

On the line and tactics of the Nepal Maoist movement

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The political situation in Nepal is quickly building up to a dangerous climax, dangerous for the Nepalese new democratic revolution and the international proletariat. The ruling classes, backed by the expansionist India and the US imperialists, are arrogantly pushing for a counter-revolutionary attack or, at the minimum, a reactionary consolidation. They are strident in their demands to liquidate all the gains made by the people through the great people's war. The terms set in the ceasefire agreements with the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [UCPN(Maoist)], earlier Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [CPN(Maoist)], are wilfully violated. Its ultimatums and deadlines are ignored. The aggressive manner in which the ruling classes are pursuing their agenda only shows that the initiative is well in their hands. They are increasingly confident that the UCPN(Maoist) will once again yield ground and come to a compromise. On the other side, the once powerful and united Maoist party is considerably weakened. The masses continue to support it. But parliamentary degeneration and departures from the Maoist style of work and living have severely eaten into the revolutionary quality of the party. Doubts about its revolutionary will are also growing among the people. Yet, despite the threat of a reactionary attack and the erosion of its strength and support, the UCPN(Maoist) leadership is busy with working out formulae that will take it back into government. Evidently, the new tactics visualised by the CPN(Maoist) in 2005 and its realisation in the ceasefire of 2006, have been crucial in the emergence of this situation. This is now the subject of the sharpening ideological struggle, the two line struggle, within the UCPN(Maoist) and the international communist movement. The future of the party as well as the Nepalese revolution hinges on its correct resolution.

Our party has all along paid great attention to learning from the positions and experiences of the CPN(Maoist) and mobilising support for the revolutionary war it led. It had upheld and defended the new turn adopted by the Nepali Maoists in 2006 and played an active role in building support for the new democratic revolution of Nepal in the new situation. All along, we were also critical of certain ideological positions and practices of the CPN(Maoist). The October 2006 Central Enlarged Meeting (CEM) of our party concluded that *"...the political-organisational plans of the CPN(Maoist) adhere to the tasks and orientation of new democratic revolution. Contrary to the propaganda done by the enemy and the revisionists, as well as the doubts created in the minds of some comrades, the present tactics of the CPN(Maoist) do not in any way indicate a desire to abandon the road of revolution for the sake of a share in the existing power. On the contrary, they indicate an MLM orientation and its application. Their tactics are serving the strategy of new democratic revolution. They are applying these tactics to fight and complete the new democratic revolution. The CPN(Maoist) is leading a great political struggle and it is our internationalist duty to uphold and build support for it."* The CEM also pointed out, *"... there are some positions, formulations and analysis, within the overall correct orientation, that give room*

for right deviationist tendencies. Further, we think that some of the views expressed in the press statements and interviews of the CPN(Maoist) leadership have violated the norms of internationalist relations. In general, it has not properly taken into consideration the international fall out of its public statements.” These were raised before its leadership in bilateral discussions as well as through a letter sent in October 2006. (letter of October 2006, Appendix 1) They were also raised in joint forums like the Regional Conferences of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) and Conferences of the Co-ordination Committee of the Maoist Parties of South Asia (CCOMPOSA).

The opportunities given by the ceasefire and the interim setup were exhausted by mid-2007. The decision of the CPN(Maoist) in 2007 to come out of the Interim government and initiate mass struggles was welcomed by us. But we were also concerned over the analysis of the situation made by the party leadership and the roadmap it visualised. The plans for developing the mass struggle towards an insurrection were being hinged on the expectation that the demands it was raising could never be accepted by the enemy. We felt, correctly as proved by events, that the enemy could well accept those demands and that the party would once again lose initiative. Public statements of prominent CPN(Maoist) leaders that presented the ongoing Constituent Assembly (CA) process as a goal in itself, and the severe weakening of clandestine structures and style of working were also criticised. These views were put directly to the CPN(Maoist) leadership. We also wrote to its Central Committee (letter of September 2007, see appendix 2). The necessity to break out of the Interim setup at all costs was stressed.

But what was seen was a backtracking of the CPN(Maoist) leadership from the decisions it had taken in its 2007 Expanded Meeting. It rejoined the government. The justification now was that this was imperative for the successful conclusion of the Constituent Assembly elections. On our part, we concluded that there has been an erosion of revolutionary will and the danger of the party sliding into rightism had strengthened. The conclusion was that “...unless the present direction taken by the party is reversed, its success in the CA elections or success in developing a mass movement in case CA elections are sabotaged, will not necessarily lead to a revolutionary outcome.”(internal circular, March 2008, Appendix 3). While continuing in the Solidarity movement, we refused the request made by the CPN(Maoist) to send observers for the CA elections. An open comment, made in our media and circulated in the internet, on the victory of the CPN(Maoist) in the CA elections, drew attention to the danger of this victory itself further strengthening rightism, even while the advantageous situation given by the electoral verdict was acknowledged.

The period following the formation of an interim government led by the CPN(Maoist) witnessed a qualitative leap in its rightist downslide. UCPN(Maoist)’s fraternal relations and exchanges with Maoist parties were, for all practical purposes, broken off. We continued to critically comment on the manifestations of rightism seen in practices of the party. Meanwhile, a line struggle emerged within the UCPN(Maoist). This had a positive impact on fraternal relations. This opportunity was used by our party, with the assistance of the UCPN(Maoist) leadership, to have discussions with a wide range of party and mass organisation leaders as well as investigate

the ground situation in the country in 2009. They strengthened our critical views which were raised with the UCPN(Maoist) leadership.

Today the most crucial task regarding the revolution in Nepal is the successful advance of the struggle against the rightism that is on the verge of derailing it. While the people's war is the most outstanding advance made by the Maoists in Nepal, it does not exhaust their contributions. In the present world, where the political realm has widened to a great extent, political intervention carried out through diverse forms of struggle has great importance. The recognition of this factor and its utilisation stands to the credit of the Maoists in Nepal. Yet this very approach is also an inseparable element of the course that led to the present situation. Therefore a proper synthesis that draws out the positive and demarcates it from rightist deviations is very crucial in the deepening of the line struggle against rightism.

Negotiations as a form of political intervention

The pace at which the revolution in Nepal progressed, the varied tactics that the party adopted and the maturity and the flexibility it showed at various instances caught the attention of the progressives and the revolutionary masses all over the world. The heroic struggle of the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) and the masses were supplemented with the political interventions of the party. While the main focus was on rural work, appreciable work was done to the extent possible in urban centers too. By correctly grasping the dynamics of the war, the party advanced the people's war qualitatively and quantitatively, in a planned manner, effectively enthusing the masses and maintaining the initiative in their hands. They thus forced the enemy to act according to the agenda set by the people's war.

Unlike the period of the Chinese revolution, when the political sphere was rather limited, today the spread of means of communication and media has extended it throughout the country. There still is a lot of unevenness in this. But the extension of the political sphere is an important particularity of the contemporary Third World. A total war in which the enemy is attacked on all fronts will not be possible if this extremely dynamic sphere is ignored. This is the importance of the active political intervention of Maoists. In an oppressed country the advance of the people's war is the main factor giving weight to such political intervention. The people's war makes the political sphere even more dynamic. In its turn, political intervention that strikes at key points becomes a catalyst which increases the pace of the war (and preparations for it). But in order to carry out political intervention, particular effort and tactical approach are needed. It won't do to stay restricted to the advance of the war alone. This is a method of applying the tactics of political intervention, usually associated with the armed insurrection, in the strategy of protracted people's war. The approach of the Nepali Maoists of going into negotiation at different times was an application of this correct approach. It helped the party to spread its views more widely. It forced the enemy to remove the tag of terrorist. And it also helped the party to rest its forces and build strength, making it all the more capable of advancing in leaps. This was once again seen in the initial period following the 2006 ceasefire. But now the revolution itself faces the danger of

derailment. Obviously, the question of whether this negative situation is an inevitable consequence of the negotiation approach must be settled. Is it the case that the ceasefire of 2006 was unnecessary and the Interim setup, including the CA, could only have led to loss of initiative of the Maoists?

During the preceding period the enemy was pursuing a policy of more or less retreating from the rural areas, unable to withstand the attacks of the PLA, camping in the urban centres and foraging into the countryside from time to time. By this time the revolutionary forces had succeeded in bringing 80% of the country under people's power. Though they achieved a number of military successes they couldn't capture and retain urban centres since they didn't have the weapons needed to smash the fortifications built by the enemy with US expertise. Since the enemy had succeeded in smashing the urban organisational structures, launching a mass movement also wasn't possible. The CPN(Maoist) evaluated that if this situation, which had emerged during the strategic offensive, were to continue, it would lead to stagnation and loss of initiative. Around this period, the monarchical coup led to a partial realignment of political forces within the country and created an opportunity for uniting with the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) to launch a mass movement based on the call for Interim Government, Constituent Assembly elections and abolishment of the monarchy, slogans initially raised by the Maoists. There was an additional factor. Nepal faces a complex geophysical situation. It is landlocked between two developing ambitious expansionist military giants. In this situation, in an imperialist world dominated by the sole super power US, with no socialist country to get support from, any possibility of neutralising some of the lesser enemies and gaining support internationally was worth utilising. Any doctrinaire approach denying this would have only complicated the situation further. Hence the decision to enter negotiations leading to the Interim setup was justifiable as tactics to enter and organise in urban areas, buy time to prepare for final insurrection and prepare favourable grounds internationally. The approach outlined by the CPN(Maoist) in its August 2006 CC Resolution – "It is indispensable to have a correct coordination and balance of armed people's war, strong mass movement, peace-talks and diplomatic initiative for the success of Nepalese people's revolution..." was mainly correct.

Negotiations inevitably imply acceptance of certain compromises. They can even go to the extent of admitting the possibility of joining an interim government along with reactionary parties, and touch upon the people's army and the new political power. The negotiations done by the Communist Party of China with the Koumintang, and the compromises proposed by it, are a precedent. (see 'On Peace Negotiations with the Kuomintang' and 'On the Chungking Negotiations', volume 4, Selected Works of Mao Tsetung). The tactics adopted by the CPN(Maoist) and the conditions accepted by it in the course of negotiation have been criticised within the international Maoist movement. Most of them came from a view that ruled out the necessity of negotiation or 'peace' tactics in that specific juncture. There has also been a dogmatic denial of the validity of such tactics itself, though they are accepted in words. The criticism has also been raised that serious errors of line in political positions, seen well before the alliance with

the SPA, have paved the way to rightism. As explained above we basically disagree with these criticisms.

At the same time, these criticisms also contained some correct aspects. Even if negotiations were necessary, one important question is whether the specific conditions accepted by the CPN(Maoist) were justified. In particular, the CPN(Maoist)'s accepting to canton the PLA under UN supervision, while allowing important armed duties to the Nepal Army, and to dissolve the new political power structures have been criticised. They have been compared with Mao Tsetung's insistence on retaining the PLA and the new power (base areas) while the CPC was negotiating with the Kuomintang. The CPN(Maoist) has pointed to its disadvantageous situation compared to that of the CPC, which enjoyed support from the USSR, to explain the concessions it made. It has also explained that most of the fighters and weapons were outside the cantonments. Local power centres led by the party continued to function, undeclared, in rural areas. It is a fact that this situation continued to exist, well after the ceasefire was formalised. The enemies were quite aware of it and often accused the CPN(Maoist) of violating the agreements. But there was nothing they could do about it. This was a strong testimony to the dual power existing in Nepal. Unfortunately, most of the criticism on the CPN(Maoist) on this issue simply avoided this real situation. This was an example of the doctrinaire approach seen in them. But there were also some positions that acknowledged the real situation and proceeded to raise criticism. It was pointed out that the CPN(Maoist) was disarming its ranks and the masses, *ideologically and politically*, by accepting such conditions (cantonning the PLA and dissolving local power centres), as they surrender revolutionary army and revolutionary power, at least verbally. This is correct. In failing to examine the issue from this angle, from the angle of the ideological significance of the concessions made by the CPN(Maoist), we too made a pragmatist error.

The growth of rightist tendencies

Over the past 4 years the "positions, formulations and analysis" which we criticised have not only given room, as feared, for the growth of right deviationist tendencies. It has cultivated and nurtured these tendencies, bringing the party to the verge of degenerating into revisionism, even of liquidating itself. From the strong position enjoyed by the party in 2006 we see systematic and steady decline. It has been losing initiative and trailing the ruling classes in a series of compromises. Crucial opportunities for unleashing the masses revolutionary fervour in order to break out of the Interim setup and advance in revolution have been missed. When the masses were rallied, this was restricted and employed as a mere tool in parliamentary manoeuvres and compromises. Why did this happen?

In a Resolution adopted in May 2006, the CPN(Maoist), CC had made it clear that, *"In this situation, on the one hand and mainly it is necessary to raise struggle against right reformist trend that seeks to go ahead by abandoning clandestine structure, working style and revolutionary form of struggle and on the other it is necessary to be careful against the dogmato-sectarian trend that only devaluates the importance and necessity of talks, open-meetings and new fronts of struggle.*

Hence, in the changed situation, party policy is: give priority to clandestine structure of organization, working style and revolutionary form of struggle and don't abandon talks and legal front of struggles too... maximum majority of comrades from command, region and district level will have to go for organizational rectification, consolidation, expansion and mass mobilization, while a certain number of comrades only will have to push the tasks ahead by building talks-team and speakers-team without any unnecessary intermingling between these two and correct coordination with each other... In the present context, when domestic and foreign reactionary elements are conspiring against Nepalese people's aspiration of progress and peace, the whole party from top to bottom must give maximum emphasis on the question of consolidating and expanding people's liberation army and keeping them prepared to go any time into the war front., if the party failed to consolidate and expand people's Liberation Army and keep it prepared 24 hours for war, Nepalese people will suffer a big defeat. Party can have a lot of compromises in the domain of politics and diplomacy, but will never give up the real strength, the People's Liberation Army and the arms they possess that the Nepalese people have gained with the blood of thousands of martyrs... Party will never tolerate any vacillation in this basic class and theoretical question."

But, contrary to the directives given in this resolution, its clandestine structure was drastically weakened. While the party could make significant entry into the urban areas and organise extensively, its work in the rural areas suffered. There has been erosion in the fighting quality of the cantoned PLA. A series of ideological, political positions went into reducing the UCPN (M) to this level. The position on Prachanda Path, ambiguous formulations on 'fusion of PPW and insurrection' and views on multi-party competition are clearly and directly related to the present mess the party finds itself in. While they must be traced back to the very roots, this document will mainly examine the positions directly underlying the turn taken by the CPN(Maoist) in 2006.

The Chungwang Central Committee meeting of November 2005, which took the decision of going into negotiation defined the new tactics thus – *"Now the slogan of interim government, election of the constituent assembly and democratic republic that our party, taking into account of the international and domestic balance of power, has formulated is a tactical slogan put forward for the forward-looking political way out. Remaining clear on the principle that the tactic must serve strategy, our party has viewed the democratic republic neither as the bourgeois parliamentary republic nor directly as the new democratic one. This republic with an extensive reorganization of the state power as to resolve the problems related with class, nationality, region and sex prevailing in the country, would play a role of transitional multiparty republic. Certainly, the reactionary class and their parties will try to transform this republic into bourgeois parliamentary one, where as our party of the proletariat class will try to transform it into new democratic republic. How long will be the period of transition, is not a thing that can right now be ascertained. It is clear that it will depend upon the then national and international situation and state of power balance. As for now, this slogan has played and will play an important role to unite all the forces against the absolute monarchy dominant in the old state for it has been a*

common enemy for both revolutionary and parliamentary forces. Both of the understandings that the slogan of constituent assembly and democratic republic is a pure political and diplomatic manoeuvring to be never applied or as a strategic slogan to be never changed i.e. to be applied in any condition are wrong." (Political and Organizational Resolution, November 2005)

There are 2 serious mistakes here. a) The definition of democratic republic itself was unclear and b) It was vague on the time period. As pointed out in our October 2006 letter, *"The conception of democratic republic formed under a new constitution as a transitory form is problematic. Similarly, it is wrong to conceive that the reactionaries in a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country can form a bourgeois parliamentary republic. ... an interim government, in which the SPA also is a partner, will be neither new democratic or simply a continuation of the past. But in that case also it will have class content. It will be a dual power. It is true that the length of the period it will exist cannot be ascertained right now. But, as a general principle, dual power can exist only for a fairly short period. This is particularly true when it is coexisting within a single structure. If this is not explained as such, a rightist tendency promoting the desirability and possibility of a fairly long period of co-existence with the reactionary parties can well come up."* The state structure is meant for exploitation of one class over the other. There can be situations where, because of the balance of power, dual power exists. But how can both the antagonistic classes co-exist together for a long period? This ambiguity has in fact encouraged the rightist tendency to promote the extension of this co-existence phase, by arguing that the time to end it has not yet come. Furthermore, by conceding the possibility of a bourgeois parliamentary republic, room was given for the persistence of the rightist position on a separate sub-stage of 'bourgeois democracy'.

The handling of the 2-line struggle that emerged in 2004–05 on the same subject had left much to be desired. Comrade Baburam Bhattarai had on several occasions raised the question of "need for a sub-stage", before the complete capture of power and the formation of New Democratic Republic. On the other hand, the CPN(Maoist) was clear that no separate stage was necessary, as a matter of principal, before the final completion of new democratic revolution (NDR). This 2-line struggle was later claimed to be settled but one never got an explanation as to how it was settled. The plenum report covering this line struggle appreciated the capability of the party to avoid split and advance by transformation as a sign of maturity, unlike the negative tradition of the M-L movement of ending in splits even over slight differences. It is indeed a good thing to avoid split. But that cannot replace ideological consolidation or reduce its importance. The entire party needed to be ideologically educated and told that there was a diametrically opposite view which was defeated in the 2 line struggle, thus developing ideological clarity among the cadres and the masses. This was not done.

The understanding of Bhattarai on this matter is very old and deep-rooted. In his book 'Political- Economical Rationale of the People's War', the stress is on the backwardness of Nepal. But Bhattarai doesn't see it as Mao did – this backwardness also has its advantages, its positive aspect, the possibility it offers of unleashing the potential of the masses. The minds of the masses are not so corrupted with the blind attractions of imperialist-comprador consumerism. It is like a

blank paper. This is supportive to the vital task of breaking away from the economical relations of the world imperialist system (of which Indian expansionism is a part). Without such breaking away no oppressed country can hope of equitable, sustainable and all-round development. This is precisely why Mao Tsetung pointed out that there is no Chinese Wall between new democracy and socialism. The NDR removes the shackles of imperialism and feudalism. This inevitably leads to the growth of some local capitalism. But the *aim* of NDR is not the growth of capitalism. It can never be so, no matter how backward the country is. Because any attempt to develop capitalism in an oppressed country will inevitably entangle itself in the imperialist web and end up as bureaucratic capitalism, thoroughly comprador.

But instead of this Maoist approach Bhattraï talks of the need to develop productive forces in a one-sided manner and takes this as proof of the need to develop capitalism. This is expanded to insist that a sub-stage of a period of capitalist development and bourgeois democracy will be necessary before going into completion of the NDR. The presence of the monarchy was taken as a political justification for this. Whatever one may subjectively think, this inevitably means coming to terms with Indian Expansionism that controls the Nepali economy. The dream of developing entrepreneurs from among the Nepalese over a period will simply remain that ... a dream. Instead, a whole new crop of compradors will be reared. Meanwhile the class base of the party will be shifted from the working class/landless and poor peasants to middle classes. Thus the plan of completing NDR gets aborted and the party faces the prospect of turning into a mere parliamentary-bourgeois party.

Clarity on this question and drawing a firm line of separation from this rightist view was essential to educate the masses and the cadres. This was vital to distinguish the tactics of seeking a short period to carry out urban organising, polarise the middle classes and make necessary diplomatic moves in order to complete preparations for insurrection, from rightist machinations to extend this period of peace and co-existence indefinitely. The formulation of the Chungwang document faulted on both these counts. This was an instance of eclectics, of combining two into one.

One-sided evaluation of the situation

The CPN(Maoist) had based its tactics on the evaluation of the immediate unfavourable international situation faced by the NDR. This was correct. But the strategically favourable situation existing internationally and the unfavourable situation faced by the enemies of the revolution, immediately as well as strategically, were ignored. This had serious implication for its negotiating stance as well as its tactics after the ceasefire came into force. Our letter of October 2006 noted, *“The CPN(Maoist) has correctly stated that the present tactics flow from the strong position achieved by the 10 year old people’s war. This strength is evident. Along with that there is also a favourable factor in the international and national situation, in the immediate sense itself. And it is necessary to stress this. If both the favourable and unfavourable factors are not taken into account and placed as such before the party and the masses it can lead to the development of*

pessimistic tendencies. Mao's writings clearly show us that this was how he analysed and presented the situation that made tactics of coalition government both possible and necessary."

The partial view of the situation was an important factor in laying the ground for making unnecessary concessions in negotiations. It had serious consequences in the matter of tactics. Immediately after the ceasefire the party leadership had planned that they will never join the Interim government and would stay outside. It was assumed that the demands and conditions raised by the party would be unacceptable to the ruling classes. This approach was repeated in 2007 after coming out of the Interim government. It was also seen in the question of CA elections, where, right up to the very end, the expectation was that the enemy would try to sabotage it. On each occasion, the anticipated negative response of the enemy was conceived as the point to break out of the alliance with the SPA and advance the revolution. But the anticipation proved wrong, the enemy made concessions and the party lost initiative. (Some of the critics of the CPN(Maoist) tactics made similar estimations and posed *them* as urgent reasons for the CPN(Maoist) to break off!) Evidently, the party leadership failed to analyse the factors pressing the enemy to compromise, in other words the unfavourable situation faced by the enemy. In 2006 itself, and repeatedly thereafter, we had pointed this out. But instead of critical re-examination, the party leadership buttressed its one-sidedness with its position on a 'globalised, unipolar imperialism', 'US imperialism functioning as a globalised state' and similar views. This was wrong in principle because it denied the inevitable contention between imperialist powers. Besides, as we wrote to the CPN(Maoist) in 2006, *"This is going beyond noting the status of the US today as a sole superpower, enjoying unchallenged hegemony. It ignores the serious problems faced by the US in carrying out its strategy to achieve total domination through its so called 'War on Terrorism' due to the resistance of the world peoples and also underplays the growing contention within the imperialists camp, particularly with Russia."* The international situation clearly showed that the imperialists, especially the US, wanted a compromise, for tactical and strategic reasons. They were already feeling the effects of getting bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan. And, politically, the advantage they gained by covering their 'War on the People' as a confrontation with obscurantist Islamic fundamentalists would be lost in a war against a people's revolution led by Maoists. The Indian expansionists too preferred avoiding direct confrontation, given the significant growth of the Maoist led NDR in India and the danger of triggering of a sub-continental upheaval in the event of Indian aggression in Nepal. Both these enemies were well aware that a resumption of the people's war would inevitably lead to their direct involvement, since the reactionary Nepal army was no match to the PLA. They still have this concern.

The repeated failure in its anticipations of the enemy's responses, from a leadership that successfully planned ahead and showed exemplary calibre in implementing those plans through a decade of practice of people's war, raises serious questions. Was this an inevitable outcome of the positions underlying the ceasefire and 'peace tactics'? Or was it the fall out of serious errors of line in the direction taken by the party, even before its unity with the SPA? A careful examination of the objective circumstances negates this. There was enough and more grounds to formulate and carry out tactical moves (mobilising masses on political, economic demands) aimed at ensuring,

and justifying, breaking out of the Interim setup to advance the revolution. But if the favourable aspects of the objective situation and unfavourable factors faced by the enemy are discounted, then there won't be any urge to even think of such tactics. Instead, the insistence will be to adopt tactics of posturing and pressurising, with the aim of getting the minimum, because that will be seen as the only plausible achievement. It remains to be examined whether tendencies of doubting the very possibility of succeeding in the NDR, in the present world situation, influenced the Chungwang decisions.

The evaluation of the CPN(Maoist) on the contradictions in play, before and after the ceasefire, has always been marked by an under-estimation of the comprador character of Indian ruling classes. There was (and still is) an over-estimation of the capacity of the Indian ruling classes to act on their own and of their contradictions with US imperialism in policy matters. As a result, while note is made of such contradictions and the opportunities they offer, the structural limitations within which Indian expansionism must act is ignored. Therefore the threat of Indian intervention is not evaluated in the context of the present US policy for the whole of South Asia. This threat thus tends to get exaggerated. A similar problem is seen in its assessment of China. In Nepal's geo-political conditions, the contradictions between India and China should certainly be utilised. But these contradictions and the Nepal policies of the rulers in these countries must be viewed within the frame of the imperialist system of dependence within which they exist. Besides, China's stance on the present dispensation in Nepal, with the UCPN(Maoist) in or out of government, and the attitude it would have towards a successful Maoist led revolution in Nepal, are qualitatively different matters. The Chinese revisionists will be severely threatened by a Maoist led new democratic state in Nepal. Sharpening contradictions within China will magnify this threat. Therefore, the extent to which their contradiction with the Indian ruling classes will outweigh this fear and whether they can be counted on to hold the scales against Indian intervention in that situation, are to be seen. *All the trends* within the UCP (Maoist) are over-estimating these factors, though with some unevenness in the weight given to them. Overall, the tendency of geo-physical calculations outweighing class outlook in the analysis of international relations, and the consequent inflated views on the potential of diplomacy is quite evident. This has always been a characteristic of rightism.

Making an absolute of abolishing the monarchy

Immediately following the Palace massacre, the CPN(Maoist) shifted the focus of its political attack and made the monarchy headed by Gyanendra its main internal target. This was a correct tactical step. It promoted the split among the ruling classes and prepared grounds for uniting the ruling class parties into a broad political mass movement directed against the monarchy. But this tactics was also marked by some errors in principle and inconsistencies. Our letter of 2006 had drawn attention to this. The CPN(Maoist) documents usually characterised the monarchy as representing the feudal forces. The monarchy, as an institution of the state and as a hegemonic ideological apparatus, was indeed the main lynchpin of feudalism in Nepal, one which has a centuries old suffocating grip on Nepali society. But once Nepal came under British

imperialist domination and became a semi-colony, it no longer represented feudalism alone. It became the lynchpin of all reaction. The class character of the king and court nobles itself changed. They were increasingly tied up directly with the growing bureaucrat capitalism. Distinguishing between feudal forces and the comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie and targeting the monarchy in order to tactically utilise the contradiction among these two parts of the ruling classes was correct. But viewing and presenting the monarchy solely in relation to feudal forces was wrong. The monarchy was only a *form* of the existing Nepali state, a state which serves *all* the ruling classes. Lack of clarity on this promoted the danger of absolutising the struggle to end the monarchy. It aided the argument for a separate sub-stage of 'bourgeois democracy' to be achieved through abolishing the monarchy, instead of placing its abolishment within the broader task of destroying the existing state and completing the NDR. It also influenced the way in which the 'peace' tactics were understood in relation to the strategic task of NDR.

This prevented the party from anticipating a possible move by the enemy to *"do away with the monarchy and set up some sham republic, even incorporating some formal rights for oppressed sections (like in South Africa)."*(letter of 2006) Along with this, the opportunist tendency of avoiding ideological-political precision in formulations under the plea of tactical necessities came up in force and compounded these errors. An example was the loose formulations on 'Republic'. At various times this was said as republic, people's republic, federal republic, and peoples federal democratic national republic. It was always explained that the intended political program of the republic is new democratic, though this is not made explicit due to tactical reasons. From the very beginning we were critical of this and raised this before the CPN(Maoist) leadership. It was pointed out, *"Tactical slogans should definitely be capable of linking up with the mood of the masses. Lenin's slogan of "Peace, Bread and Democracy" during the preparations for the October insurrection is an example. But a distinction must be made between such slogans and the direction given to the party through its documents. In the political situation of Nepal where the attainment of the republic is widely understood as the scrapping of the monarchy, when there already is the history of a tendency in the top leadership level arguing for a sub-stage of bourgeois democracy, when party documents themselves say that the republic conceived by the party is not immediately a new democratic one, such blurring of ideological-political clarity will definitely give room for rightist tendencies to grow."* (letter of 2006)

Thus, the error seen in the CPN(Maoist)'s positions on the monarchy, as well as its varying characterisation of ruling class parties, depending on the ups and downs in its relations with them, have no doubt aided the growth of rightism. In immediate terms, the trend of conceiving and posing the ending of monarchy as almost equivalent to the completion of a stage (or at least a phase) of revolution was instrumental in promoting the view that the completion of the Constituent Assembly process was, *and remains*, a must. This thinking is still shared, though unevenly, by the revolutionary left.

Making an absolute of the Constituent Assembly process

By early 2007 itself the party had succeeded in its plans to enter the capital city and build up its mass base and structures. But, instead of trying to create grounds for getting out of the Interim setup and launching the insurrection, the CA elections and completion of the CA process came to be seen as an unavoidably necessary step, an aim in its own right. As argued in the previous section this was closely associated with absolutising the abolishment of the monarchy.

Given the centuries old existence of the Nepalese monarchy, its abolishment was no doubt a significant achievement of the revolutionary process led by the Maoists. It considerably weakened the institutions of the reactionary state and deepened divisions within the ruling classes. But the ending of the monarchy did not mean the abolishment of the state. Moreover, the ending of the monarchy was something that could be utilized by the enemies also. And that is what they did. They claimed that the tasks set forth by the 2006 mass movement had been mainly accomplished and that there was no further justification for the Maoists' separate agenda. This possibility was already seen during the 2007 political crisis when the Nepal Congress hastily declared in favour of a republic. The Interim constitution was even amended to allow the declaration of a republic by two third majority in the Interim assembly itself. Such developments clearly brought out the limits of the CA and Republic slogans as tactics to deepen polarisation and prepare the insurrection. But the CPN(Maoist) failed to assess this. Instead, participation in the completion of the CA process was considered absolutely necessary. It was said that this was essential to ensure that this process was not derailed by the enemy. Thus, *what started out as a tactical position for preparing insurrection became a strategic target.*

The completion of the CA elections and abolishment of the monarchy have become issues in the line struggle developing within the UCPN(Maoist). The left argues that this has ended the validity of the tactics adopted at Chungwang. It identifies the present stagnation of the party as an outcome of continuing with tactics of a completed process and demands the formulation of new tactics. On the other hand, rightist, centrist trends argue that the process initiated at Chungwang is yet to be completed. The desire of the left to advance a different set of tactics centred on completing the NDR distinguishes it from the others. But, its argument still shares common grounds with them on the CA question. By arguing that the question of new tactics came up only *after* the completion of the CA elections and abolishment of the monarchy, it too acknowledges that this was an essential necessity. As a result, the shifting of the tactical issue of CA and abolishment of monarchy into strategic aims and the role this has played in strengthening the grounds of 'sub-stage' and promoting the deviation from the revolutionary road is missed. New tactics had to be formulated, but premised on the reality that the Chungwang process was exhausted by mid-2007 itself. New tactics are needed; not because the CA elections are over and monarchy abolished, but because the party had made sufficient headway by 2007 in the tactical aims set by it in 2005, as part of preparing for the final assault for political power. After all, *this* was the declared aim of the Chungwang tactics. *If this revolutionary frame of reference is not retaken, the left will remain trapped in the frame set by rightism and centrism, whatever its subjective intentions may be.*

There is the further question of what can be achieved through the present CA. Within the CA the UCPN(Maoist) does not have the required majority to push through its constitutional provisions. But there is an even more basic issue. The principles of any constitution are only as weighty as the force that can be employed to ensure their implementation. This much is clear from the basic teachings of Marxism on the matter of the state, constitutions and government. In the situation of Nepal, the old state is yet to be destroyed. No matter how progressive a constitution may be presented in the CA by the UCPN(Maoist), it will be a dead letter. At the most, as part of an immediate plan for organising the revolutionary seizure of power, constitution making could have been a tool for exposing the enemies and mobilising a broad mass movement. In the absence of such a plan the CA is a trap that ties down the revolutionary party. This is what is happening in Nepal.

Leading the government and the deepening of rightism

The victory of the CPN(Maoist) in the CA elections was overwhelming and gave it a substantial advantage. But it was not a one sided verdict in its favour. The wide lead in seats was not matched in party vote shares. In fact, the significant shares of the two major ruling class parties (Nepal Congress and UML) in proportional votes actually allowed them to regain some legitimacy. In the West and Far West, the main centres of the people's war, the wins of the CPN (M) on both counts were powerful, but in many other places the fight was neck to neck. Had the ruling class parties been united then there was a fair chance that Maoists might not have emerged as the largest single party in the CA. But this hard fact, which revealed the inevitable limitations of parliamentary tactics, was not reflected in the evaluation made by the party. In place of sober assessment, triumphalism ruled the roost.

The policies and practices of the UCPN(Maoist) while in government were consistent with the rightist approach of making the formation of the CA and ending of monarchy into strategic aims. They were an irrefutable testimony to the rightist deviation from the tasks set before it while adopting the 'peace' tactics. This could already be anticipated in the positions taken by the party in 2007 after it reversed its decision to take up struggle. It was demonstrated without doubt right from the very beginning on the issue of government formation. The internal and external reactionaries refused to honour the electoral verdict and allow a government headed by Maoists. The CPN(Maoist) leadership could have made that an opportunity to unleash the revolutionary energy of the masses in a powerful upsurge, for the 3rd Mass Movement it had been talking for long. Instead, it preferred to enter in petty parliamentary bargaining and come to government through a dangerous compromise - allowing a separate centre in the newly established presidential post. After the formation of the government also, there were a number of situations when the issue could have been taken to the masses and struggle developed. That was never done. Even the issue of the Army Chief was dealt with as matter of government, despite its directly exposing the reactionary challenge raised by the Nepal Army.

Any proletarian led state will have to engage in diplomatic relations with imperialists and reactionaries. It will have to make some concessions to them. At times, it will have to be constrained in its public positions. But none of this can justify placing diplomatic compulsions above proletarian internationalism. In Nepal, the CPN(Maoist) was leading a coalition government, sitting atop a reactionary state. The political and diplomatic compulsions it faced were even more rigid. But within that space too it could have set up a different pole. Instead it chose to ingratiate itself with the imperialists and reactionaries. There was nothing that differentiated the Maoist led government, no new pole could be established. Instead the CPN(Maoist) led government did grave harm to the international cause of Maoism. For example, in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) meet on Terrorism orchestrated by Indian expansionism, comrade Prachanda could have presented the Maoist perspective on this question. The government headed by him could have refused to sign up. But he went ahead and obediently signed the declaration. Similarly his government could have ended Nepali participation in the US led occupation of Afghanistan, but it did not. None of this would have gone beyond the limits of legitimate diplomacy. None of these were impossible in the present world.

The handling of international fraternal relations was even worse. Relations with fraternal parties, RIM and CCOMPOSA were practically broken off. The Solidarity Committee formed in India was avoided. Not even a statement was brought out on the massacre of the Tamil national minority and fighters of LTTE in Sri Lanka. Relations were established with a number of rightist parties and organisations. In fact, totally opposite to the glorious record of the CPN(Maoist) in proletarian internationalism, a strong tendency of cynical, opportunist utilisation of relations with Maoist parties got strengthened. These relations were played up or muted as a bargaining chip in political manoeuvring. (Some change was seen after the CPN(Maoist) led government was dismissed and the 2 line struggle strengthened. But this tendency remains influential.)

The slogan to struggle from '*street-legislature-government*' (*sadak-sadan-sarkar*) went into cold storage. Some manoeuvring was done at the level of government and parliament but the 'street' and the role of the masses was totally sidelined. The party practically vanished. No statements, no signs of existence of the party were seen. It was allowed to deteriorate and become dysfunctional at various levels. It must be said that at this point the CPN(Maoist) leadership 'outclassed' decades old revisionist parties like the CPM and CPI in India. No matter however much they integrate with the ruling classes, they maintain the primacy of the party, fully aware that this is the instrument by which they maintain their governmental prospects. The reduction of a party like the CPN(Maoist), a party that had steeled itself through the people's war, to such a sorry state in so short a time, is indeed a grave matter to be thought over by Maoists throughout the world. It demands a serious re-examination and advancement of the concepts and methods of party building, particularly in its ideological, political levels.

The suicidal nature of the deterioration of the party was surely apparent. After all, without the party what was there to ensure a return to government? But logic was operating here. It becomes clear when the deterioration of the party is seen as a simultaneous re-organisation, a

reorganisation making it suitable for the rightist course embarked upon by the leadership. This was confirmed and cemented with the unity of the CPN(Maoist) with a section that came out of the revisionist CPN (Unity Center-Mashal). In the unity moves of the past, MLM based synthesis (eating up) of different streams breaking off from revisionist or reformist parties was prominent. Contrary to this, the present unity leading to the formation of the UCPN(Maoist) represented a further step in ideological, political and organisational dilution of the CPN(Maoist). It conceded significant ground to rightist liquidationism. The formulation on ideology, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism was opportunistically changed to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism/Mao Tsetung Thought for the sake of this unity. The struggle waged earlier by the CPN(Maoist) to insist on the term Maoism and its opposition to any view that saw the adoption of Maoism as a mere matter of words, were conveniently forgotten. If not for the resistance from the revolutionary left within the party 'Maoism' would have been dropped from the name of the unified party itself.

Ironically, through the Army Chief issue the reactionaries inadvertently rescued the UCPN(Maoist) from an ignominious fate. Otherwise, stuck in the day to day activities of government and parliament, it would have degenerated beyond repair.

The line struggle

The left had been steadily building up during the period of the UCPN(Maoist) led government. It got a good opening in the wake of the dismissal of the government over the Army Chief issue. Through continuous struggle the left line has gained significant strength. It has been able to move the struggle away from personalities and focus on line questions. This is a welcome development. But though it is attacking and checking the growth of rightism, the task is not complete. The left still has not achieved a decisive break. It has to rupture from the roots of the right deviation in the party by deepening the ideological-political struggle and consolidating it organisationally. A correct rupture can be achieved only by a critical analysis of the party line and practice and synthesising it at a higher level. A simple rejection of the past positions, including Chungwang CC, will not do. Though insurrection may still be a possibility, it is essential to break away from any absolutist concept of insurrection that either regards it as the only possibility, ruling out re-initiation of protracted people's war (PPW), or thinks that insurrection should be attempted only with a high chance of achieving countrywide victory. It must also fight for urgent steps to prepare against the threat of a reactionary attack aimed at decimating the Maoists.

One of the main weaknesses of the revolutionary left is its continued support for going back to government and the slogan of carrying out the struggle from '*street-legislature-government*' (SLG). This blurs the distinction between the right and the left and leaves the ranks and the masses confused. Within the left, there is a strong tendency to see the abandoning of the '*street*' part of SLG as the main error. It urges a 'full' application of the three pronged tactics. This begs the question, struggle for what? Rightists take to the streets when out of government. They need it ... to get back into government and enjoy the crumbs of power. We in India are quite familiar with such revisionist 'street-government' tactics. Can anything different be expected in

Nepal? A series of mass struggles were launched by UCPN(Maoist) in the period following its dismissal from government. But they have not led to any decisive, qualitative change. All that energy was finally pooled into pushing the ruling class parties towards a new compromise (yet to be actualised) that will allow the UCPN(Maoist) into government. The argument for continuing the SLG tactics is bound up with thinking, still influential within the left, that the CA process must be taken to its logical end. This is seen in some of the views and writings from the left. It is a continuation of the 'absolutising of the CA process', criticised earlier in this document. The influence of erroneous evaluation of the situation, exaggerating the threat from Indian expansionism and considering diplomatic ties with China as an indispensable counter-weight, also underlies this view. Struggle is essential within the left itself to achieve clarity on ideological-political issues and the path forward to completing the revolution. The crucial need today is to regain the revolutionary road. This means line, plan, tactics and determination to break out of the existing Interim setup and advance towards completing the NDR. Nothing less than this will do.

The left has to advance its positions addressing a very complex and challenging situation. In fact it is almost similar to a new initiation. But one that is more complex and challenging. At the time of the initiation of the people's war the party did not have to deal with diplomatic or other similar relations. Everything was a new beginning. But now it must handle a lot many more aspects and pay attention to properly handling their relations, so that the maximum gain can be retained while making the new leap. *But what is decisive is the leap and gearing up the party to take it.* Because, no matter how good a job is done in handling complex relations and tasks, a restructuring of the present support base, the falling away of a substantial section particularly from among the middle classes, is inevitable. In fact this partial destruction is a necessary corollary to the leap and must be seen as such. This crucially hinges on the deepening of the line struggle and decisive rupture from rightism. Though the urgent task is to address the line and tactical questions immediately posed by the concrete situation, limiting it to these will weaken the left. The ideological struggle must be deepened and the roots of the present rightist tendencies must be identified.

In conclusion, we would like to place before the Maoists in Nepal an important lesson learnt in the course of struggle against rightism in our own context, "**If a deviation is left not rectified it will generate conditions for its growth into a wrong line.**" It will do this by moulding the thinking of the leaders and cadres in its own image. ... opposition [within the CRC, CPI(ML)] not only failed, but also ended up as fuel for the wrong line itself. This happened because there were a lot of common views shared by the contending ideas. ... Despite all its eclecticism, a wrong line has its logic and dynamics. It will incessantly push the party away from Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The obvious divergence from Marxist-Leninist-Maoist positions will no longer seem to be so. Large sections within the party may not feel comfortable with such divergence. But their ideological alertness is already dulled by liberal thinking — 'well, they do have a point which must also be considered'. More ground is yielded to the wrong line. Ultimately, the struggle against the wrong line flounders within the ideological, political boundaries set up by that line itself, causing demoralisation. Finally, the most important lesson is this. **No matter how high the**

heap of garbage, it can always be dug away. Provided, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is firmly grasped and wielded with determination to make a total rupture.” (from ‘Repudiation of the CRC, CPI (ML)’s views on military line’, Spring Thunder, 1/1998)

The Maoist movement in Nepal has a rich history of struggle against rightism. It has a powerful Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideological tradition. Political power enjoyed by vast sections of masses for the first time in the country, oppressed sections and regions of society living a life of dignity, backward Nepal being transformed into a beacon for the whole world, daring thinking and initial steps towards building up a self-reliant Nepal - these glorious achievements of the people's war, realised through the sacrifice of innumerable martyrs, has added even more might to this heritage. The Nepali Maoists will surely succeed in drawing on it and regaining the revolutionary road.
