

World Peoples' Resistance Movement (Ireland)

Final Report: Nepal Visit 2009

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Final Report: Nepal Visit 2009

Three Members of the World People's Resistance Movement (Britain & Ireland) recently spent a month in Nepal from August to September 2009 [all reports are available online at www.wprmbritain.org]. Please post comments, suggestions and criticisms.

Two of our members had been on the 2nd International Road Brigade in April 2006, but its fair to say Nepal looked like a different country than it did back then. No longer underground and fighting a People's War, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has now opened offices and operates legally in every village in the country. The monarchy is a relic of the past, abolished in 2008, and the Maoists, after having led the government for nine months, are now leading a popular protest movement against the current government with the aim of creating a third *Jana Andolan* – People's Movement.



But similar to 2006, party leaders and supporters alike were keen to welcome us to Nepal, help us with whatever we needed and talk to us at great length about the situation. With huge smiles, warm shakes of the hand and the constant raised clenched fist of *lal salam*, red salute, we were able to see much in our one month visit. We travelled to the districts of Rolpa, Dang and Banke in the mid-west, Kailali in the far-west, and Dolakha in the east as well as

Kathmandu. We met with leaders and cadres of the UCPN(M), especially members of the Young Communist League (YCL) and various Cultural Groups. In Kailali we visited the cantonment of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) 7th Division, and in Dolakha we visited a model school. Along the way we spoke to many party supporters and ordinary masses about their thoughts and experiences of the struggle in Nepal.

Through our communication with party leaders and supporters it was easy to forget how impoverished Nepal is. Materially speaking, Nepal is a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country which has suffered for centuries under feudal monarchical rule, and especially under the control of Indian expansionism, a localised form of imperialism. Yet for all its material poverty, the UCPN(M) has taken up the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and applied it creatively to the concrete conditions of Nepal, the results of which are there for all to see. Nepal is materially poor but ideologically perhaps the richest place in the world today. The success of the UCPN(M) in fighting the People's War (PW) and building up people's power in the countryside showed the firm grasp of MLM by the party. In the changed situation since 2006, the Maoists seem to be increasing their strength, and we aimed to investigate how much this is still based on their firm grasp of ideology.



For people who think communism and revolution are historical relics, the Maoists in Nepal have turned history upside down and shown the continued relevance of this ideology, possibly greater than ever before because of the deeper level of imperialist exploitation existing around the world. But the history of revolution in the twentieth century and before is not forgotten. Instead the UCPN(M) aim to synthesise this experience in order to apply MLM at a greater level in the twenty-first century. In this synthesis they have placed special

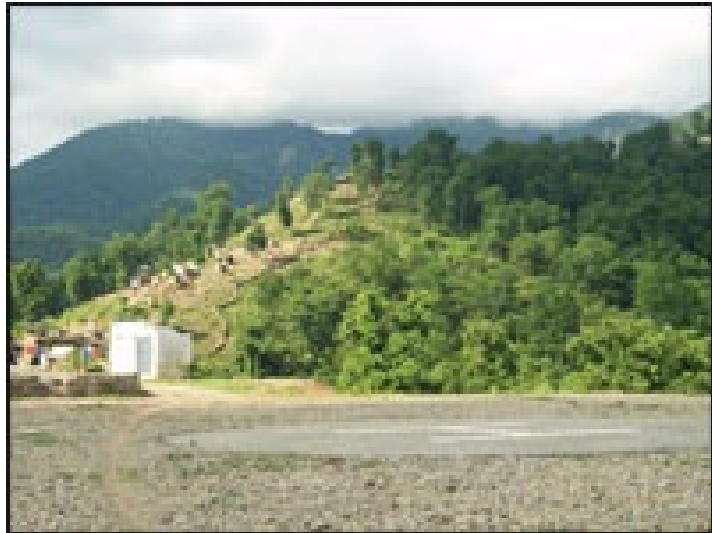
emphasis on the question of democracy, on how a New Democratic and Socialist society can be run while exposing and opposing revisionism from within and imperialist from without.

Our visit was inspired by the need to investigate the objective situation in Nepal in order to gain a better understanding of the unfolding revolution there. Since April 2006 the voices in opposition to the UCPN(M) have grown stronger. In general it seems that the mood which was once euphoric in its support of the Nepalese Maoists fighting the PW has considerably waned, to the point where the party is openly condemned by some. Support for the legitimate struggle of the Nepali people has therefore been withdrawn, at exactly the time it is needed most. Through various discussions and meetings we had had in Britain and Ireland, as well as certain published documents from around the world on different stances towards the revolution in Nepal, we felt that there were many issues to investigate. The first issue relates to issues of strategy and tactics and the question as to why the UCPN(M) shifted from the strategic offensive in the PW to the political struggle centred on the Constituent Assembly (CA) and the new constitution. Particular concerns surround the supposed disarming of the PLA, demobilisation of the YCL and scrapping of the people's power in the old base areas. The second important issue is on the question of the state and relating points on the democratic republic as a sub-stage of the New Democratic Revolution (NDR) and crucially whether the Maoists have abandoned the idea that the old state needs to be smashed but can

instead be reformed. The third main issue centres on the role of elections, specifically in the future New Democratic and socialist states, and the role of Cultural Revolution. Further to this we wanted to gain a deeper insight into the practice of two-line struggle within the party. Following is our report of the situation there.

War and Politics

The issue of the PLA in the revolution in Nepal is a fundamental question and one which has led to great differences of opinion among supporters of the Nepalese revolution internationally. This is the army which grew out of the PW, winning glorious victories against the reactionary forces in the rural areas, showing people – and women, dalits and oppressed minorities in particular – that the people’s destiny can be taken up in their own hands. During the PW the PLA was the key link in the mobilisation of the



masses and the practice of the mass line. By 2006 the PLA had proven itself on the battlefield and also within the hearts of the people. As we all know, Mao said that “without a people’s army the people have nothing.” There have therefore been concerns on the apparent disarming of the PLA after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). According to the CPA, the PLA has been confined to seven cantonments across the country, with its guns under lock and key and monitored by the UN. There is thus a worry that not only does the PLA therefore not have ready access to its weapons, it is also the fish plucked from the water, unable to maintain its links with the people. Now it awaits the fate of integration with the army it once fought, supposedly based on the need to ‘professionalise the PLA and democratise the Nepalese Army (NA)’. While the NA certainly needs democratisation, whether the PLA is in need of professionalisation is a different matter. Furthermore, the conditions in the cantonments were at first dire, and now still not suitable to look after the needs of the thousands of revolutionary soldiers around the country.

One of our primary objectives was to visit a cantonment, and very early in our trip we were able to spend some time in the cantonment of the [7th Division of the PLA](#) in Kailali district, far-western Nepal. Certain preliminary points are important. While the PLA has been placed in the cantonments they have not been disarmed, as the key to the weapons is firmly within the hands of the respective division commander, as the 7th Division acting commander [Comrade Jeevan](#) reiterated to us.

Also, the process of army integration is a complicated process. What is certainly not happening is the wholesale dismantling of the PLA to be placed within the NA as it now stands. Instead the Maoists emphasise the need to create a new national army which is anti-feudal and anti-colonial in character, taking into account the concrete conditions of Nepal. For Nepal its small size and open border with its giant neighbours India and China make a standing army capable of defending its sovereignty an unrealistic dream. Instead, the Maoists have emphasised arming the population in general while keeping a relatively small national

army that can be used for security but also for development purposes. In this situation the idea that the PLA needs 'professionalised' is of course ridiculous, a fact pointed out to us frequently by various leaders and soldiers when we were inside the cantonment. As it has proven on the battlefield, the PLA is already a professional army.

The Maoists are also trying to wrestle with the fact that in the USSR and China, the revolutionary armies were transformed from being amongst the most advanced sections of society to being bastions of revisionism, a process which mainly occurred through the destruction of their links with the masses and their barracks lifestyle. With this in mind, the PLA soldiers stressed the need to deepen the relationship between the revolutionary army and the people to prevent its sliding into revisionism, and this would be an important component of the future army. In the cantonments the practice of the mass line is very difficult for the PLA. Whereas before it was second nature, now there is a physical barrier between the soldiers and the masses. However, we could see signs in the cantonment that even this physical barrier was not so firm. Most impressive was the healthcare facilities run by the soldiers, not only for their own needs but for those of the local population too, which has poor facilities and is far from the nearest hospital in Danghadi. We were told that people come from quite far to seek health service inside the PLA cantonment. This demonstrated to us that the PLA is still trying to maintain its links with the people, however hard it is in this present time.

Lastly, the UCPN(M) has put forward a fluid concept of the dialectic between war and politics. PW does not advance in a straight line, or even a general progression through the various stages marching ever onward to the smashing of central state power and the victory of NDR. In fact, from the beginning the Maoists have emphasised the dialectic between war and politics. Before the launching of the PW in February 1996 the party went through line-struggle on this question, a struggle which eventually ended in a split and the formation of the CPN(M) in 1995. The line



led by Prachanda took up the position that the PW was necessary in the concrete conditions of Nepal, a line since proven correct by history. But they were careful in 1996 to present the launching of the PW as a strategy forced on the people. Through presenting the 40-point demand to the government, the party showed that it was compelled to launch the armed struggle in the face of the corrupt nature of the semi-feudal, semi-colonial regime. People do not like war, and they should not be forced to take part in war. But the correct Maoist position is to "fight war to end war." Peace cannot exist in class society, which is based on exploitation and oppression. However, during the PW the party did not concern itself only with military strategy. Great emphasis was put on the two sets of peace talks which were held with the government under a general ceasefire. Each time the party demonstrated the weakness of the government and its fundamental inertia in the face of a revolutionary struggle. Again, the masses realised that the party was compelled to fight.

By 2005 the situation had changed. The PW had developed rapidly and the Maoists were in control of the vast majority of the country. Its influence in urban areas, and with the industrial

proletariat – a quantitatively small class – in particular, was however not high. Because of the situation stemming from the royal massacre and the coup carried out by King Gyanendra earlier that year, the Maoists were presented an opportunity for uniting with the parliamentary parties in order to force the King to accede to CA elections. This laid the basis for the eventual overthrow of the monarchy. On the back of the PW, the People’s Movement of April 2006 showed the great unity amongst the people against the monarchy. While the bourgeois media stressed the role of the Seven Party Alliance (SPA), it was evident to members of the 2nd International Road-Building Brigade who were in mid-western Nepal at the time, that the real strength of the People’s Movement was the revolutionary people from the countryside, who poured into the cities to take leading parts in the protests. The role of the parliamentary parties within the SPA meanwhile was making sure the fury of the people did not go too far, a role which was seen clearly by the unilateral acceptance of the King’s offer to reinstall parliament after 21 days of protest.

This situation seems now far removed from the life of the soldiers in the cantonments. But frequently we heard about the link between war and politics. Since the CPA the Maoists have been using political means to pursue their goal of exerting a greater influence in urban areas. The fact that their influence had risen greatly lay in the results of the election in 2008, when the Maoists even won the majority of constituencies in Kathmandu itself. In the cantonments however the PLA soldiers we held discussions with, and the acting division commander Comrade Jeevan, all explained to us that this period in the cantonments is “one of waiting”. That they will be needed in the future is self-evident to the soldiers. But that will only come about if they are once again compelled by the reactionary nature of the bourgeois parties or by imperialist or expansionist influence to take up arms in defence of the revolution.

The Mass Line

Along with concerns about the disarming of the PLA have been worries that [the YCL](#) has been demobilised. The YCL is constantly the object of sustained criticism from the bourgeois press, both in Nepal and internationally, precisely because it is accused of violent ‘undemocratic’ practices. These kind of articles seem to appear daily in the Nepali English-language press. One of the most striking things about our visit to Nepal however was the vibrant role the YCL plays in not only propagating the party line, but carrying out the mass line and even practicing what is described as the embryo of a future New Democratic state.

It became evident very soon on our visit that the [links between the PLA and YCL](#) are very strong. In fact, even though the two organisations are physically separated because of the PLA being put in cantonments, the YCL was actually reformed in 2006 out of many former PLA soldiers. While the PLA was put in cantonments therefore, the central, regional and local forces were reorganised in an effort to maintain and further develop the party’s links with the masses.



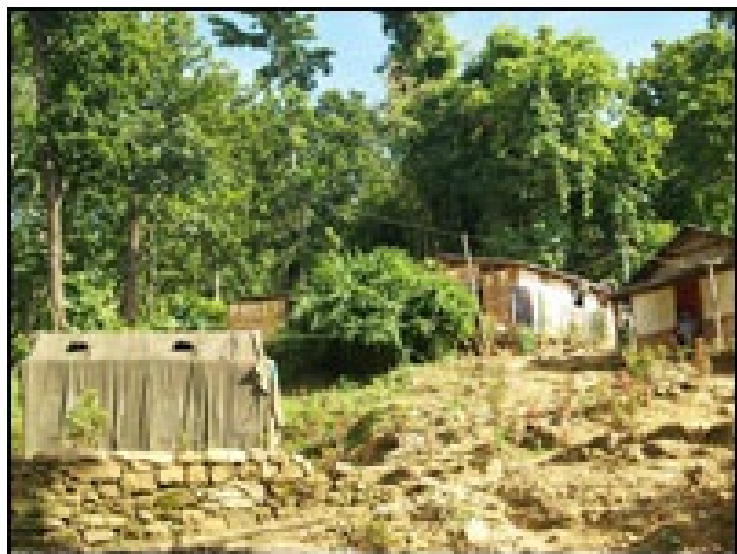
From Kathmandu to the villages, YCL cadre are involved in development work and production alongside the people and are beginning to fill the role of the state in certain areas. One area is road widening, rubbish collecting and tree planting. The YCL also plays a role in combating pimps and drug dealers, as well as helping drug users and sex workers recover and reenter society. Another involves protecting the border from east to west against encroachments by India. Finally, in the villages the YCL settle disputes relating to land and forestry rights, acting in part as the local state. This is particularly important because of the dismantling of people's power in the base areas, of all parallel structures run by the Maoists in the countryside, which we will go into more detail about later. That the YCL is practicing 'a new kind of state' is however an important issue, especially as it relates to the central issue of the state, about the kind of state that exists now in Nepal, the future state and how the one is linked to the other.

It is important to remember that the YCL is not the only organisation that is involved in carrying out the mass line. In every district of Nepal a [Maoist Cultural Group](#) has been set up. We met with one such group in Danghadi, Kailali district, where we talked in the building which houses these young men and women. And we met another group in Liwang, the district capital of Rolpa in the Maoist heartland. The function of these groups is not just entertainment. In fact they occupy an important role in getting out the Maoist message to local people. In true spirit to the Maoist dictum "from the masses, to the masses" the Cultural Groups go out to the villages and learn about the problems people experience. They propagate the party line and also educate people with regard to their rights. They deal especially in opposing feudal and imperialistic culture, opposing this with the New Democratic culture represented by the Maoists. Through a mixture of song and dance the Cultural Groups perform on subjects ranging from resisting Indian expansionism to the goal of building a New Nepal.

Even though the PLA is in cantonments and to a great extent physically divorced from the masses, through the YCL and Cultural Groups, not to mention the party offices in every village in the country, the UCPN(M) is therefore still very much linked to the masses, aware of their problems and propagating the Maoist line.

The Base Areas

A claim often made by critics of the UCPN(M) is that after building up people's power in the countryside the Maoists have dismantled the new institutions and deactivated the [base areas](#). This was an issue we were particularly interested in because our visit in 2006 to the base area in Rolpa had been so inspirational. Our time in the mid-western hills of Rolpa was limited, so we were unable to gather a good picture of the state of the base areas. However, we were able to garner some information. Previously the



UCPN(M) had secured large areas of the Nepalese countryside, in which the royal government was virtually unable to tread. In these areas they had started to build people's power, including parallel governmental structures, people's courts, a banking system, model schools and a new system of healthcare. Although important developments were made in the creation of people's power, nevertheless the Maoists stressed that in the situation they were in the aspect of destruction was still principal. Before the old state was smashed the new state could not be built. Moreover, by 2005 the party had concluded that the revolution in Nepal could not be victorious by simply replicating the pattern of revolution in Russia or China. The development of base areas and the PLA was not on its own enough. More important was to undermine the enemy class's position in the cities in order to strike at the principal enemy of the Nepalese people: the monarchy. The base areas however were in rural areas which had never been fully incorporated into the Nepalese state, and were thus penetrated with more ease than urban areas, especially the Kathmandu Valley.

The base areas were therefore never built up to a level that could have demonstrated the new Maoist society. What about the claim that they have been dismantled? While formally it is true that the parallel structures have been dismantled, in practice many things seem to continue as before. In Rolpa the UCPN(M) basically is in control. Even an NA soldier told us he supports the Maoists, and the YCL act as the arbiters of disputes and in development projects. The model schools and hospital in the villages of Thawang and Jailwang are still in operation and the communes which were set up are also still in existence. The People's Courts, which are a sensitive issue especially for the bourgeoisie, have been reduced to the background, but reports are still made intermittently about the role that they play. Certain leaders of the UCPN(M) for their part also periodically call for the reinstatement of the parallel structures when the danger the party will become bogged down in parliamentary politics comes to the fore. It is thus unhelpful to claim that the dismantling of the base areas is proof of the wrong line of the UCPN(M). Rather there is a difference between official pronouncement (made in a 'diplomatic' way) and the fact that in many respects the base areas continue in practice as before.

One concrete example of this is the [Maoist model school](#) in Jiri, Dolakha district which we were able to spend some time in. Set near the top of a mountain high up in the clouds, the school is teaching more than 100 students, all children of martyrs. Even with rudimentary conditions it was clear that this was really a new type of education. With an emphasis on the teachings of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as well as classes on maths, science and English, the students and teachers took part in agricultural work together growing crops for the canteens, and with a particular emphasis on cultural activities the song and dance performance of the children was an impressive call to make sacrifice in the revolution. So while the base areas have been formally dismantled, it is far from the case that Maoist practice amongst the people has receded to the background. This school was one of five set up this year, one in each district of the country. And so more and more people are coming into contact with Maoist communities of practice, whether the YCL, Cultural Groups or model schools.

The class character of the State

The transition from People's War to a peaceful pursuit of power in a Constituent Assembly has been rapid and, in its departure from the historical path of making revolution in a semi-feudal semi-colonial country, has seemed at times very confusing. But in a recent article in the UCPN(M) English language journal, *The Worker* #12, Comrade Gaurav explains that "it

is [the] clear understanding of our party that the revolution is still incomplete and it is in the halfway and we are sincerely committed to continue the revolution, but the form of struggle has been changed.” This refutes the idea that the UCPN(M) have seen the elections to the CA and the abolition of the monarchy as an endpoint of the revolution. In fact, that the current CA is a type of bourgeois democracy is well-known.

Moving on from the gains of the People’s War, we felt it was important to clarify the UCPN(M) conception of the nature of the state in this transitional period. Participation in the movement against the monarchy and then the transitional state has led to accusations that the UCPN(M) had a non-Marxist understanding of the state. This boiled down to two things: what was the class nature of the new transitional state and could New Democratic Revolution be made without smashing the old feudal and imperialist dominated state. In conversation with many people we approached the question of the class nature of the transitional state. From [various comrades](#) we received an unequivocal answer: the abolition of the monarchy has not changed the class nature of the state which remains semi-feudal and semi-colonial. What has changed is that the old triangular balance of forces has been reduced to two sides, the Maoists on the one side and the bourgeois parties led by NC and UML on the other. This picture was further clarified in discussion with [Baburam Bhattarai](#), who characterised the state thus: “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”.

Knowing full well the state represents either reactionary or revolutionary interests, and that the current state represents reactionary interests, he highlighted however the possibility in the concrete conditions of the Nepalese revolution, to use the state machinery in order to defeat the monarchical forces. Yet the success of the New Democratic Revolution cannot and will not depend on the perfection of the current state, it can only come about through the smashing of it. The election to the CA was not the first of an institutionalised parliamentary system but a one-off political event which sounded the death knell over the monarchy. The recent calls for a third People’s Movement and the need for insurrection, and the new protest programme called by the UCPN(M) for the beginning of November, is evidence to this end.

Strategy and Tactics

While the strategic outlook remains the need to make New Democratic Revolution, the tactics pursued from late 2005 were for a Constituent Assembly which could unite all the republican forces in the country in order to abolish the monarchy.



Teachers and students dancing together in cultural performance

This was achieved by the Maoists in 2008 when the first sitting of the CA took place and Nepal was officially declared a republic. Since then there has been a need for a new set of tactics, and Comrade Basanta was especially frank in stating to us that it has taken quite some time for the party to come up with a new set of tactics. In fact this is to be expected, because in this new situation different problems will rise up. But the UCPN(M) has forged a new set of tactics through a healthy two-line struggle, a point which we will come back to later.

What then are the tactics the UCPN (M) has adopted in order to make New Democratic Revolution? In a discussion of strategy and tactics in *The Worker* #12, Gaurav shows that because the strategy of NDR is nearing completion, the final set of tactics the party has adopted – the struggle for a People’s Federal Democratic National Republic (a People’s Republic of Nepali characteristics) – has become so close to the strategy that they almost overlap. This is precisely because it is the final set of tactics, following on from the successes of the People’s War, the various diplomatic peaceful offensives before and during that time and the second People’s Movement of April 2006.

He goes on to show that the choice at the moment is between two types of republic, a People’s Republic of Nepali characteristics, or a bourgeois republic which consolidates bureaucratic capitalist and comprador bourgeoisie rule. He demonstrates how the principal enemy of the people in Nepal has changed from feudalism, as represented by the monarchy, to the comprador bourgeoisie and bureaucrat capitalists, as represented by Nepali Congress and also UML, the stooges of imperialism and expansionism in Nepal. This also means that the class character of the state, the semi-feudal and semi-colonial state, has not changed, but the principal enemy has. However, the contradiction is still changing towards the possibility that the principal enemy will be with imperialism itself in general, and Indian expansionism in particular. This implies that the UCPN(M) are preparing for direct foreign intervention in Nepal.

During this period the UCPN(M) actually led the government for a period of nine months. Under Chairman Prachanda the Maoists led a coalition government but was unable to make big changes in Nepal. Firstly, it is interesting to note that Mao at the end of the Second World War had himself proposed a coalition government with the arch-reactionaries and representatives of US imperialism, the Guomindang, giving up part of the liberated areas (see [On the Chungking Negotiations](#)) Nevertheless, in the concrete conditions of Nepal taking part in the reactionary state has allowed the UCPN(M) to massively increase their influence and support in urban areas especially. It has allowed them unprecedented opportunities to gain access to the organs of state power, especially the Nepalese Army and the judiciary. This line of politics is obviously very dangerous, and there have been many concerns that in doing this the UCPN(M) has shown reformist tendencies of the worst kind. One example however is that the resignation of Prachanda from the government showed that the UCPN(M) was not a reformist party. It was not intent on restructuring the state from within. It was not flirting with the idea that New Democracy could be established from the CA. In fact, when imperialist intervention in Nepal, through the issue of civilian supremacy over the Nepalese Army, surfaced, it was clear that India and the US still exert great control over the bourgeois state in Nepal and that the organs of state power are very much out of the hands of the people. By resigning, the UCPN(M) were showing to the people that they were not a party like NC or UML, which played politics solely for personal gain and position, jockeying for a better place within the existing order, but were in fact a party that would not compromise on the key questions of the people’s struggle.

Moreover, in organising a coalition government of all the parties except for the Maoists, NC and UML have shown themselves to the people to be the same old parties as before. The new prime minister Madav Kumar Nepal lost in not only one seat in the election to the CA but in two, and likewise new foreign minister Sushil Koirala, member of the most powerful dynasty in Nepalese



politics, also lost the election in two constituencies. Resigning from government has also placed the key question of control over the army, as well as the situating of the Maoists in the ongoing peace process, in front of not only every political party in Nepal but every person. Straight away the consequences of this government were to induce splits within the other forces. One of the Madhesi parties, the MJF, split vertically almost immediately, and all the main parties suffer division over this issue. UML in particular is increasingly dividing into a pro-Maoist section and a pro-reactionary section. According to comrades, members and supporters of the UML are deserting the party and joining the UCPN(M). Crucially, the Maoists are also inducing splits within the Nepalese Army, with the party especially intent on winning over a large number of the normal soldiers, who are themselves from proletarian backgrounds.

On Elections

Perhaps the central issue that is raised by critics of the UCPN(M) is that of elections. In fact what we are talking about here is two separate but related issues. Firstly, the election to the CA of 2008 and secondly the role of elections in New Democratic and socialist society. The UCPN(M) was victorious in the CA elections, taking the imperialists, the bourgeois press and the other Nepalese parties by complete surprise. While an election is obviously not representative of the definitive support of the party amongst the people, it nevertheless showed that the UCPN(M) was not only popular in the mid-western hills where the PW had begun, but also in the urban areas including even Kathmandu, where the Maoists won a majority of the seats. As has been discussed already, taking part in this election has paved the way for the eventual overthrow of the state, it did not mean to establish New Democracy but to alter the balance of forces within the semi-feudal, semi-colonial state.

Drawing even more criticism however is the plan to hold elections within a New Democratic or even socialist state, the idea of 'Democracy in the 21st Century'. This idea, and it is still only an idea at present, has been vociferously criticised by some as the ultimate example of the reformist tendencies within the party, pandering to western imperialist notions of bourgeois democracy and human rights. Moreover, it has taken a long time for the implications of this idea to be understood by revolutionaries around the world. The basis of this idea can be found in Baburam Bhattarai's article 'The Question of Building a New Type of State' in *The Worker* #9 and party documents since that time. In interviews with [Comrade Gaurav](#) and then Bhattarai himself, as well as many discussions with comrades throughout the country we tried to get into the heart of this issue. Firstly, the practical matter of elections, which itself has not been fully understood, is about competition between progressive parties within the stage of New Democracy and also socialism. This means that in New Democracy all pro-feudal and pro-imperialist parties will not be allowed to participate. Gaurav stated explicitly that this means that under their current line NC and UML would not be included within this state. It seems clear then that the elections would not undermine the need for the proletarian party, nor for the People's Democratic Dictatorship under New Democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat under socialism.

Where then does the idea for elections come from? The UCPN(M) seek to understand the nature of the history of revolution in the twentieth century in order to better make revolution in the twenty-first century. They have isolated certain limitations of the experience, including in the Cultural Revolution, the main one of which is the generally reduced opportunity for the masses to themselves take part in transforming society, within which lay the seeds of the capitalist restoration as experienced in the USSR and China. What the UCPN(M) proposes is

that the masses must have a greater role in society. While the Cultural Revolution is the pinnacle of the history of revolution thus far, it still was only a short period of time in which new ideas were thrashed out but no concrete conception of the finalised form of the transition to socialism was discovered. The UCPN(M) thinks that by allowing the people to take part in elections and giving the right of immediate recall of any representative the party can be more firmly kept on the socialist road. Rather than negate the Cultural Revolution however, elections will not guarantee provide the basis for New Democratic or socialist revolution, they will not be able to turn one into the other, but will only contribute to each given process.

This idea is only in its infancy. To us it seems that elections can not guarantee the socialist transition nor the continued revolutionisation of the party and society. But it is an important contribution to the need for a new conception of revolution in the twenty-first century, of both learning from and building on the experience of revolution before. The UCPN(M) constantly stress this point, that no revolution can be copied but must be developed.

Two-Line Struggle and Cultural Revolution

How then has this new set of tactics and new ideas within the party been developed? It is evident that the Maoists are coping with many issues they have not faced before, and in this situation it is not surprising that there are twists and turns and that their general line is unclear to outside observers. However, the UCPN(M) themselves are very open that the new set of tactics has taken a long time to decide upon. The two-line struggle within the party, two lines said to be represented by Prachanda and Kiran, was well-publicised. The struggle centred over the question of the stage of the struggle, whether it was necessary to consolidate the CA and bourgeois democracy or whether to push on towards NDR. Comrade Basanta emphasised to us that the UCPN(M) practice of two-line struggle is always conducted in a healthy manner, on the basis of unity-struggle-transformation. Later Baburam Bhattarai was to stress that possibly the main problem with the practice of two-line struggle in the international communist movement is that struggle is often practiced divorced from the idea of unity. Splits are therefore constantly generated. We feel that one of the grave shortcomings of revolutionaries around the world is the inability to have properly grasped the nature of the two-line struggle as put forward by Comrade Mao. Moreover, the practice of two-line struggle by the UCPN(M) is a good example of this that should be studied by comrades around the world.

It is important not to look at the UCPN(M) as divided between a Prachanda camp and a Kiran camp. Basanta points out that the bourgeois media and feudal and imperialist interests were keen to induce splits within the proletarian party, a fate the Maoists want to avoid. However, the two-line struggle was carried out over a period of time and seems to have ended with a higher level of unity within the party. The practical expression of the two-line struggle can already be seen, in the resignation of Prachanda from the government, which shows that the UCPN(M) are not content in restructuring the existing state from the centre. Instead they are calling for a third People's Movement and there is increasing talk of insurrection. At the time of writing, the situation is becoming especially acute because of the set of protests organised around the United National People's Movement, under the leadership of Baburam Bhattarai. The UCPN(M) is therefore engaged in healthy line struggle, stressing the need to avoid splits but also that a tendency towards constant unity is harmful. For us, the practice of two-line

struggle, one of the key teachings of Mao, is one of the very real lessons revolutionaries around the world should draw from the Nepalese revolution.

And the lesson of two-line struggle comes to the fore in the practice of Cultural Revolution. This was a subject which came up in interviews and discussions frequently because it penetrated to the heart of the UCPN(M) conception of revolution. Central to this is the idea that revolution is a continuous process. It is not one that rests at certain stages or stops for a while, but is reliant on constant revolutionisation. The implication was that now the monarchy has been defeated, the revolution cannot pause but must continue to uproot the source of all feudal and imperialist influence in Nepal.

Baburam Bhattarai pointed out that for the UCPN(M) the Cultural Revolution is the pinnacle of the history of revolution. In an article in *The Worker* #10 entitled 'Problems of Cultural Transformation', Comrade Kiran had pointed out that even though the Cultural Revolution in China was practiced only after 17 years of Communist Party rule, in Nepal it was necessary to cultivate a Cultural Revolution spirit right from the very beginning. For revolutionaries around the world this is also a point to take very seriously. In an interview on the role of elections and the idea of Cultural Revolution, Comrade Gaurav too stressed the essential nature of the Cultural Revolution in the continuing revolution in Nepal. The Cultural Revolution was an unprecedented outbreak of democracy amongst the people and forged new roads forward in continuing to construct socialism in China. Gaurav spoke of this in the Nepalese context, where after the New Democratic Revolution only Cultural Revolution could prevent the transformation of the revolutionary party into a revisionist one and capitalist restoration.

Proletarian Internationalism and support for the revolution in Nepal

Regarding the international situation, Gaurav in *The Worker* #12 writes that the Nepalese revolution is part of the world revolution and is therefore responsible for serving the world revolution. However, it is also deserving of assistance. He writes that "it will be definitely an unfortunate event if the revolutionary forces and people do not support the revolution in Nepal especially when the imperialists and reactionaries of the world are very much involved in sabotaging the revolution in a legal way as far as it is possible."

The revolution in Nepal has posed many questions. The course followed so far has received some opposition. There are indeed many questions to be asked on various issues, questions which should be raised and certain criticisms also that must be aired in the spirit of 'letting one hundred flowers bloom'. However, we believe that all these questions and criticisms must be made on the basis of the unity with which the revolutionary people around the world share. While in discussion with the comrades in Nepal, who are experiencing the twists and turns of the struggle there on a daily basis, we should aim for a higher level of unity, a higher level of understanding.

It seemed evident to us that the UCPN(M) had compromised on many issues so far, not least the placing of the PLA in cantonments and the dissolution, in name at least, of the base areas. Yet on the crucial points the party will not compromise. The de-arming of the PLA is one such issue, and the need to smash the semi-feudal, semi-colonial state is another.

Now that the third People's Movement is starting to loom on the horizon, and with it the renewed danger of direct foreign intervention in Nepal, it is important that revolutionaries all

around the world unite to support the struggle of the Nepalese people against feudalism and imperialism – the struggle that is led by the UCPN(M). In the great success of the People's War and the course of the struggle so far, we also believe there are many theoretical and practical lessons that revolutionaries can gain from studying the revolution in Nepal. And as the time is getting closer towards the potential success of NDR, the responsibility of Maoists and all anti-imperialists around the world towards organisation of activities in whichever country they are in to support the Nepali people at this time, against the reactionaries within Nepal but principally against imperialism and Indian expansionism, is greater than ever.