (M)?

A: This is a very important question which has actually produced much theoretical debate. Multiparty democracy within the dictatorship of the proletariat is a continuation of the proletarian dictatorship which was initiated by Chairman Mao Zedong in the Cultural Revolution. The position we have put forward is a development of the Cultural Revolution. It is because theoretically, socialist society cannot be monolithic; people do have a competitive nature.

On the other hand, after the revolution is completed the bourgeois class doesn't come from the outside. The mistake that Stalin made was that class contradictions were finished in Russia internally, and class antagonism can only be seen at the international level. That was a mistake. But what we have seen from the experience of Russia and China, and Mao correctly saw this and criticised this viewpoint, is that after the revolution has been accomplished, the bourgeois class and reactionaries principally come from the inside.

Once the proletariat seizes political power the bourgeoisie doesn't see a scope from outside and will rush into the party camouflaging as if they are the number one proletarians and will ultimately overturn the dictatorship of the proletariat. Even if it is still in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in content it becomes a bourgeois state. So to prevent that kind of situation today and to fight against imperialism we have to develop some kind of mechanism, a principle, a theoretical proposition. We must have a state mechanism corresponding to our ideology and that political proposition.

What we are proposing is that in socialist society under the dictatorship of the proletariat there should be competition among communist revolutionaries and this will help the unity of the proletariat. Because the proletariat has no other interest than developing the dictatorship of the proletariat and eventually eliminating itself as a class and class society altogether. At the same time there will be unity of the bourgeoisie because they have no other place to go except to rush into the party of the proletariat. So, if there are two revolutionary parties the bourgeoisie will rush into, they will be identified. Also the masses will have lively participation in politics and they will be able to identify what each party is talking about, how it is behaving and how the line is being advanced and how the proletarian dictatorship is further developed.

The bourgeoisie have done a lot of work on this question even though the class content is different. For example if we look at the United States today, we see the contradiction between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party where there is a debate over attacking Iran. The Republican Party says that the US must attack right away, but the Democratic Party says we should not attack right away, we should warn them first, make them fulfil some demands, and if they don't comply then we attack. The content is attack, so there is no difference over the content, only on how they will attack, whether step by step, earlier or later.

The argument they have is that Democrats say, if we attack right away we lose power here, but the Republicans say if we don't attack soon then we lose power here. So they are concerned about losing

power. They are not talking about whether or not one of them will get into government. They are talking about their class dictatorship would be weakened. If they attack that creates a chaotic situation and the masses and other classes will strive to overthrow them. If they are overthrown, both will be overthrown and a different kind of dictatorship will rule over them, it might be people's joint dictatorship or proletarian dictatorship. This situation might come up over there, which is really dangerous for them. Their anxiety is not that they will lose the government but they will lose the dictatorship.

Let's say this could be more or less a principle, equivalent in the proletarian dictatorship. For two reactionary parties their debate is how to strengthen the reactionary dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, if there are two revolutionary parties the debate and struggle between those parties would be over how to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat, how to establish socialist revolution all around the world and how to advance socialism, to communism.

If any communist party makes a mistake in the process of advancing to communism, fingers will be raised that you cannot run the government. This will prevent the bourgeoisie, at least it will make cause stimulus for the masses to prevent counterrevolution. At the same time it will make the masses of people actively participate in politics. In a monolithic society, especially those we have seen, once the socialist revolution is established and the basic needs of the masses are fulfilled then the masses lose interest in politics.

Now, in the United States, even most of the poor people are not interested in politics. They are fed up with politics. They take part in struggles but not in politics. It is very important and necessary to encourage people to participate in politics. For the bourgeoisie it is good, it's good not to have the masses involved in politics. But for the proletariat it becomes very complicated. For some time, at least up to communist society, as long as there is dictatorship and class division within society, this multiparty system under the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary. It is very important to note that this is under the dictatorship of the proletariat to strengthen the proletarian dictatorship, communist competition under the socialist state is necessary. That is what we believe and we are confident that this is a continuation of Cultural Revolution as put forward by Mao.

Q: What would be the role of parties of other classes like the middle classes?

A: These parties of middle classes will not remain at that time. Classes will be there, but once the revolutionary society is established and the mode of production is changed, the culture of society is changed, the education is changed, relations are changed, these classes will wither away. Because the society does not preserve the old classes once it becomes a new society. For example, if we look at the United States, the nationalist tendency of 100 years ago and the nationalist tendency today are radically different. It changed. So when we have a socialist society, as the society develops, these classes will wither away.

Q: I think you agree that socialist society is a class society, with not only the middle classes but also the bourgeoisie. So in the multiparty democracy proposition, are they allowed to have their parties and to compete in multiparty democracy or are they not allowed to have political parties?

A: In the name of capitalist or nationalist parties they will not be allowed. There will be no such process. They will not be allowed to contest. Even if they are nationalist then they will find themselves saying they are revolutionaries and their principles will have to comply with the revolutionary line. Otherwise, they will not be able to compete. How can they compete if they say that they want capitalism, or monarchy, in a socialist society? It's not possible. Even if they want to bring back the monarchy they have to say that they are revolutionary and monarchy is useful, you have to convince the masses that this is useful. And the masses are not naive to say that bringing back capitalism or the monarchy is fine. No, they will not do that.

If you can convince people that this party is a revolutionary party, to think up to the level of taking society to transform to communism then people vote for you. In that process people will go ahead and can choose either party. Just as in the United States over the question of who can attack Iran. Whoever can

convince the masses that can best attack Iran will win the election. Any candidate who cannot convince the masses that they will attack will not win the election. In the same way, in a different kind of society, communists can win by convincing the masses that they will transform the society into a radically different position. The bourgeoisie will also be there, but the bourgeois in that society will change their colour. However this is a reflection of capitalism. They change colour, opinions and approach in a different way.

Q: In China, the other classes belonging to the people's camp were allowed to have their parties and to participate in the People's Congress. Now from what I gather from your presentation about multiparty democracy, this proposition states that only the proletariat can have many parties and the other classes are not allowed. Is that right?

A: Yes, exactly that. Let's look at China. The other parties existed on the sufferance of the main party, the Communist Party of China. That's to show the other parties their role is not really like a party. They cannot challenge the main party, the Communist Party, and the role of these parties is to politically paralyse the masses. Mao did that but from a different proposition in order to safeguard the masses from different wrong tendencies. But it was not developed; rather it was kept intact to fulfil the interest of one section of the ruling class which is complimentary of the party and working in the interest of that party to show they have a multiparty system. But there was no real competition there and there was no challenge for the proletariat itself, whether proletariat was correct or not. Whatever the party of the proletariat does other proletarians should have the right to challenge it.

So, it is necessary to separate the party of the proletariat and create competition under the dictatorship of the proletariat. What is dictatorship? State, law, constitution, framework, the orientation of the state machinery, etc., are different parts of dictatorship. If it is bourgeois dictatorship it is about how they exploit workers and peasants, accumulate money, plunder other countries and expand their colonies, these are all within the bourgeois dictatorship. And the proletarian dictatorship is about how to win the world to transform to communism and smash all exploitation and oppression of man by man. There will be competition in that kind of process, it is necessary.

Q: Continuing on this theme a bit more, because many people are asking about this, one question people ask is that according to the class nature of the proletariat they always strive to unite the masses of people. Proletarian struggle is for unity. The proletarian ideology is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and proletarian philosophy is dialectical and historical materialism. The thing is in a socialist society you need to see more concentration of this, so will it be the party trying to unite the masses of people and create more unity and so on? But this proposal seems to superficially create many parties of the proletariat. The question is how can you have many proletarian parties when all have the same philosophy, line, ideology, goals and are trying to unite the masses, how is that possible?

A: Marx said that the state would wither away, a scientific conclusion, and that the party would also wither away once the necessity is reached. But the point is that sometimes, there is a reason why the necessity is over. As long as there are reactionary societies existing in any part of the world the reflection of them comes inside any socialist country. The main thing is that in the reactionary bourgeois forces can transform a lot but still there would be some level of bourgeois ideology working in that context. However, the necessity of that party withers away. Like we have seen in Russia, before the October Revolution there was many parties, Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, nationalist parties etc, but after the October Revolution many of the parties vanished. In China there were eight other parties, even though this was mechanical. Similarly, when we make revolution in Nepal, India, or any other country, to bring the party on the surface would be very difficult.

We have to think from a materialist dialectical point of view. Whether we think classes exists or not, classes exist, whether we think contradictions exist or not, contradictions also exist. We are the proletariat, do we have contradictions? We definitely have contradictions. Whatever the level of our understanding there will always be contradictions among the proletariat. In a socialist society there will be the contradiction of whether we can extend the proletarian state or not, that is one contradiction. There

would also be a contradiction over whether we can develop things to meet the demand of the people of the world.

At the same time, there would be contradictions among proletarians of how to handle relations with the outside world. To come to the correct conclusion there would be struggle. But this struggle is related not only to debate within the party but is also related to state power. Because there is state power things have to be done through state power. One person cannot do things. We have to utilise state power. For example when scientists try to develop their understanding and experiment with things they cannot do that just by themselves, the state has to get involved. Once the state gets involved then the process is linked to the state power. Everything is linked to the state then there is room for two parties to exist even under one class rule.

So before the revolution there must be one proletarian party, but after the revolution there can be two or more proletarian parties to sustain and develop the proletarian state, to transform it, as long as it has not been transformed to communism. I believe even in communism there will not be a party but a group, a kind of mechanism. How this group balances work or distribution is important, because the world is not equal. Some places are hilly, some really hot or very cold, some places are white or sandy deserts but still people live there. How can the people make a balance? Equal distribution under absolute equality would be inequality. So if we want to make just equality there has to be inequality again. This is a very complicated problem and to manage this balance we need some kind of mechanism and power. Obviously once we go to communism we will not return to feudalism, but there will be different kinds of contradictions.

Q: Many comrades have read (communist) parties' documents and have had many discussions, but this is the first time that I am really starting to understand that the multiparty democracy proposition is not that other classes can have their party but that only the proletariat will have more than one party.

A: When we have a revolutionary socialist society we can find other classes but under the surface, our task is to recognise them. They do not openly advocate that they are bourgeois man in charge turned it to a restaurant. Now that restaurant is abolished and the church is established again. That man's grandson is now in charge and in an interview he said, the communist dictator abolished our god and now we have to start all over.

My point is that at some stage in the future, you will find no nationalists because they won't be able to sustain themselves. The state power principally determines what kind of character the people become. When there is a revolutionary power, people will be transformed to revolutionaries or act like revolutionaries. Whether they are revolutionary or not, that's another matter, whether they deeply believe in revolution is another thing, but revolutions move in waves.

If you look at Nepal, in the last election some people who painted their faces are considered as lumpen, but these people were in queues to vote for Maoists. In fact, they voted for Maoists and they consider themselves Maoists. They say that they have changed, and they claim to believe in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and Prachanda Path. They think we must make Comrade Prachanda the president because we need a new society. All these people have to have jobs, freedom, free education and healthcare. They need to absorb our education and learn to serve the people. They talk like Maoists, but two days ago they were not Maoists and now they are! Are they real Maoists? It is very difficult to say that they are real Maoists, but we can't deny that they are Maoist supporters. This means society has changed and the interest of petit-bourgeois has to be assured, but they can't say they are petit-bourgeois.

Comrade Bob Avakian made a very interesting comment, he said once, when we go into socialism the people will feel the same about capitalist society as people feel today towards slave society. For example in Nepal, there is \$300 per capita income, but when the socialist society is established most probably it will increase to \$3000 or even \$30,000 per capita income. At that stage some people want to restore a capitalist society but they definitely would not want to return to feudal society with \$300 per capita income.

These changes in a different way. What kind of political power is ruling society when the society advances? The culture of the people is determined by that. If we have a feudal power their culture is feudal culture overwhelmingly, but not totally. There are also people fighting against that. Overwhelmingly the culture and tendency of the people is determined by the ruling class, whether feudal, capitalist or socialist. Therefore, in socialism we can't find nationalists, elements championing parochialism, racism and others in an open way.

Q: Some forces in the communist movement have been mainly silent about the revolution in Nepal during the past two years. What are your expectations from these forces?

A: Some forces are silent because they have doubts on the question of the line. This shows a limitation in their understanding of the concrete situation in Nepal. Lack of understanding creates doubts about where this is going, and because of this doubt there is vacillation. I think this will become clear, and those people who have doubts will be clear within a short time. We expect and hope for them to become clear and perform revolutionary activities supporting the revolution in Nepal and making revolution in their own country too. Supporting the revolution in Nepal by all means, as Lenin defined real internationalism. We expect they act in a real proletarian internationalist way.

Q: Why is there confusion about the line of the CPN (M) internationally?

A: This is an obvious question, because once you have to chart a new road there is always confusion. Mao once said you should dare to scale the heights, but it would be stupid to say we will go straight up on this road without turning left or right. Once you really get going you will find the direction, but you don't know the way beforehand. Before you are on your way you don't know when to turn right or to turn left. This kind of situation creates confusion among the people. If you have a straight road then you will not be surprised and it will not be difficult to find your way. If you miss the road you can say you have missed it. But if you are charting a new road then it creates confusion.

Q: What are the Party's strengths and what are its shortcomings?

A: The party's strength is in understanding the ideology, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. There are a lot of shortcomings, quantitatively many more than our strengths. But the dominant factor is our strengths, so our shortcomings are secondary. One of our shortcomings is about making the masses conscious about our political agenda, which sometimes we can't do it on time. For example, we made an agreement and compromised not to put the words national and regional autonomy on the comprehensive peace agreement and in the interim constitution, but we didn't abandon that agenda.

Actually we were playing a trick to bring the bourgeoisie into the Constituent Assembly, then we could come up with the next initiative. This would have given us enough time to encircle and defeat our enemy politically. On this issue, we thought we were unable to convince the masses. We didn't take it to the masses, because we thought if we tell the masses then the enemy will also know. But in fact the enemy already knew about this trick, and they were advancing and pushed us in a corner.

These kinds of shortcomings can be avoided. We should have taken it to the masses and explained the reason we were doing it. We said state restructuring means the right of self-determination and the right of autonomy. We should have explained this to the masses but we did not do that. Another example: right now from the centre, we are continuously fighting against reactionaries, expansionists and comprador bourgeois puppets. At any given moment, there is fighting, vigorous fighting. But on the ground people are watching to see what is happening, listening to the radio to hear what Comrade Prachanda will say today and what he will say tomorrow. But there is a lag; we have some sort of shortcoming to take these things to the people. Sometimes these shortcomings are obvious. But our main strength is that so far we have been able to understand Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in an advanced way, develop the Prachanda Path and dictate the political initiative overall, which is overshadowing all these weaknesses.

Q: How do you think the integration of the People's Liberation Army and the Nepal Army will take place?

A: Firstly there is a theoretical question then a practical question. Can one state have two armies? As long as the national state remains, it has to have an army. In exceptional cases maybe they won't, like the Vatican City, actually the Vatican also has an army, about 900 soldiers. So even that holy state needs an army! You can't abolish the army. Secondly, one state can't have two armies. If there are two armies there are two states. In Nepal, during the time of conflict it was necessary to have two states, one revolutionary state and one reactionary state, and there was fighting between these two states. Now one state has to eat up the other state. In that way there has to be one army. But what should the character of this army be? In our opinion the old army has to be developed into a new army. The new army has brought the country to this stage and the old army is irrelevant in the new situation. For the new state the old army has to be transformed into a new army.

That is the principal question.

On the practical level, two armies cannot live together, so we have to build one army. But what kind of army will this be? Whatever kind of state exists will determine the character of the army. Yesterday, the army was ruled by the king, now the monarchy has been abolished. The state has changed and the army has to be changed, there has to be a new army. This is the essence of the fusion of two armies.

Q: What is the Party's plan to transform the economy?

A: First of all we have to end the semi-feudal, semi-colonial economic relations and develop the national economy. We have to mobilise three things: land (Jamie), humans (Janashate) and jobs (Jall). We call this the three Js principle. On this basis we can develop the national economy. But there are some theoretical questions today: whether a national economy can purely be a national economy. I think it is wrong to establish a purely national economy. It cannot happen; it would be wrong theoretically. If we limit the economy to a national economy it would not be able to make much progress, it would limit the progress of human beings. The national economy is interdependent, there is a world economy, but the class character of the economy has to be changed. Instead of being a reactionary imperialist economy there has to be a socialist economy. So there are two aspects: tactically there has to be a national economy and strategically there has to be an international socialist economy.

Q: How do you see the Party overcoming its present difficulties with Nepali Congress, UML and the Madhesi parties?

A: It is obvious that there is struggle now because there are two classes and two states have come to logger heads. But this will be overcome through the process of class struggle. We won't remain in a status quo for long. One will eat up the other. Either they will destroy the Maoists or the Maoists will destroy them and then this question will be over. It won't take a long time.

Q: What does the Party need right now?

A: It needs international support from the proletariat, from the democratic and nationalist forces, from human right activists, and from all people to establish a New Democratic Republic, sustain it, and support its economy and to help it work. We need ideological, political, moral, economic support. We request all kinds of support.

Q: For us particularly, from the Party's point of view, how can supporters of the revolution in Nepal and supporters of the CPN(M) who are outside the country help to advance the revolution in Nepal and learn its lessons to implement them wherever we are?

A: This is a very important question. The point is that you can assist by fighting against imperialism, exposing imperialism and the reactionary classes, and also by theoretical work today. Many people have vacillated about reading things, looking at history and identifying the problems of the revolutionary

struggle. By studying and bringing out the historical importance people can make a great contribution. This is a very important thing to do, and at the same time we must fight against imperialism and expose it. This is a historical necessity for revolutionaries. This is proletarian ideological-political support; to bring everything including the bitter histories to the surface and at the same time to inspire the masses about how to fight, how the military strategy of the CPN (M) has developed, and at the same time popularising the revolutionary movement in Nepal the world over. This will also serve the revolutionary process in all countries.

Thank you.