

The Telegraph [Nepal]

People's Republic can only guarantee Nepal's national pride

[Interview with Narayan Kaji Shrestha ["Prakash"] on May 13, 2009. At the time of the launching of the People's War in 1996 Shrestha opposed that action and split with the faction of the party that went on to form the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and lead the People's War until 2006. Shrestha was a leader of the CPN (Unity Centre-Masal) that merged with the CPN (Maoist) in January 2009, to form the present Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). He is now a member of the Secretariat of the UCPN(M) and the deputy leader of that party in the Constituent Assembly (the interim parliament). In the CA his focus is mostly on the question of writing a new constitution. –BT.net]



Narayan Kaji Shrestha ["Prakash"]

Narayan Kaji Shrestha
United Maoists Leader, Nepal

Telegraph Nepal, May 13, 2009

TGQ1: Your party-the Maoists-has stepped down from the government front. You could have fought the battle by being in the government. Isn't it? If the President did an act that you dub as unconstitutional one and the Chief of the Army staff defied the government's order, wouldn't it have been better to fight with them by being in the power structure? Isn't it a defeated mentality of your party? What say you? Your comments please.

Narayan Kaji: No! it is not that we became unable to fight and quit the government. Instead, we eased the process for a solution and thus resigned from the government. We felt that there remained some thing to be fought for which we have had to quit the government.

The President took steps that we dub as an unconstitutional act. We thus have to fight against the President's erratic moves for which we concluded that it would be fair to fight with such unconstitutional moves by remaining out of the government corridors. We appointed Kul Bahadur Khadka as the new Army Chief but the President reinstated the sacked Army Chief Katwal which created a tremendous moral pressure on us because we felt that Nepal now had virtually two power centers.

More so, the Maoists are not like those traditional political parties who wish to stick on the chair in any circumstances. We are not that shameless party as others are and thus we came out from the government. Yes! We could have struggled as you have rightly said. We pondered over that very option as well, but wisdom demanded that it would be more realistic and opportune to wage the struggle from both street and the parliament.

A sort of moral pressure was on our party because of the reinstatement of the sacked Army chief which also forced us to opt for the resignation option which has now facilitates us to heat both the streets and the parliament. Take it this way but not as a defeated mentality.

TGQ2: It is rumored that your party was awaiting a ruse to quit the government as your government had become unable to perform. Is the Army Chief episode just the ruse to quit the government? Now also tell us that the emerging situation is bit different and thus where the people's war and the Nepal's Communist Movement stood at the moment? Your opinions please.

Narayan Kaji: This allegation is hundred percent baseless. Albeit, the expectations that the people have had from our government could not be fulfilled. I agree to it. The transitional phase and the coalition sort of government came in the way. We were thinking on how to work for the people in a much more effective manner. We haven't fled for fear of any sort of mis-performance.

The people's war is not like the one what we have had in the past but then yet the revolutionary struggle remains intact. Keeping the strategic objectives of the people's war, we are at a different stage of struggle. The mode has only changed, the essence remains the same. The already stated strategy remains as it is. Rest assured.

As regards the Nepali revolution, well! It is proceeding with its own unique identity and in the process we have come to this stage of peace process and for the drafting of a new constitution.

Now our entire efforts will be aimed at integration of the Armies and draft a constitution and establish a "People's Democratic National Federal Republic". We will write a constitution that will be against feudalism and imperialism. But the reactionaries and the imperialists have been impeding the drafting of the new constitution. This is the main issue where the fight between the two forces is on. We believe in the safeguarding of national pride and are engaged in this regard, however, others are blocking our way in their own styles. If the domestic and the international reactionary forces continue to put hurdles in our main objectives, we will have no option left other than to wage a final decisive war against those forces- the reactionaries indeed.

TGQ3: While forming government, your party claimed of several miracles to happen. However, those were not forthcoming. Now you say that the constitution will be made in favor of the people. How come this? Is it only a hollow assurance to the people or some thing else? The way, as you claim, you were not allowed to function in the government, the same manner other parties may not allow you to draft the constitution of your liking in the coming days. What say you?

Narayan Kaji: You look at the chain of political events that have unfolded in the mean time. We proved ourselves correct when we said that elections to the constituent assembly were possible. It became a reality as against what others claimed then. It was basically our agenda which was later beamingly followed by all those who had been against such an election.

The constitution which we prefer may not be allowed to be written but we will succeed in the long run. The people themselves will force others to take our line then though obstacles may crop up in the process. The attack or say the main target of the People's War and the last Revolution was not only the Monarchy but also the traditional parliamentary system. What the people need today is the forward looking People's Republic which is in essence the People's Democratic Republic where people remain sovereign and their supremacy prevails. People's Republic can only guarantee national pride which obliterates the entire feudal and imperial symptoms prevailing in the society. This is the best system that suits to the needs of the common workers, peasants and the exploited ones of this country. Those who

will prefer to object to proceed in this regard will be automatically sidelined by the people. We can thus hope that we will be able to frame a people's constitution of our preference.

As regards to your supplementary question, let me tell you frankly that no force on earth can challenge the strength and the will of the people. However, this does not mean that our aim will not pass through obstacles, but will be sidelined by the people themselves ultimately. But if the people feel that their preferences are being challenged by some quarters they will wage a sort of final battle against those who come in their way. The revolution in that case will be imminent.

TGQ4: You have been telling the people that the President staged a Coup d'etat. But how is it a Coup? If so then how will you proceed in the days ahead against the Presidential decision? Why would be your comment?

Narayan Kaji: That is crystal clear. The President wanted to find his role going out of the ambit of the constitution. His decision has established that we have two equally powerful centers in the State. This in itself tantamount to a Coup d'etat. Yes! It was not a military Coup d'etat although.

We demand that the President's decision must be taken back at any cost. We have already declared our struggle against the decision. We will coordinate the struggle of both the streets and the parliament. We will force him to take his decisions back come what may. If he doesn't come to terms as demanded by our party then indeed the peace process and the drafting of the new constitution will see a major set back.

We just want to bring the derailed interim constitution on track. We will thus restore the lost people's supremacy.

TGQ5: What the President should do now? What if the President doesn't retract from his previous decision? How the politics will go then? Your remarks please.

Narayan Kaji: The President should reverse his decision. For that he should make null and void the decision that facilitated the sacked Army Chief Katwal to retain his post. More over, if the President wants to keep up to the prestige and pride of the Presidential institution, he must apologize to the people unconditionally.

Well, if he doesn't then we will not allow the parliament to run. We though want a new government in place that honors the people's supremacy but not that of the Army's. In fact, the interim constitution has been derailed. The formation of a new government with the constitution derailed will not get sanction of our party. That's all.