

Interview with Bhattarai: Fusing People's War and Insurrection

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WPRM: Thank you for meeting with us today. In your article in *The Worker* #4 'The Political Economy of the People's War' you write that "the transformation of one social system into another, or the destruction of the old by the new, always involves force and a revolutionary leap. The People's War is such a means of eliminating the old by a new force and of taking a leap towards a new and higher social system." Why then did the Maoist party enter the peace process and attempt to change society through Constituent Assembly elections?

Baburam Bhattarai: This is a very important question related to the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM). The basic motive force of history is the contradiction between the existing level of productive forces and the production relations within society. At a certain stage this contradiction sharpens and there is a break with the old relationship and a leap to the new one. We call this social revolution. That leap necessarily confronts a certain force, because every set of productive relations is backed by a state, and the state means basically the organised force of the army. To break with the old mode of production and leap into a new one, you have to break all the relations within the state backed by the army. And that inevitably requires the use of force. This is a law of history and a basic principle of MLM which nobody can revise. If you revise or abandon it then you are no longer a Marxist. There is no question of our party ever ending this basic principle.

By adhering to this basic principle we waged armed Protracted People's War (PPW) from 1996 to 2006. But after 2006 we made a certain departure in our tactical line. Some people are confused about this and think we have abandoned PPW forever and adopted a peaceful path of social development. This confusion needs to be cleared. What we are saying is that People's War is a multifaceted war where both the armed and political form of struggle needs to be combined.

Protracted People's War (PPW) is a military strategy to be adopted in a semi-feudal, semi-colonial context, and, in the different context of imperialism, could be applied in a modified form even in imperialist countries. But basically the theory of PPW as developed by Mao was to be applied in semi-feudal, semi-colonial countries. That's why the military line adopted in the case of Nepal was basically a line of Protracted People's War, which we developed through the course of our struggle, applying it very creatively in Nepal for ten years. And we were successful in developing this war from the stage of strategic defensive to the stage of strategic equilibrium and on to the stage of strategic offensive. We basically established the strategic offensive, which means the final stage of capturing state power and which must be meticulously calculated and applied. If you don't take note of the existing balance of forces, both politically and militarily in the country and outside, firstly it will be difficult to capture state power and secondly even after capturing state power it will be difficult to sustain it. That's why we introduced certain new features.

People know only the negative part, but what they forget, or what we have been unable to propagate well since the beginning of the PPW, is the new context of world imperialism and the specific geopolitical context of Nepal. In this context, our party decided that we need to adopt some of the features of general insurrection within the strategy of PPW. Therefore the basic strategy will be PPW, but some of the features of general insurrection, which relies on people's movement in the urban areas and leads to the final insurrection in the city, the tactics of the general insurrection, should also be incorporated within that strategy. This has been the basic question within our party, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [UCPN(M)]. This idea we first introduced in our national unity congress in 1991 and after that when we had our 2nd national conference in 2001. At that time we developed the theory of fusion of PPW and general insurrection to a new level, so that in the specific context of Nepal, while adhering to the basic path of PPW, the tactic of general insurrection should be fused within that strategy. That's why at

that conference we put emphasis on this aspect. But we thought that when we developed this new political line, developed through the course of the People's War in Nepal, that it needed to be assessed more thoroughly in the international community of Maoists.

We called this one of the features of Prachanda Path, which we regarded as a new development in the theory of MLM. After 2001 we still adhered to the People's War but we resorted to some of the tactics of general insurrection, that's why when we were in the People's War we always talked of political negotiations and we actually had two rounds of political negotiations. During that time we raised the issues of Constituent Assembly, abolition of the monarchy and establishment of a bourgeois democratic republic. These were the tactics we followed while we were in the PPW. Why we did that was because in the specific conditions of Nepal, though we are in the stage of transition from feudalism to capitalism, in our case the feudal system had been basically led by an autocratic monarchy for thousands of years. In most third world countries autocratic monarchy has already been abolished, and in those countries though the basic foundation of society is still semi-feudal, semi-colonial, the political superstructure was led by bourgeois democrats. But in our case even the political superstructure was dominated by the autocratic feudal monarchy, the national bourgeoisie was very weak and they could not carry forward the bourgeois democratic revolution. It was the proletarian party which had to take the lead to abolish the autocratic monarchy and introduce a bourgeois democracy, which could be again transformed through struggle into New Democracy, a proletarian democratic system.

Therefore we adopted these tactics, and after 2001 we followed these tactics and by 2005 we had reached the stage of strategic offensive in the PPW. Then we thought it was time to focus our activity, to shift our activities to the urban areas. By that time we had liberated most of the countryside, where the poor peasantry lives, and under 25% of our population lives in urban areas. There the petty bourgeoisie class and other classes needed to be mobilised if we were to complete the stage of strategic offensive and capture the state in a revolutionary manner. After 2005 we decided to shift our activity to the urban areas, because without mobilising the masses in urban areas we couldn't complete our strategic offensive, capturing the state. With these tactics in mind we entered into the negotiation process with certain parliamentary parties who were all struggling with the monarchy but which were too weak, their class nature was too weak, they couldn't struggle with the monarchy and complete the bourgeois democratic revolution. When the autocratic monarchy centralised all state power in a coup, it was easier for us to have an alliance with those bourgeois democratic parties and we made the 12-point understanding. On the basis of that 12-point understanding we launched a mass movement which we called the 2nd mass movement. After the 2nd mass movement there was a huge upsurge of the people and the autocratic monarchy was forced to accept the Constituent Assembly and to step down. After that we made the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, in which we had to make certain compromises. Those compromises were made to abolish the monarchy, hold the Constituent Assembly elections and then move ahead to complete the bourgeois democratic revolution in the country.

There are some ambiguous features in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Our understanding, the revolutionary party's understanding, was that after abolishing the monarchy and establishing a bourgeois democratic republic, the proletarian party would take the initiative and launch forward the struggle towards New Democratic Revolution. We knew the bourgeois forces, after the abolition of the monarchy, would try to resist, and our main contradiction then would be with the bourgeois democratic parties. This we had foreseen. So we have not said that after the abolition of the monarchy we'll stop there. We never said that. What we have said is that we would align with the bourgeois democratic parties to abolish the monarchy, and after the abolition of the monarchy then the contention would be between the bourgeois forces and the proletarian forces. A new field of struggle would start. That was clearly stated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the subsequent interim constitution and other documents we passed.

After the Constituent Assembly elections, when our party emerged as the largest force and we abolished the monarchy, there was a lot of enthusiasm among the masses of the people. Our party's tactical line had been correctly implemented. That gave a tremendous force to the basic masses of the people and our support greatly increased. For the time being we cooperated with the interim government also,

because by participating in that coalition government we thought we could work within the bureaucracy, within the army, within the police and within the judiciary, in order to build our support base through those state structures, which would help us for future revolutionary activities. With that in mind we participated in the coalition government. After the abolition of the monarchy, when the main contradiction would start with the bourgeois democratic forces, then our struggle took a new turn.

After April 2009 [when Prachanda resigned from government], that phase of the Constituent Assembly and implementation of the bourgeois democratic republic was more or less complete. Our understanding is to now carry on the struggle forwards to complete the New Democratic Revolution. So again we made a tactical shift, showing that from now on our major fight would be with the bourgeois democratic parties who are backed by imperialism and the expansionist forces. With this thinking our party left the government and now we are focusing on the mass movement, so that now we could really practice what we have been preaching. That means the fusion of the strategy of PPW and the tactic of general insurrection. What we have been doing since 2005 is the path of preparation for general insurrection through our work in the urban areas and our participation in the coalition government.

But what one should not forget was that we had never ever surrendered the gains of the PPW, what we had gained during the ten years of struggle. We had formulated the People's Liberation Army (PLA), we had our base areas, we had a lot of mass support, and all this we have been able to preserve. But we have not been able to convey to our comrades outside the country that the gains of the People's War were never surrendered. The PLA is still with us, and the arms we collected during that war are still with us within the single-key system, monitored by the United Nations team, but basically the key is with us and the army is with us and we have never surrendered. This shows we have not abandoned the path of PPW. What we have done is suspended that part of the activity for some time and focused more on the urban activities so that we could make a correct balance between the military and political aspects of struggle. After some time we will be able to combine both aspects of PPW and general insurrection to mount a final insurrection to capture state power. We would like to stress that we are still continuing in the path of revolution, but the main features we tried to introduce were to make a fusion between the theory of PPW and the tactic of general insurrection. After coming to the peaceful phase I think whatever confusion there was has been mitigated and people realise we are still on the revolutionary path.

Now we are preparing for the final stage of the completion of the New Democratic Revolution. In a few months when the contradiction will sharpen between the proletarian and bourgeois forces, maybe there will be some intervention from the imperialist and expansionist forces. During that time we may again be forced to have another round of armed clashes. Our party is already aware of that and we have decided to again focus on the basic masses of the people both in urban and rural areas. To strengthen those mass bases we have formed the United National People's Movement, which will be preparing for both struggle in the urban areas and to strengthen our mass base in the countryside. In the decisive stage of confrontation with the reactionary forces we could again combine our bases in the rural areas and our support in the urban areas for a final assault against the enemy to complete the revolution.

I would like to say we have never abandoned PPW, the only thing is that there has been a tactical shift within the strategy. This is one point. The other point is that being a Maoist we believe in continuous revolution. Revolution never stops. Even when one stage is completed, immediately the new stage should be continued. Only that way can we reach socialism and communism. That is a basic tenet of Maoism. Being a Maoist, this reasoning of continuous revolution can never be abandoned. We are still in the course of PPW, though the tactics have shifted according to the nature of the time. But there is a confusion in the international community of proletarian forces, and we would like to clarify this, but I think this thing can be better done in practice than in words. Anyhow we are confident we can convince our comrades who have some doubts about our activities that we are still pursuing the path of revolution. We will complete the revolution in a new way and we have to show that revolution is possible even in the 21st century. And Nepal can be a model of revolution in the 21st century.

WPRM: Can you explain how the UCPN(M) understands the nature of the state in this transitional period? Can the New Democratic Revolution be completed through the holding of an election?

Baburam Bhattarai: The key question in any revolution is the question of the state. The state is simply an instrument of dictatorship of a certain class. Right now in Nepal the existing state is a dictatorship of the feudal, comprador and bureaucratic capitalist classes. So the task of the revolution is to smash this state and replace it with a New Democratic one. This is the basic objective of the revolution. But in the special case of Nepal, the semi-feudal, semi-colonial state was presided over by an autocratic monarchy and it was being backed by foreign imperialist and expansionist forces. Our party, the UCPN(M), therefore thought it more prudent first to do away with the autocratic monarchy and establish a bourgeois democratic republic and then immediately go towards New Democratic Revolution. Those were the tactics adopted by us. We took the initiative to abolish the monarchy under the leadership of the proletariat which was a tremendous boost for the proletarian forces within our country. It also marginalised the bourgeois democratic forces because they had not taken the lead in that phase of the revolution. After the implementation of these tactics and the abolition of the monarchy, we have established a bourgeois democratic republic in this country, which basically still is a dictatorship of the feudal landlord, comprador and bureaucratic capitalist classes. But politically, since the proletarian forces took the initiative to establish this transitional state, there is contention between the reactionary classes and the progressive classes. A sort of flux has been created, it has not been stabilised. Within this nature of the state, which is in flux, we think it will be easier for the revolutionary forces to intervene and further destabilise the state, putting pressure on it from outside the state which can be smashed to make a New Democratic state.

The nature of the transitional state is, to put it very concisely, in principle a dictatorship of the reactionary forces. But in practice, since the proletarian forces played a leading and decisive role in dismantling the autocratic monarchy and creating this transitional state, the political authority of the progressive, patriotic and proletarian forces is high. So this interim state won't be very stable and if we can correctly mobilise the masses of people it can easily be overthrown and replaced by a New Democratic state. We think this is a new experiment being carried out in Nepal, it has not happened like in China where they directly implemented the revolutionary policies of the party and overthrew the old state replacing it with a new one. But in our case it has meant cutting up the state part by part, in fact we are devouring it part by part. Ultimately we will be able to smash it and then replace it with a new state. This does not mean we are trying to reform the whole state, indeed the whole state has to be totally displaced by a new state. There is no confusion on our part on this question. But the method of destroying the whole state is partly new in our case because it was presided over by an autocratic monarchy not by bourgeois democratic parties as seen in other third world countries. Because of this specificity of Nepal, this transitional state has been a new thing not seen elsewhere. But our party is very clear on the question that the state needs to be totally destroyed and replaced by the new state. We are working on that line and our party feels that after the formulation of the strategy of People's War and general insurrection we will be able to finally mobilise the masses of the people in a mass upsurge and insurrection to abolish this state and replace it with a New Democratic one.

WPRM: After the resignation of Chairman Prachanda from the government and the coup by President Yadav over the affair of General Katuwal, the main revisionist party, the CPN-UML, is now leading the government and you are heading the recently formed United National People's Movement (UNPM). Can you tell us the plan of the party in leading People's Movement-3 and carrying out insurrection in this situation?

Baburam Bhattarai: As I told you, the basic orientation of our party is to complete the New Democratic Revolution in a new way in Nepal. By firmly sticking to that line we are practicing different tactical shifts. Accordingly, after we completed this task of elections of the Constituent Assembly and the establishment of democratic republic, now our next task is to organise a people's movement and develop it into an insurrectionary upsurge and complete the New Democratic Revolution. Now we have entered that phase. During this phase we will focus more on organising and mobilising the masses and leading them towards a revolutionary upsurge. That means certain changes in the policy as had been practiced during the

People's War. During that time our focus was on the peasant masses, which was slightly different than the struggle in the urban areas which consists of basically the working class.

To lead this phase of the movement we have set up the new UNPM, which is basically a revolutionary united front of the patriotic, democratic and left forces led by the Communist Party. We have put forward a list of 25 demands related to nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood. With these demands we have mobilised the masses of people. At a certain stage the contradiction with the bourgeois democratic forces and the imperialist expansionist forces will reach a higher stage. At that time there will be a decisive clash between the reactionary and revolutionary forces. That will be the insurrectionary upsurge. This is the view of the people. So with this in mind we have been organising plans and struggles, mass struggles which we will be carrying out in subsequent months. As Marx and Lenin correctly pointed out, you must believe firmly in the tactics of insurrection. If you have to organise insurrection you have to make a decisive action and take it to the final conclusion. If you can't do that you will be defeated. To prepare for that decisive struggle you have to move through different stages, that's why after leaving the government we are now focusing more on the issue of civilian supremacy so we can isolate the militarist section of the reactionaries. Secondly we are focusing on the question of nationalism so we can organise the broad masses of patriotic forces against imperialist and expansionist intervention. Thirdly we are raising the issue of land reform and the basic question of livelihood among the general masses of the people, so that the poor masses of the people and the petty bourgeoisie classes can be organised.

With this in mind we are carrying on a plan in the coming few months, there will be a broad unity of patriotic, democratic and revolutionary forces, which can mount a final struggle against the reactionary forces, the bourgeois democratic forces backed by the foreign imperialist forces. We think this will lead to a proper movement and a final insurrectionary upsurge of the masses of the people. If we are able to play the contradiction between the reactionary forces within the country and the imperialist and expansionist forces outside, then at an opportune moment we can organise an insurrectionary upsurge and be victorious. Therefore we have established the UNPM and put forward protest programs. In the next few months when the contradiction will sharpen among the reactionary forces while making the new constitution, during that time this new movement will arise when the people will finally come to revolt and complete the New Democratic Revolution. This is all I want to say on this for now.

WPRM: In the past you have written of the need to confiscate the land of feudals and the capital of comprador and bureaucrat capitalists, and the party has carried this out to some extent. Is this still the plan of the UCPN(M)?

Baburam Bhattarai: To complete the New Democratic Revolution you have to smash the feudal production relations and culture, that means we have to confiscate the property of the feudal landlords and distribute it to the peasants on the principle of 'land to the tiller'. This was the basic policy of our party during the People's War, which we practiced in the rural areas. Nepal is geographically divided between the hilly regions and the plains areas and most of the land is in the plains. But in the plains it was difficult to carry out guerilla warfare, so we just entered there and implemented some land reform policies. Since the plains border India and there is a danger of foreign intervention there, we have never been able to completely practice land reform in those areas. This will only be implemented after the final victory of the revolution. During the People's War this policy, the principle of 'land to the tiller', was practiced more clearly in the hilly areas and partly in the plains areas bordering India. But we subscribe to the policy of abolishing feudal landowners because without making the real tillers of the land, the peasants, the owners of the land, we can't bring about the land revolution and can't complete the New Democratic Revolution. So our basic policy remains abolishing the feudal property relations and introducing a socialist-oriented national bourgeois democratic revolution. That is our policy on the question of land.

On the question of capital, for countries like ours, a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country, capital is basically dominated by imperialist capital. In our case Indian expansionist capital in particular. The nature of capital in Nepal at the moment is comprador and bureaucratic. This means it is dependent, you cannot have national independence in the country. That's why we want to do away with this bureaucratic and

comprador capital and convert it into national industrial capital which can subsequently be organised in a socialistic manner. With this policy in mind, we intend after the completion of the revolution to confiscate all this bureaucratic and comprador capital and convert it into national capital which can be reorganised into a socialist mode of production. This is our policy to do away with all the remnants of feudal landlordism, abolition of bureaucratic and comprador capital, and reorganisation of the economy, firstly under a New Democratic line and then in transition towards socialism.

WPRM: The UCPN(M) has brought forward ideas around elections in a New Democratic and socialist state. In your article on 'The Question of Building a New Type of State' in The Worker #9, you particularly discuss the need for greater democracy among the people. How will the holding of elections solve the problems generated by the weaknesses of the experience of socialism in the 20th century?

Baburam Bhattarai: This question of democracy and dictatorship is also very important for the communist movement. In principle every state is a dictatorship of a certain class, so-called democracy is also a form of bourgeois dictatorship. This is a basic tenet of MLM and nobody can deny that. But what was practiced in the 20th century in different people's democracies and socialist countries was, though in theory correct, in practice the real democratic institutions and processes were minimised. Democracy is a class concept, and bourgeois democracy has its own rules, but proletarian democracy also needs to be developed. What happened in the Soviet Union was that the Soviet, a democratic institution, and the working class became very functional, especially during Comrade Stalin's time. In reality the Soviets couldn't be very functional and they gradually turned into a bureaucratic state apparatus. After the counter-revolution in the Soviet Union, Comrade Mao Zedong drew certain lessons and he wanted to expand the scope of proletarian democracy. That's what he practiced during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. There were certain new institutions of people's committees and Red Guards to expand people's democracy. But this experience was very short and after Comrade Mao died, the counter-revolution in China took place.

Now it is up to the revolutionaries of the 21st century to learn from those lessons of the 20th century and develop a new concept of proletarian democracy. Our party discussed this thoroughly and made a review of the positive and negative aspects of revolution in the 20th century. We came to the conclusion that though the basic concept of MLM on state and democracy remains valid, because the Soviet apparatus was no longer functional, when the Soviet state turned into a bureaucratic state, and with the lesson of Mao's experiment of Cultural Revolution against that negative experience of the Soviet Union, we have to develop the concept of proletarian democracy further. Our conclusion was that basically we need more room for the masses of the people to supervise and intervene in the state. If that will not happen then after the revolution the initiative of the masses will be diminished, and only the few of the bureaucratic elite will rule over the state in the name of the proletariat and the revolution would not be carried further.

To check this we have to create certain mechanisms whereby the constant mobilising of the masses and the constant vigilance and intervention of the masses is ensured so the state doesn't turn into a bureaucratic state. To create such an institution one of the ideas is to provide democracy as was practiced during the Paris Commune days, or to again go towards the Soviet model of democracy, or draw lessons from the Cultural Revolution. We want to take lessons from all these three experiences, so our party's conclusion was that within a socialist framework, within the framework of the dictatorship of the proletariat, competition should be organised among the masses of the people, so the masses will be constantly energised and it will prevent only a few people having a monopoly over the state.

This concept of competition within the framework of socialism, of proletarian dictatorship, we have developed this basic concept. But this is only a general concept, the actual mode of that competition we have still to work out. Our general feeling is still under discussion, we haven't reached any final conclusion. But we have proposed multi-party competition within the socialist framework. Why do we need many parties? Though the proletarian class is one class, the proletarian consciousness is different, there is uneven consciousness. If there is competition among them then the most revolutionary section

will be in a position to lead this process through democratic means. All the masses of the working class can be mobilised, and in such mode of constantly mobilising the masses of people we will limit the chance of degeneration of this democracy into a bureaucratic set-up. That's why we are thinking one of the options is to allow multi-party competition among the proletarian and progressive classes within the framework of the leadership of the proletariat and a socialist constitutional framework.

This is one of the options that we have proposed but it just a proposal, we haven't reached any conclusion. This is what I discussed in that article, it is a preliminary article, we have proposed this but I think it needs to be discussed in the international proletarian movement and developed further. Otherwise we will not be able to draw lessons from the failures of the teachings of socialism and proletarian revolution in the 20th century and lead revolution forward into the 21st century. The basic point of departure is still from the Cultural Revolution, where Mao went beyond the traditional framework of the state system and gave more power to the masses of the people to rebel against the bureaucratic system within the party and within the state. That is the general orientation. But the right institutions have not been developed yet. The job of the revolutionaries in the 21st century will be to develop that concept further and to develop certain institutions and procedures whereby the proletarian class gets mobilised to carry forward the revolution. With this in mind, we are putting forward this concept of competition within the New Democratic and socialist state framework.

WPRM: Elections in imperialist countries generally serve not as a way to mobilise the masses but as a formal ritual that people carry out in a very bureaucratic way. Only very seldom does the election actually mobilise people and that is in very specific circumstances, like to some extent the election of Obama in the USA, because people were so opposed to the crimes of the Bush regime. How can you make elections at all for mobilising people and helping people develop their understanding of the class nature of society and the need to push towards socialism when our general experience of elections in imperialist and oppressed countries is that they are a tool for deceiving the masses?

Baburam Bhattarai: The practice of democracy in imperialist countries is a form of bourgeois democracy, a ritual that deceives the masses of people and perpetuates the rule of their class state. But what we are talking about is not organising elections within the bourgeois state, we are talking about after the revolution in a New Democratic or socialistic framework, where there will be certain constitutional provisions whereby the reactionaries, imperialists and criminal forces will not be allowed to participate. Only the progressive forces, the democratic forces and people will be allowed to compete. That is the competition within the New Democratic or socialist framework we are talking about. This is a basic difference. After the revolution, the first thing we will do will be redistribution of property. There will no longer be rich and poor, a big gap between the haves and the have-nots. That way when we organise competition there will be an equal chance for people to compete. But in the given framework of the imperialist and bourgeois democratic system there is a huge gap between the propertied and property-less working class. The competition is so uneven that the property-less working class can never compete with the propertied, the bourgeois and imperialist class. That way, only after carrying out this redistribution of property in a socialistic and New Democratic manner can you organise political competition where there will be a fair chance of everyone to compete on an equal footing. Our idea of competition in a New Democratic and socialist framework is therefore fundamentally different from the formal competition and practice in a bourgeois democratic and imperialist state. The difference in the class nature of the state should be appreciated.

WPRM: You've already discussed some aspects of the Cultural Revolution but I would like to go into that in more detail. The Cultural Revolution was the pinnacle of revolution in the 20th century, so what lessons do you and the UCPN(M) take from this?

Baburam Bhattarai: Yes we think the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was the pinnacle of revolution not only in the 20th century but in the whole history of the liberation of mankind. It is the

pinnacle of the development of revolutionary ideas. So all the revolutionaries must make the Cultural Revolution their point of departure and develop the revolutionary idea and plan further.

The basic question of the Cultural Revolution was to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. That was the basic idea. So first you need a dictatorship of the proletarian class, and for that you have to smash the whole state and complete the revolution, that is the first thing we have to do. After the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the working class needs to be constantly mobilised in a continuous revolution. Only then can we prevent the state degenerating into a bureaucratic apparatus. That is the basic idea. That's why after the negative experiences of the Soviet Union and the initial negative experiences in China, Mao developed this concept of Cultural Revolution, giving the masses the right to rebel. He asked all the oppressed classes and people to rebel against the authority in power and he introduced Red Guards, people's committees, all-round dictatorship of the proletariat in every field, in politics, economics and society, in cultural space, exercising all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie to continue the revolution. This is the fundamental aspect of the Cultural Revolution and this needs to be upheld and developed further.

But in our case since our class has not completed any revolution in the 21st century and there is no revolutionary socialist state in the world, we have to draw lessons from the Cultural Revolution and try to practice them within the revolutionary parties and within the mass organisations, and then after we complete the revolution then we can practice the basic tenets of the Cultural Revolution in the state. This is the basic lesson to be drawn. And what we would like to stress is that without taking the Cultural Revolution as the point of departure we cannot complete the revolution in any country in the present day world and we will not be able to reach socialism and communism if we don't have this idea of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. This idea of continuous revolution needs to be grasped very firmly. People generally think that once state power has been captured, the revolution is complete. But thinking like this means the initiative of the revolutionary masses will be diminished. That has been a flaw of earlier revolutions. What we need to practice now is the idea that the revolution never stops until all the classes are abolished, the state is abolished, the property system is abolished and we enter a classless and stateless society, or a commune of the masses of people is created. Until that stage is reached revolution never stops. This idea of Cultural Revolution needs to be firmly grasped and we are very serious on this issue.

WPRM: How do you practice Cultural Revolution within the party now?

Baburam Bhattarai: Within the party we allow broad and great democracy. The principle of the Communist Party is democratic centralism. We need centralism to guide the revolution, we need strong leadership, but if that leadership and centralism is not created on the broad foundation of democracy, that is not acceptable. Otherwise that leadership could degenerate into bureaucratic centralism. Right now within our party there are broad divisions on any issue, but the central leadership will mobilise the cadres and masses of people to discuss these issues and only then will the decision be taken. Once the decision is taken it will have to be carried out. But before taking the decision any issue must be broadly discussed so that the great exercise of democracy should be done first and on the basis of that the centralism will be created. Only that kind of centralism will be truly democratic centralism. This is what our party is trying to practice.

WPRM: What about the practice of two-line struggle within the party?

Baburam Bhattarai: Two-line struggle is also related to this question. Two-line struggle is the life of any party because everything is a unity of opposites in this world. Even the party is a unity of opposites. The policy of 'one divides into two' also applies to the party. So although there is a contention between proletarian and non-proletarian tendencies within any communist party, so there has to be a proper mechanism to organise a struggle of different tendencies within the party. Therefore two-line struggle needs to be promoted. The only thing is we have to be very careful in handling the two-line struggle. On this issue there are different tendencies within the International Communist Movement. One is very

sectarian, once you enter into two-line struggle you always end up with a split. This is a sectarian or ultra-left tendency. The other is a right-revisionist tendency, which is to struggle and always compromise so that the party gets turned into a reformist group.

The correct MLM formulation is unity-struggle-transformation. We should struggle with the aim of achieving a higher level of unity. That's the aim of the correct handling of two-line struggle in a revolutionary party. And our party has been very successfully conducting this method of two-line struggle with the aim of unity-struggle-transformation. We are interested in mainly transformation. If the aim is not transformation then it is not reaching a higher level of unity and then the two-line struggle always leads to a split. And a split of the proletarian party weakens our class and our ability to carry forward revolution. This lesson needs to be firmly grasped, especially among Maoist revolutionaries in the world today. In the name of carrying out two-line struggle they forget the aspect of reaching a higher level of unity and transformation. In that way the revolutionary parties remain as very small groups and collections and are not able to carry out revolution. I think these lessons, especially from Lenin and Mao, need to be drawn and practiced.

WPRM: As a way of concluding this interview, in the situation of continued pressure and the possibility of intervention from US imperialism and Indian expansionism in particular, do you think that socialism in one country can be developed in Nepal?

Baburam Bhattarai: This question of socialism in one country is a theoretical question to be debated. This is the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. Imperialism always consists of uneven and unequal development, so revolution within a country is not only a possibility, it is a must, because revolution won't break out all over the world at the same time. That's impossible as long as imperialism remains and uneven development is there. This is a basic tenet of Leninism which still holds true and we should grasp it. But in the specific case of a small country like Nepal, sandwiched between the big countries of India and China and being dictated over by US imperialism all over the world, if you don't have support, international support, or there is no strong revolutionary movement, it will be very difficult to sustain the revolution. It may be possible to carry out the revolution to capture state power, but to sustain the state power and develop in the direction of socialism and communism we will need support from the international proletarian movement. That way the level of international support and international proletarian solidarity is important. After the growing influence of so-called globalisation, imperialist globalisation, the reaches of the imperialist power have gone to every corner of the world. If there is no strong international proletarian organisation to fight against imperialist intervention and domination, it will be difficult to sustain the revolution in one small country.

Keeping this in mind, we must however make revolution in our country, this is a must. But to sustain it and develop it further we need the backing of the international proletarian forces. For that we have to give more importance to internet work and the international community. This need is more important in the case of small countries like Nepal. In fact, in recent months we have been discussing this issue. To complete the revolution in Nepal and sustain it and develop it further, at least in the South Asian context, we need to have strong revolutionary solidarity and we need the backing from the international proletarian movement. We feel the events of the international proletarian movement worldwide and some of the institutions that are being developed are all important, like the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties in South Asia (CCOMPOSA) and the World People's Resistance Movement (WPRM). These type of organisations are very important for the success of the revolution and to gather support at the international level for the success of our revolution.

WPRM: Thank you for your time.

Baburam Bhattarai: Thank you and lal salam!