



# Demarcations

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## **Reviewing the Differences between the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) and the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan**

**– by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)**

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Some time has elapsed since the publication of issue 3 of *Shola*<sup>1</sup> [the official publication of the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan – C(M)PA], which carries a critique of our Party’s line in an article entitled, “The Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist - CPIMLM) has fallen into the wrong path of post-Marxism-Leninism-Maoism”. In this article, *Shola* criticizes the new synthesis of communist theory by Bob Avakian and attacks our Party for its support of the new synthesis.

After the appearance of *Shola*’s article, some comrades who are more familiar with the history of the C(M) PA and its views were assigned to prepare a reply to that article. In June 2011, the 7th Plenum of the Central Committee (CC) of the CPIMLM studied this reply and made recommendations on the basis of which the reply was reworked and became more comprehensive. Due to factors related to the priorities of our Party, the publication of this reply was delayed. Although the reply could have been improved by taking into consideration the recent articles published by the C(M)PA, nevertheless, in order to prevent further delay we’ve decided to publish the reply as it is. During this period, we have become even more convinced that the ideological and political chasm between our Party and the C(M)PA is indeed deep and that this is a reflection of the two-line struggle that has been going on in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) over the past few years. This two-line struggle became more open and sharper, especially following the major capitulation of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) over a revolution that had gone right to the gates of victory. The development of a deep political and ideological rift within RIM made it practically impossible to maintain its organizational unity. (See our analysis of RIM in *Haghighat* 58.)

We hope that the present document, through studying the differences between us and the C(M)PA, can shed light on the nature of the deep political and ideological chasms between the parties and organizations of RIM, and in doing so also illuminate the dangerous situation in the international communist movement (ICM).

The *Shola* article is a critique of a document of the CPIMLM Central Committee entitled, “The Communist Movement at a Crossroads: Withering or blossoming?” (From here on we will refer to this as the “Crossroads” article). What is being attacked by *Shola* is in fact the body of theory that Bob Avakian, the Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party (USA), has brought forth as the new synthesis. *Shola* is angry because our Party, and specifically the “Crossroads” article, emphasizes the correctness of these theories and the role of the new synthesis in dealing with the life-and-death crisis of the international communist movement. *Shola* tries to wrap its anger in a thin disguise of “internationalism” and its concern for the situation of RIM, but from the beginning we face sheer nationalism spouting out every step of the way. The article starts with this introduction: “The Iran-ization of American post-Marxism-Leninism-Maoism”, which is a title more suited to anti-communist journals. *Shola* over and over again attacks “Crossroads” for being “Iranian bombast” and

“Iranian-ism”. The sorry state of *Shola*’s method and style of work does not end here. Many times *Shola* “interprets” the new synthesis arbitrarily and then “criticizes” its own interpretations of the new synthesis. One must appreciate the role of debate and polemics in raising collective consciousness. However, criticism must have two features: first, it should be substantiated and scientific, and second, the line and theory being criticized must be presented with the utmost honesty, as its author or authors have developed and defended it. It is wrong to make a critique based on arbitrary “narratives” or “interpretations” of those lines and theories.

If the above-mentioned method is not observed and adhered to, then criticism will become something like issuing a moral fatwa that must be accepted by the “disciples”, without any need for substantiation, proof or even hearing the defense. This kind of method would turn off the advanced minds that are in search of truth and would excite the backward strata and nourish a non-proletarian and non-revolutionary sentiment among the masses. Method is also part of line, and it has a class character.

Let us concentrate on the main issue that provides the fuel for this method of “critique”. The C(M)PA has centered its critique on three subjects:

First, they claim that the theories of the new synthesis and the recent documents produced by the RCP(USA) and more openly the documents of our own Party and the “Crossroads” article totally discard the theoretical and thinking framework of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and therefore are “post-MLM”.

Second, they claim that there has been no important change in the objective situation since the restoration of capitalism in China, and therefore there is no need for the development of the science of MLM.

Third, they claim that our Party has an absolutist approach to the role of theory and that we negate the role of practice.

### **Is the New Synthesis a Total Negation of the Thinking and Theoretical Framework and Approach of MLM?**

Explaining why the C(M)PA thinks that the line of our Party and the RCP is “post-Maoist”, *Shola* argues: “Because according to this line the new synthesis of Bob Avakian theoretically constitutes the beginning of a new stage outside the framework and foundations of MLM and is seeking to create a new non-MLM theoretical framework and foundation. In other words, this is not a strategic orientation to develop the theoretical framework that ‘Marx brought forth and later was developed by Lenin and Mao’. Rather, it is seeking to refute the totality of that framework and create a new one. This strategic orientation has been expressed openly and nakedly in the document of the CC of the CPIMLM [i.e. the “Crossroads”].” [The text in square brackets has been added by the translator for clarity.]

To demonstrate our “nakedness”, *Shola* quotes “Crossroads”:

“The advances of the first stage were based on the theoretical framework that Marx brought forth and later was developed by Lenin and Mao. The current period also needs a new theoretical framework, which must be brought forth based on a critical summation of theoretical and practical achievements and shortcomings of the past. The new period cannot be a repetition of the past and cannot advance on that basis.”

Our judge jumps out at this great blasphemy and announces:

“What is meant here is the elimination of the entire theoretical framework of MLM and its replacement with another theoretical framework. In other words, not just the elimination of Maoism and the Chinese revolution and the Cultural Revolution in China, and even not just the elimination of Leninism and the Russian revolution, but Marxism itself is also under attack – an undertaking that was not even dared by Mansour Hekmat and the Workers Communist Party.” [Mansour Hekmat was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Iran in the early 1980s which later, after the fall of the Soviet imperialist bloc in the 1990s split into different factions, and he himself founded the Workers Communist Party of Iran. He and others had founded the CPI based on liquidating the theoretical and practical achievements of both the Soviet and Chinese revolutions – and in particular he led a vehement assault on the Chinese revolution and Mao Tsetung.]

Our reply to this “critique” is as follows:

First, the new synthesis does not discard the theoretical foundations of MLM. Rather, it’s the only school of thought in the communist movement today that is the scientific continuation of MLM and generally of Marxism. This continuation has become possible by rupturing from the erroneous aspects of MLM as well as

from aspects that, while they had been correct at their time, are no longer correct. The new synthesis represents the dialectical continuation of Marxism and a Marxist affirmation of Marxism.

Second, it is impossible for any science to develop without rupturing from its erroneous aspects or aspects that no longer correspond to reality. The development of a science is impossible without rupturing from itself (i.e. its erroneous aspects). To treat the development of science as a gradual, incremental increase in knowledge is a mechanical outlook. The development of a science proceeds through the contradictions within that science and through its ruptures from itself. This is true of any science, including Marxism. Therefore, *Shola's* expectation that Marxism can develop by preserving itself in its entirety (“the theoretical framework that ‘Marx put forward and later was developed by Lenin and Mao’”) is futile, and at best mechanical. Indeed, the explanation of “Crossroads” about the movement and dynamics of development of Marxism is correct and dialectical, and this is the only method through which MLM can continue and be safeguarded from a freefall into the abyss of revisionism.

It is appropriate now to look at some of the *official* and *original* documents from the RCP(USA) and the writings of Bob Avakian himself, and on that basis, and not on the basis of narratives and verdicts of the C(M) PA, to discover the relationship between the new synthesis and the principles of MLM. To this end, we will refer extensively to an article entitled “The Re-envisioning of Revolution and Communism: What is Bob Avakian’s New Synthesis?”<sup>2</sup> (we would like to remind that the first section of this article was published in Farsi in the same issue of *Haghighat* that carried the “Crossroads” document, and other sections were published in subsequent issues of *Haghighat* in Farsi.)

This article as well as other documents by RCP(USA) and works of Bob Avakian explicitly state that the framework of the new synthesis “... definitely comes out of and builds on what has gone before, this advance has also involved real ruptures with the past understanding and experience as a crucial element.”

This article explains the relationship between the new synthesis and 160 years of the history of Marxism and the socialist revolutions:

“160 years ago, Marx and Engels proclaimed in *The Communist Manifesto* that the workers of the world – the international proletariat – had nothing to lose but their chains and had a world to win. That Manifesto put forward the basics of the pathbreaking theory that would guide that struggle.... Twenty-five years later, the first, brief attempt at proletarian revolution occurred with the Paris Commune; and nearly 50 years after that, the first real breakthrough – the first real consolidated socialist revolution – was made in the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Lenin and, after Lenin’s death, Stalin. This was followed in China – where the revolution came to power in 1949 and where 17 years later the leader of that revolution, Mao Tsetung, launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution...”

The “Re-envisioning” article explains the end of the first wave of communist revolutions as follows:

“This whole first stage of the communist revolution came to an end in 1976. When Mao died, there was a counter-revolutionary coup in China that imprisoned and/or executed those who had stood with him in leading the Cultural Revolution. The policies that they had fought so hard against were put into effect, and capitalism was restored. Today there are no genuine socialist countries in the world. And people all over the world feel, and struggle with, that weight every day – whether they know it or not.”

The new synthesis is a product of efforts to respond to these conditions and the challenges they pose. The question is: what does it take to transform this situation and advance again? How to open up a new stage of revolution?

“Re-envisioning” writes:

“In this situation, Bob Avakian has led in defending, upholding and building on the monumental achievements of those revolutions and the illuminating insights of its greatest thinkers and leaders. But he has also deeply analyzed the mistakes, and the shortcomings in conception and method that led to those mistakes. And on that basis, he’s forged a coherent, comprehensive and overarching theoretical framework – that is, a synthesis. While this definitely comes out of and builds on what has gone before, this advance has also involved real ruptures with the past understanding and experience as a crucial element, which is why we call it the new synthesis.”

The new synthesis is based on dialectical materialism from Marx to Mao. But it also ruptures with secondary metaphysical aspects that had penetrated into that. Let’s see how the dialectics of “continuity” and “rupture” is presented in the “Re-envisioning” article. The article explains the forging of dialectical materialism and

historical materialism and explains that Marx and Engels “... set the theoretical foundation – they lit the way. But there were, not surprisingly, limitations in the way that Marx and Engels went at this, and these problems got compounded by serious methodological shortcomings on the part of Stalin.... What’s worse, these errors came at the very time an advance in understanding was urgently called for. Mao – the leader of the Chinese Revolution – fought against some of these problems, but Mao himself was straining against an inherited framework and was not free from its influences. And these shortcomings had consequences.”

It has to be said that a large part of the influential mistakes in the international communist movement are not related to the founders and thinkers of the scientific theories of communism – Marx, Lenin and Mao. In fact they fought against such errors. However, within their own thinking too there were elements of those wrong tendencies that later one or another section of the communist movement took up and developed into full-blown lines. But today, largely due to their own efforts we are in a position to recognize their secondary errors, criticize them and prevent full-blown erroneous lines from gaining justification by referring to these secondary errors. In fact, those parties and organizations in RIM who have called the new synthesis “revisionist” are themselves representatives of these developed erroneous lines.

As is emphasized in the “Re-envisioning” article, Bob Avakian identifies four weaknesses in communist philosophy and makes a deep critique of them. They are as follows:

1. Idealistic and even pseudo-religious forms of thought that penetrated into the essence of Marxism and were not ruptured with in the past.
2. The need for a qualitatively deeper understanding of how matter and consciousness interact with each other and transform each other.
3. A series of problems related to pragmatism and associated philosophical tendencies.
4. The need for an epistemology or path towards achieving the truth that is different in essential ways.

By doing all this, Bob Avakian puts Marxism on a more scientific foundation.<sup>3</sup>

We can see that the new synthesis not only does not discard the theoretical foundations and principles of MLM, but based on defense of the foundations and principles of MLM it goes way beyond the imaginings of any orthodox MLM. However, this is done through identifying mistakes and shortcomings in MLM and weeding them out and in this way rendering it more scientific and correct. The C(M)PA repeatedly equates “framework” with principles and fundamentals. But in the new synthesis this term is not used as equivalent to foundations and principles. In fact, putting the principles and foundations in a new framework saves them from the revisionists. Bob Avakian himself explains what he has done:

“This new synthesis involves a recasting and recombining of the positive aspects of the experience so far of the communist movement and of socialist society, while learning from the negative aspects of this experience, in the philosophical and ideological as well as the political dimensions, so as to have a more deeply and firmly rooted scientific orientation, method and approach with regard not only to making revolution and seizing power but then, yes, to meeting the material requirements of society and the needs of the masses of people, in an increasingly expanding way, in socialist society – overcoming the deep scars of the past and continuing the revolutionary transformation of society, while at the same time actively supporting the world revolutionary struggle and acting on the recognition that the world arena and the world struggle are most fundamental and important, in an overall sense – together with opening up qualitatively more space to give expression to the intellectual and cultural needs of the people, broadly understood, and enabling a more diverse and rich process of exploration and experimentation in the realms of science, art and culture, and intellectual life overall, with increasing scope for the contention of different ideas and schools of thought and for individual initiative and creativity and protection of individual rights, including space for individuals to interact in ‘civil society’ independently of the state – all within an overall cooperative and collective framework and at the same time as state power is maintained and further developed as a *revolutionary* state power serving the interests of the proletarian revolution, in the particular country and worldwide, with this state being the leading and central element in the economy and in the overall direction of society, while the state itself is being continually transformed into something radically different from all previous states, as a crucial part of the advance toward the eventual abolition of the state with the achievement of communism on a world scale.” (From *Making Revolution and Emancipating Humanity*, part 1 – cited in *Haghighat* 54, page 17)

Here it is also necessary to deal with the analogy that the C(M)PA has used in order to highlight the extent of

our “sins”. The C(M)PA accuses our party of having done what “... even Mansour Hekmat and the Workers Communist Party did not dare to do...” What the C(M)PA means is that Mansour Hekmat and the Workers Communist Party of Iran “at least” kept “Marxism”, while our Party has thrown in the dustbin the entire framework of Marxism!

In fact, the C(M)PA has put their finger on an important example, because this example shows where a dogmatic understanding of Marxism would lead, and this should be a lesson to the C(M)PA and others.

The Communist Party of Iran (MLM) has been unique in systematically critiquing the world outlook, positions, methodology and generally the political and ideological line of Mansour Hekmat. But our point of departure in dealing with this liquidationist trend (by liquidationist we mean they liquidated correct theories and practices from Marx to Mao) has not been a dogmatic and religious-style defense of the “past”, nor has it been by way of ignoring the shortcomings and deviations that existed in the theory and practice of the communist movement from Marx to Mao. What made it possible for our Party to scientifically and powerfully assess and criticize this trend was learning from the methodology and summations of Bob Avakian in assessing the theory and practice of the first wave of the communist revolutions. At the time these views were reflected in works such as *Mao Tsetung’s Immortal Contributions, Conquer the World: The International Proletariat Must and Will, and Advancing the World Revolution: Questions of Strategic Orientation*.

The Communist Party of Iran under the leadership of Mansour Hekmat was founded based on discarding the fundamental lines of demarcation of the new communist movement that had been forged in the 1960s internationally. Those lines of demarcation had been drawn in the midst of and as a result of one of the greatest struggles within the ICM over the nature of socialism. Over this same question (i.e. what is socialism?) and as a result of the struggles that the Chinese communists under the leadership of Mao waged against the revisionists who had seized power in the USSR under the leadership of Khrushchev, the international communist movement split. It was on the basis of this struggle – meaning the struggle over communism on a world scale – that a new communist movement was born in Iran and all over the world. The fundamental question at the heart of this historic split was: *what is socialism and how can it be built?* Mansour Hekmat treated this great struggle as “a struggle between Chinese and Russian nationalists” and muddied its fundamental achievements. Mansour Hekmat’s rejection of Mao’s line of demarcation with the Soviet revisionists was not due to some peculiar enmity he had against Mao! Hekmat rejected Mao because of his outlook and understanding of the nature of socialism and how it can be achieved; his outlook and understanding on the possibility of achieving socialist revolution and constructing it in a world surrounded by capitalism was close to that of the Soviet revisionists. Hekmat developed a kind of critique of the Soviet experience which in fact demonstrated his bourgeois outlook and understanding of socialism and the political and economic nature of socialism and the real contradictions of this world – a historic transition period. Hekmat founded a Party that gave unclear and incorrect answers to the most important problems of the international communist movement and the revolution in Iran. This type of approach opened the door in his Party for the growth and prevalence of a social-democratic version of “communism”.

The CPI under Hekmat’s leadership, instead of analyzing and taking a position against the restoration of capitalism in socialist China, chose the “simple path” of rejecting this great socialist revolution, a revolution whose pinnacle was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, an unprecedented revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat that aimed at making hundreds of millions of the Chinese masses, as well as proletarians around the world, conscious about the real meaning of socialism and communism, and mobilized them to master this understanding and fight to prevent the restoration of capitalism in socialist China. By eliminating the history of the socialist revolution in China and the restoration of capitalism there, the CPI did not relieve itself of the objective necessity of dealing with the problem of capitalist restoration in the ex-socialist countries. This Party also went wrong when trying to sum up the theory and practice of the socialist revolution in the USSR and followed the same erroneous approach, with the result that it ultimately adopted the simple and pragmatic solution that “there was never socialism there” either. In an idealist/dogmatic fashion, the CPI called for a return to Marx and the Marxism of that earlier period, claiming that it had not yet been applied to change the world. This Party, on the basis of eliminating the experience and history of two major efforts by the proletariat in making socialist revolution and building socialist society, wound up presenting the revolutionary experience of the twentieth century and the history of the international communist movement (except for the immediate period after the victory of the Russian revolution) as “all dark”.

In contrast to that, the method and approach of survivors of the Union of Iran Communists (UIC) was that the restoration of capitalism in China was as important as the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union; that it

had a deadly impact on the international communist movement and the revolutionary trend in the whole world; and that the UIC had to settle accounts with this matter theoretically, ideologically and politically. The result of this search was to rediscover and recognize Mao's theories on the nature of socialist society and the class struggle under socialism, all of which had objectively pushed the body of Marxism to a higher level, which was expressed by the terminology "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism".

We recount this experience in order to draw a lesson and see the truth of what objective necessity imposes upon us. The question is: do we recognize necessity and are we able to change it by applying a correct and scientific line, or not? Attempts to erase the question or resort to partial and simple answers will inevitably lead to a retreat to the ideas and methods of the bourgeoisie, and no one is immune to this: neither those who whimsically and irresponsibly throw into the dustbin the great achievements of humanity in changing the world and feel satisfied, nor those who worship the past with a rock-solid "faith". Those communists who follow either of these approaches will turn into a residue of the past rather than becoming a vanguard of the future communist revolutions.<sup>4</sup>

Let's emphasize one point before we continue. If our Party had come to the conclusion that the foundations of Marxism are no longer applicable for correctly analyzing the world and changing it through revolution, undoubtedly we would have announced it with courage and scientific humility, because it would be impossible to change the world without theories that correctly reflect it. For us, theory is a telescope and microscope helping us to understand the phenomena we are dealing with and to discover the possible pathways for their transformation, which are embedded within those very phenomena. A dogmatic and static approach to a living science is useless for changing the world. The dynamism of Marxism stems from the fact that it is a "this worldly" school of thought, and is related to the revolutionary transformation of the world. No permanent and static framework of any kind can be attributed to Marxism. Unless of course, this is done with a religious approach to Marxism, which is not a new matter in the ICM. The ICM and the parties and organizations who identified themselves with it have been guilty of taking such an approach in different forms at different times. In fact, rejecting a religious approach to Marxism has been one of the hallmarks of the new synthesis. The new synthesis considers rupture with such an approach a necessity for developing Marxism. Without breaking with a religious approach to Marxism, one cannot grasp and apply it, develop it and put it on a more correct footing. Although a religious understanding of Marxism has been a strong current among communists, nevertheless no Marxist will openly announce that Marxism is a religion. The point is that having a general belief in a science is one thing, having a scientific approach towards it and applying it correctly is another matter. Unfortunately, not taking the scientific and dynamic character of the communist theories seriously has deep roots within the communist movement, and in fact proclamations of the scientific character of Marxism have become mere decorations. One of the reasons for the influence of a non-scientific approach to this science in the communist movement is the prevalence of religious-style thinking all over the world today. But there is more to it than this. The spread of a deterministic approach in the communist movement since Stalin is another important factor responsible for this malaise.

In conclusion, we want to refer to one of Bob Avakian's latest works where he says, "... I've also made allusion to something which is very important to grasp as a basic point of orientation: Communism, from the time of Marx to now, has undergone many transformations itself in its understanding, even while its fundamental principles and objectives, and its basic scientific grounding, method and approach, remain essentially the same."<sup>5</sup>

Continuing, Bob Avakian stresses that the new synthesis must be approached not "...as some kind of 'magic formula' but as embodying the essential method and approach to confronting and struggling through the contradictions that have to be faced in advancing to communism – precisely in order to go forward on the revolutionary road leading to communism – and, in the course of this, to continue to develop the science of communism."

## **Marxism is Thrown to the Wind!**

*Shola* accuses us of "blasphemy" because we have stated in "Crossroads" that a new stage in communist revolution has begun which cannot be a mere repetition of the previous period and cannot proceed on the previous basis. *Shola* is outraged, and proclaims that by this our Party intends "...a total elimination of the theoretical framework of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and its replacement with a new framework instead", and that "therefore" the new synthesis is "post-Marxism-Leninism-Maoism".

The history of the communist movement is full of these types of cries that warn against throwing out Marxism. Thirty years ago, when Bob Avakian was summing up Stalin's serious errors, and was demonstrating the significance of Mao's rupture with the Soviet model of socialism, many in the ICM cried out and mourned the death of "principles". But in fact Avakian's bold summations were crucial for consolidating the theoretical framework of MLM and revalidating socialism as the only real alternative to the capitalist system and all the horrors it represents. In fact, those who cried and mourned in the face of these summations were the ones who were trampling on Marxism. Or when Bob Avakian in *Conquer the World?*<sup>6</sup> criticized erroneous aspects of Lenin's article "Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder", many rightist pseudo-communist currents who took refuge in Lenin's statements in order to falsely claim that the communists should take part in bourgeois parliaments and that this is "part of the theoretical framework of Leninism", were outraged. Rather than explaining why they think "taking part in parliament" is tantamount to and a requirement for preparing the revolution, they preferred to "argue" that since Bob Avakian had not led any revolution therefore he was not qualified to say what was wrong in Lenin's article. But what Bob Avakian did was damned important for defending Leninism and safeguarding its proletarian revolutionary essence from the invasions of bourgeois democrats disguised as communists.

There is no way to deny the historic role of the RCP(USA) under the leadership of Bob Avakian in forging a correct line for the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. In the end, the leaders of those parties who opposed and resisted this correct line and fought against it under the banner of orthodox MLM wound up crushing the revolutionary principles of Marxism underfoot one by one. These various tendencies that reacted against Bob Avakian's summations in *Conquer the World?* have existed throughout the entire period of RIM, in an embryonic form or sometimes as a more developed line. Later, they leaped out and developed and formed a pole.<sup>7</sup>

When we say, "the current period needs a new theoretical framework", *Shola* interprets that as a total negation of the fundamentals of MLM. Not only does *Shola* not try to understand the concept of a "new theoretical framework" but it also fails to honestly reflect the way our "Crossroads" article has defined it. *Shola* outrageously ignores all the relevant issues in this article and uses a certain "new theoretical framework" measuring rod (with a meaning rendered to it by *Shola* itself) to deal with the whole article and the concepts put forward in it.

In this manner, *Shola* presents its own understanding of MLM and clearly demonstrates that the C(M)PA believes in an eternal framework for MLM and considers any trespassing away from that framework a negation of this science and a deviation from its fundamentals. We should not reduce communist theories of social revolution to a set of dry, rigid formulas that are contained within the walls of some unchanging framework, nor should we learn the theory and apply it in that kind of way. We also have to have a dialectical materialist approach towards Marxism itself. Even our understanding of dialectical materialism has gone through changes, and has become more and more scientific. This is only normal, because this methodology has not fallen from the sky and is a product of human efforts in the realm of ideas. Experience gained through struggle to change the world creates the ground for the expansion of our knowledge and provides material for cleansing it of mechanical materialism and idealistic dialectics. Astonishingly, one can find Marxists who exclude Marxism from this process. Fortunately, in the history of social development, great teachers have stepped forward who have been able to lead transformations and developments in dialectical materialism as well. Lenin attached great importance to developing the understanding and grasp of dialectics while science was developing in different areas. (See Lenin's articles on dialectics and "Notebooks on dialectics".) It was in line with this type of thinking that Mao took a revolutionary approach to dialectics and its laws and stressed what is central to dialectics, i.e. the contradictory nature of all phenomena and processes.

*Shola* insists so much on the literal meaning of the term "framework" that it develops its whole critique based on this terminology. This itself shows the method of thinking of *Shola*. By adopting this method, *Shola* washes its hands of engaging the content of the new synthesis and closes its eyes to its essence and principal arguments.

### **What is a "framework" in science and how does it relate to the fundamentals of the science?**

Changing the "framework" means the *foundations* of scientific theory remain, but for it to remain as a living and valid science it has to rupture from secondary errors within it that keep it from being unleashed. Those aspects that no longer represent the material world, i.e. objective reality, should be tossed out and those aspects of the material world that this science has not covered should now be covered. Doing all this – in a correct way, and not a revisionist way – leads to the formation of a new theoretical framework, which rests on the same

foundations.<sup>8</sup>

It is not this or that theoretician who arbitrarily challenges one or another theoretical framework, rather it is objective reality that challenges the framework. This situation leads to a crisis in science. In this process theoreticians emerge whose powerful scientific thinking enables them to see this problem and take up the challenge of dealing with it. When such development happens, the only correct approach is to see whether their analysis of the problem (the illness) is correct, and if correct, whether the solution they put forward (the cure they prescribe) is correct and is headed in the right direction.

Changes in the material world challenge our theoretical framework. This has numerous aspects:

First, we have applied our communist theories, bringing forth tremendous changes in the world. In this process the principally correct essence as well as shortcomings of our theory and practice have been revealed. Does *Shola* accept this truth?

Second, human thought has expanded in different directions as a result of scientific experiments and production efforts, becoming more scientific, which in turn helps us to achieve a better understanding of the problems of social revolution and its complex dimensions. Darwin's discovery of evolution played a tremendous role in the development of Marx's thinking and even on the way Marx formulated the mechanisms and dynamics of the capitalist system. Does *Shola* oppose this truth?

Third, the material world has gone through many changes in different aspects and for other reasons too. The movement of capital has caused tremendous changes in the structure of different societies. For example, compared to the early 20th century, the world in general and different countries have become qualitatively more integrated. This brings the necessity of reviewing the class analysis and path of revolution in these countries. How does *Shola* look at this reality?

One of the signs that a science needs to develop is when different interpretations of it start to proliferate. Over time, a science that has had an important role in changing the material world shows its incorrect and incomplete aspects and no longer reflects the material world as clearly and as sharply as it once did. This has happened to Marxism. For the bourgeoisie, it is useful for Marxism to remain in this state, because in this way anyone at all can claim to be a Marxist based on his/her interpretations and every kind of bourgeois path and politics can be passed off and justified as "socialist". The shortcomings of the previous socialist revolutions and the erroneous elements in the theoretical body of MLM are minor. Nonetheless, they are minor elements that cannot be ignored, because they have weakened Marxism and have been harmful to the program of communist revolution. Furthermore, this has offered an opportunity to the bourgeoisie to launch effective anti-communist attacks and become a cover for wrong and capitulationist lines under the guise of Marxism, or Marxism-Leninism, or Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. We have witnessed the presence of similar tendencies within RIM as well.

Every revolutionary communist in Iran and Afghanistan and around the world knows (or should know!) the extent to which Lenin's views on participation in parliament and the concept of the "democratic republic" have been used to conciliate with the bourgeoisie, or how Mao's concept of "two-stage revolution" and "defeating the enemies one by one" have been used to collaborate with native reactionary forces.

Revisionist currents that have arisen from the Maoist parties have justified their alliance with different factions of the reactionary classes by using Mao's concept of "destroying the enemies one by one". Hasn't Afghanistan witnessed many such trends? How did the Rahaii Organization and SAMA (National Liberation Organization of Afghanistan, one of the left-secular united front organizations that was organized and led by a section of the movement that considered itself Maoist) try to justify their unity with the Islamists (jihadists)? They didn't just say, "We are bourgeois and because of this we are uniting with jihadists"! Did they? The Rahaii Organization was a follower of the capitalist roaders in China and was in no way a representative of Mao's revolutionary communist line. But its leaders knew how to use the weak link in "Mao Thought" and dispense with the revolutionary communist essence of his thinking in order to justify their revisionism. The rightist line that developed in the Union of Iran Communists in 1980 considered it necessary to defend "anti-imperialist aspects" of the reactionary Khomeini. This tendency, which was not limited to the UIC but had many adherents in the Left movement in Iran, had two "theoretical" sources: first, Mao's concept regarding the "dual character" of the national bourgeoisie in China, and the necessity of creating a united front with that class in order to achieve the victory of the revolution against feudalism and imperialism. (It is interesting to note that after the rise of the "reform faction" of the Islamic Republic headed by Khatami and his victory in the presidential elections in



the 1990s, some remnants of the right opportunist line in the UIC who had also opposed Sarbedaran's armed uprising for the overthrow of the Islamic regime of Iran [in 1983] used this same logic to call for support for Khatami.) Second, the dominant thinking in the communist movement since the Comintern period (from the time of Lenin's leadership) has advocated the need to unite with "anti-imperialist" currents (which are also anti-communist).<sup>9</sup> It should be pointed out that most of the Trotskyist currents in Europe and North America (which are very much anti-Mao) use the same thinking and tradition to defend the Islamic Republic, and based on this same understanding they are now shifting to the support of the "Green Movement" led by Moussavi. And as with any split among reactionaries, these forces also split over which section of the regime they should support. As for the events in Syria, some are supporting Bashar Assad "against imperialism" while others support the "Revolution" (meaning support for the Free Syrian Army). This trend sees any kind of "anti-imperialism" as worthy of support and views the overthrow of so-called anti-imperialist regimes such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, whose anti-imperialism is extremely reactionary, as a "betrayal" of the anti-imperialist movement in general.<sup>10</sup>

At a time when the political scene in the Middle East is marked by the dynamics of conflict between the two poles constituted by imperialism and Islamic fundamentalism, and millions of oppressed masses have been caught up in and used as "cannon fodder" by these two poles, the political line of defending the "anti-imperialism" of the Islamists is extremely reactionary. It leads to the abortion of any social revolution. In this region, the so-called anti-imperialism of the Islamists cannot help the cause of emancipation from imperialism even a bit. In fact, it strengthens the imperialists' grip, just as the imperialists' "war against terror" strengthened these native reactionary forces. Isn't this experience enough to see the reality that Islamism and imperialism represent two reactionary poles, and the struggle against them cannot give precedence to one over the other, as both represent a rotten social system that needs to be overthrown? *What does the Communist Party Maoist of Afghanistan have to say about this?*

Many rightist deviations in the Left movements in the world (whether under the label of Leninism, Maoism or Trotskyism) use Lenin's article on "Left Wing Communism" in order to argue that their participation in a bourgeois parliament in a non-revolutionary situation is justified and necessary. So what is the correct approach to those with this rightist line who justify their wrong line by referring to articles like these? Is it enough just to say that they are "mis-using" the words of Marx, Lenin or Mao? If we leave it at this we will fall into a methodology similar to that deployed by the Islamists themselves, who in debates to defend their "faith" invoke supposedly different "interpretations" of the Quran. It is undoubtedly correct to argue that Mao's policy of forging a united front with the national bourgeoisie in China was based on preserving the independence of the Communist Party of China and its reliance on the Red Army under the leadership of the CCP, and Lenin's practice in the Russian revolution was a reflection of his correct theories and politics. But this is not enough. While Mao's analysis with regard to how in the oppressed countries the national bourgeoisie belonged to the camp of the people may have been correct at the time, it does not correspond to today's reality in the world and to the position of this bourgeoisie. Furthermore, generalizing Mao's view concerning "defeating the enemies one by one" is wrong, and Mao himself had a tendency to generalize the experience of the anti-Japanese war (as a result of Japanese attacks on red base areas under the control of the CCP, the Party and the Red Army proposed a peace deal with Chiang Kai-shek [the leader of the reactionary Kuomintang] for unity to defeat the Japanese Army). One should not turn that experience into a general rule. The rightists within the "Maoist" trend have always used this kind of wrong generalization to justify their rightist deviation. To contest these facts is useless for the proletarian revolution. We must face the truth.

Bob Avakian saved "Maoism" from the claws of the Chinese revisionists and their international supporters. The publication in 1980 of *Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions* by Bob Avakian was an important step on this road. In addition, the book *Revolution and Counter-revolution in China* summed up the two-line struggle within the CCP, which was a concentrated reflection of the class struggle in socialist China. This book documents this struggle in a series of articles from both sides (both the communists and the revisionists). It is in this book that Deng Xiao-ping's 20 point program and his revisionist plans for the restoration of capitalism have been exposed, and the struggle that Mao and the "Gang of Four"<sup>11</sup> waged against it is documented. The world-historic significance of these events would not have been established without the efforts of Bob Avakian and the RCP, and they could have been buried. And the bourgeois-democrats who called themselves "Maoists" would have been able to easily roam about and turn Mao into a simple bourgeois-democrat. Moreover, Bob Avakian also salvaged Mao's criticism of Stalin and developed this even further – much further than Mao. He did this at a time when the world's so-called Maoists viewed Mao's criticisms of Stalin "with suspicion". At a time when the Maoists of the "Third World" would smirk at any talk of revolution in the imperialist countries

and when the Maoists of the imperialist countries conceived of their task as simply supporting the revolutionary front in the “Third World”, Bob Avakian systematically developed the path of revolution in countries like the US. At a time when the idea that “the path of socialism goes through democracy” has been a prevalent view in the international communist movement (and the Communist Party of Nepal Maoist, now the Unified Communist Party of Nepal Maoist, was one of the defenders of this concept), Bob Avakian systematically developed and further clarified Marxist theory on the question of dictatorship and democracy. In opposition to those who were attacking the experiences of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR and China, Bob Avakian, instead of returning to the bourgeois democracy of the 18th century, criticized the shortcomings of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR and China through analyzing the great experience of the proletariat in the 20th century and further developed the theories on proletarian dictatorship and democracy.

This sharpening of the blades of Marxism upsets even some of the parties and organizations within the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, because it closes space to dissimulations regarding revolution and communism. Revolution, particularly socialist revolution, is a conscious act. Since both reality (independently existing reality) as well as consciousness are changing, it is not possible to make revolution on the basis of a metaphysical understanding that “Marxism has discovered the truth, and the task of the communists is to apply it”. If this were the case, the two major revolutions in USSR and China would not have been defeated. Truth is not something to be discovered once and for all. Rather, it is an unending process of struggle between matter and consciousness, subject and object, freedom and necessity.

### **Is There a Material Basis for the Development of Science?**

*Shola* writes: “The socio-economic system... meaning the capitalist system, despite the great developments it has gone through, is still the capitalist system, and its foundations objectively exist, and the need of the working class, as a class, to change from a class in itself to a class for itself still exists. The capitalist-imperialist system is still in existence, and we are not facing a post-capitalist or even post-imperialist system, such as ultra-imperialism.”

The question, however, is not the “objective existence” of this system! The question is the state of this continuously changing objective existence and our curve of knowledge about it. As we all know, capitalism turned into capitalist-imperialism, and there were many changes within the working class in the imperialist countries. Without understanding these changes and conceptualizing them, it would have been impossible for Lenin to make revolution. Theory had to advance in order to produce *revolutionary* practice. Without advancing theory, it would have been impossible to struggle against opportunism and revisionism, because there would not have been any criteria for demarcating with revisionism. The task of science is to analyze objective reality and the way it changes, and the reasons for these changes.

Let’s look at some of the changes that have taken place in the past few decades, and let’s see how realistic *Shola*’s analysis is that this world has not changed much.

First, let’s look at the restoration of capitalism in once-socialist China. *Shola* says, “From the standpoint of the existence of proletarian political power, the waves of proletarian revolution begun in the time of Marx vastly and deeply weakened following the defeat of the revolution in China, but did not completely end.”

With this kind of analysis, *Shola*’s demonstrates one of the following two problems: either they are not aware of the history of the world when socialist revolutions came to power and socialist countries were constructed; therefore not being able to grasp what the existence of the proletarian dictatorships represented even while most of the world was under the rule of imperialism and reaction! Or: by this type of evaluation they simply manifest a certain class outlook: they look at that history with the world outlook of the national bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, and therefore generously poo-poo the significance of the loss of those countries.

The overthrow of socialist rule in China in 1976 and the restoration of capitalism there not only eliminated the world’s last socialist bastion against capitalism, but it turned China from a bastion of world revolution into a reserve of world imperialism, and subsequently into one of its pillars. This event has had a tremendous effect on the balance of revolution and counter-revolution on a world scale, including for example with regard to the increase and spread of the reactionary Islamic movements. Does the C(M)PA really think that the transformation of China did not lead to a qualitative change in the objective situation of the world?!

The defeat of the old anti-colonial national movements in the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s and their replacement with

tribal religious wars was another of the major changes that took place. The communist movement was dealt a blow in different corners of the world and detrimentally marginalized. Instead of communist movements or even national movements, the Islamic forces, with religious tribal programs and outlooks, influenced the masses.

The end of the contention between the two imperialist blocs led by the US and USSR opened the gateways to a new round of imperialist capitalism's invasion of every corner of the world, which led to an unprecedented level of integration of the entire world, creating tremendous disintegration and instability in the socio-economic fabric of different countries. These developments had undeniable effects on the social fabric and class configurations of all countries, especially "Third World" countries, and this in turn has important implications for the strategy of revolution in every country.

As a result of capitalist globalization, new strata of bourgeois compradors came into existence, and the life of the lower strata of the bourgeoisie, or the "national bourgeoisie", became completely dependent on the dynamics of the world capitalist system. The effects of globalization changed the fabric of the countryside as well as fuelling the further migration of men and the feminization of the peasantry. The cities and proletariat in the cities expanded, and here too poverty and labor became increasingly feminized.

In the Middle East, one of the major events after the 1970s has been the rise of Islamism. Different factions among the Islamic forces (whether in or out of power) came to constitute a new comprador bourgeois strata in these countries. Disruption in the imperialist-led development process since the mid-1970s propelled these strata into an antagonistic position vis-a-vis those strata of the comprador bourgeois class who then had a monopoly on political power. This new comprador elite consisted of Islamic capitalists, politicians and intellectuals who had new demands and ambitions for a redistribution of economic and political power, although within the same framework of the capitalist-imperialist system.

The rise of these political forces came to pose great challenges to the communist movement. An erroneous political analysis of the rise of Islamism and its relation to the workings of the global capitalist system and a wrong analysis of the class character of these Islamist forces and the reactionary nature of their contradictions with imperialism caused tremendous harm to the communist and Left movements, and even dragged the anti-imperialist forces in Europe and the United States to the defense of the Islamic forces against imperialism. Two important changes in the objective situation internationally rendered the Islamic forces in the Middle East and North Africa more powerful: first, the post-1970s disruption of imperialist-led economic development brought about social disintegration within these countries; second, the transformation of nationalist movements into new collaborators of the world capitalist system, and finally the restoration of capitalism in China in 1976 weakened and discredited the "Left" and "secular" rivals of the Islamic forces.

Bob Avakian was the first person in the international communist movement who boldly and clearly analyzed the nature of these Islamic movements and the strata and classes involved.<sup>12</sup>

But most of the MLM parties in RIM were oblivious to this analysis and to the need for a revolutionary policy on this matter, while in fact the rise of Islamic fundamentalism was an important obstacle to the spread and development of the communist movements in so-called "Muslim" countries.

We would like to pose this question to C(M)PA: what has been C(M)PA's analysis of the phenomenon of Islamist movements, the class nature of the forces involved (especially the Taliban) and the nature of the contradiction between these forces and imperialism? How has their analysis of the class nature of the Islamist forces figured into developing a strategy and tactics of proletarian revolution in Afghanistan? And which MLM theories have been tools of the C(M)PA in developing such analysis and synthesis?

*Shola* believes that it is wrong to talk about the end of the first wave of proletarian revolution that began with the Paris Commune and continued with the October revolution in 1917, the October revolution in 1949 in China and the "revolution within the revolution" in 1966 in socialist China – a stage marked by the theories of Marx, Lenin and Mao (MLM). To this effect *Shola* argues,

"... The emergence of the capitalist system, the class fabric of this system and the class struggles within it was the objective basis for the emergence of Marxism. Capitalism in Marx's time was free market capitalism. The development of the capitalist system to the stage of imperialism and new class fabrics and struggles was the objective ground for the development of Marxism to Marxism-Leninism. The development of the proletarian revolution in countries under imperialist domination and, more importantly, the defeat of the revolution in the Soviet Union and the struggle to prevent the restoration of capitalism in revolutionary China formed the

objective ground for the development of Marxism-Leninism into Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. ... In relation to these objective foundations, up to now there have been three stages of development in the science of communism, meaning, first, the stage of Marxism, two, the stage of Marxism-Leninism, and three, the stage of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.... Therefore, there is neither an objective basis for conceptualizing the whole period of Marx, Lenin and Mao as a revolutionary wave (the first wave of proletarian revolution), nor any subjective principles.”

Apparently, the C(M)PA acknowledges stages in the development of Marxism, but their method and argument regarding whether or not Marxism needs further development is similar to the method and arguments of the Communist Party of Nepal (Mashal), led by Singh. (This Party was a participating member of RIM.) Singh believed that Mao Tsetung had not developed the science of Marxism to a third stage, and Mao could not have done so because, in Singh’s view, the science of Marxism develops only when capitalism develops to a qualitatively different stage. The argumentation of the leader of the Mashal Party didn’t just reflect his metaphysical method, but mainly showed that Singh did not grasp the tremendous significance of the discovery of the laws of the class struggle under socialism by Mao Tsetung and the theory of “the continuation of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat”, or from a bourgeois standpoint he simply did not care. For the Mashal Party, the restoration of capitalism in a socialist country and its transformation into a social-imperialist country was not part of “objective changes in the world”, so for Marxism there was no necessity to deal with that, and when Marxism, through Mao Tsetung, rose up to this challenge and dealt with this necessity, it was such a minor matter that it could not be considered a “development of Marxism”! For Mashal, this didn’t represent an “objective challenge” on which the future of the world and of billions of people hinged. For Mashal, this problem was not relevant to today’s revolutions, and the communist movement should not have concerned itself with it. For Mashal’s “objective” was whatever appeared on its political and ideological “radar”, and not reality itself.

Contrary to the understanding of the C(M)PA, not only are the changes that have taken place on a world scale (we have already mentioned a few) important, but delving into these changes also opens up the possibility of developing Marxism. No revolutionary party can ignore the importance of grasping these changes and their implications for revolutionary strategy and tactics. Any communist party or organization that is serious about carrying out revolution in their country and in the world has to address the challenges posed by these changes. Otherwise, it will cease to exist as a revolutionary communist current. Now, don’t we have the right to ask, what kind of thinking is it that avoids dealing with these tremendous material changes and the challenges they pose to us? Tremendous changes in the objective situation have challenged the previous theoretical framework of Marxism. The works of a materialist thinker such as Bob Avakian constitute a response to these changes and put communist theory on a more correct and more scientific foundation. Otherwise, Marxism will turn into a religion and ritual, and inevitably will lack the power to guide us in changing the world through revolution.

Now let us deal with the relationship between theory and practice and the C(M)PA’s contention that our approach is that of “absolutizing theory”.

## **The Relation between Theory and Practice**

The relation between theory and practice is another subject of critique by *Shola*. *Shola* thinks that our Party has an “absolutist” view towards the role of theory, and writes: “On the relation between theory and practice we have two famous formulas. One is that: theory is a guide for practice. And the other is: practice is the origin of theory as well as the criteria for its correctness or incorrectness. Only by taking up these two formulas can we correctly define the role of theory and practice. But the document by the CC of the CPIMLM has an absolutist view of the role of theory.”

The criticism of *Shola* mainly revolves around this statement in the “Crossroads” article: “Contrary to a vulgar understanding that theory should walk behind practice, it is theory that should walk in the forefront and lead practice. Today, all communists of the world should act upon this.”

## **Our Response to this Critique**

The problem of a correct understanding of Marxism cannot be solved with formulas. The revisionists too utilize these formulas but with their own understanding on the relation between theory and practice. These same formulas that we and *Shola* apparently have unity around are actually full of tension, and empiricist and

positivist trends have their own interpretations and understanding of them.

Social practice is the starting point and the end of theory (or knowledge). Theory is *acquired* through social practice or people's engagement with the objective world outside the mind for the purpose of understanding and changing it. And finally, the correctness of theory is also measured by that objective world. Our knowledge totally originates from social experience which comes from the practice of class struggle, of production and of scientific experiment.

The positivists either cross out the adjective "social" or understand it very narrowly. "Social practice" means a practice that is beyond the direct practice of an individual, group or nation. In our epoch, social practice means world practice. Our revolutionary theories are not principally a result of our own practice, but are abstractions of world-historic practice. Theories acquired from social practice in turn become a guide for carrying out other social practice. Mao Tsetung defended and developed this fundamental theory of Marxist philosophy. He emphasized that social practice has the primary and decisive place in the process of acquiring knowledge.

The next important point in the relation between theory and practice is that human knowledge (which the ability of human beings to change their conditions is part and parcel of) does not leap out spontaneously from social practice. This knowledge is *acquired* through mental work and synthesis. To do this, one should have the approach of going from the appearance to the essence and of discovering the internal and non-apparent relations of the phenomena in order to make a rational leap in knowledge. Only through theoretically distilling practice can human beings pass on their experience so that practice develops in a spiral path instead of getting lost in a vicious circle. If practice is not subjected to analysis and synthesis, the experience will not be transferable and in the final analysis will be lost. Today this law applies seriously to communism.

In fact, a social practice that is not summed up or that is summed up incorrectly will be lost. This is a danger hanging over the experience of the socialist revolutions of the 20th century, and among the communists of the world it is only Bob Avakian who has summed up correctly those experiences and in this way has made it possible not only to keep those experiences from being extinguished but also to preserve their deep lessons as well as to recognize their mistakes and shortcomings. Through synthesizing these experiences, Bob Avakian has produced a more scientific and more precise rational knowledge of what is communism and what is the complicated road to achieve it. In fact, the principal "field" of Bob Avakian's new synthesis is these same socialist revolutions of 20th century – revolutions that drastically changed the face of history. Here too we can see that in the development of the new synthesis, social practice has had the primary and decisive place.

In fact, later developments by the RCP (in the field of revolutionary theory and practice in the USA) were influenced by the summations that Bob Avakian was making of "fields" other than the immediate field of struggle in the USA. For example, the RCP's rupture with economism became possible with discovering the meaning and content of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. Or the vanguard role that the RCP played in relation to RIM (both theoretically as well as organizationally) would not have been possible without Bob Avakian's summations of the ICM's experiences, including the dissolution of the Comintern by Stalin and later the lack of initiative on the part of Mao Tsetung regarding the reorganization of the ICM, as well as the recognition of some nationalist tendencies in the thinking of Mao himself.

The subsequent development of all the Maoist parties was influenced by how they summed up the class struggle in China and its outcome. All of them had to explain why the communists in China were defeated and why the dictatorship of the proletariat was overthrown and capitalism restored there. The Trotskyists used this event to argue that this was another sign that socialism in one country or in countries with backward productive forces is "impossible". Some Maoist currents such as the Communist Party of the Philippines believed that defeat was due to the "leftism of the Gang of four" who wanted to impose advanced socialist relations on China. Some others saw the defeat as a result of a "one party state" and the lack of "democracy" in that country (for example K. Venu the leader of the Central Reorganization Committee of the Communist Party of India Marxist-Leninist, today called the "Naxalbari" group, and Baburam Bhattarai, a leader of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). Gonzalo, the leader of the Communist Party of Peru, believed that in order to prevent capitalist restoration in the socialist countries there has to be "people's war until communism". And so forth.

All of the above summations were wrong, and they existed and influenced the RIM parties – in one form or another – and their vision of the process of revolution in their countries. In other words, their summation of China had a decisive impact on their practice.

Another related and important aspect of this discussion of theory and practice is that knowledge or theory is

relative truth. This “relativity” is completely bound up with the reality “outside” theory, or the objective world, which is referred to as “absolute truth” in Marxist philosophy. At each point, our knowledge of the objective world and its processes is relative. This relativity is due to the fact that human beings are limited as well as the fact that the objective world is in a constant state of change. With human beings’ growing understanding of objective phenomena, the degree of “relativity” decreases. In other words, the knowledge curve changes. On this subject Bob Avakian says: “... Even though since Marx there has not been a fundamental change in the principles, goals, basic scientific groundings, method and approach of communism the understanding of communism itself has gone through a lot of changes.”<sup>13</sup>

To conclude, the *criteria for the correctness or incorrectness of theory* are not the previous frameworks of those theories. Rather, the measuring rod is the objective world itself or the absolute truth of which theory is its relative reflection.

### **Empiricist Understanding of Practice**

In socialist China, the struggle against empiricism was given a lot of importance. The study of Marxism by the masses of workers and peasants was emphasized because “...those who are contaminated by empiricism overlook the guiding role of Marxism in practice and do not pay attention to the study of revolutionary theory. They are content with passing successes and partial truths. They are poisoned with narrow-minded and unprincipled practicalities and lack a correct and solid orientation. They lack a will and are slaves to political charlatans – i.e. the false Marxists. In order to overcome empiricism the basic method is to consciously study Marxism.”<sup>14</sup>

In order to “prove” the correctness of “Prachanda Path”, the leadership of the CPN(M) too resorted to empiricist interpretations of the relationship between theory and practice. For example, one of their arguments was the repeated victories being achieved in the ten-year long people’s war (1996-2006) in Nepal under the leadership of Prachanda and what they called “Prachanda Path”. With this same methodology, they concluded that since the “dictatorship of the proletariat” in socialist China was defeated, it must have been wrong. And on that basis they proposed that a “New State” should base itself on electoral democracy between the Communist Party and bourgeois parties.<sup>15</sup>

If we extend this positivist method we should believe that “Only what IS is desirable and possible” – including the class system of oppression and exploitation. The CPN(M) replaced the universal truths that have been acquired from the vast practice of world-historic class struggles with its own limited and partial experience. Mao warned against this deviation, pointing out:

“Those who have gained experience should increase their theoretical readings and seriously study; only in this case they will be able to systematize and synthesize their experiences and raise it to the level of theory; only in this way they will not mistake their partial experiences with universal truth and will not fall into empirical mistakes.”<sup>16</sup>

Undoubtedly, the lengthy practice of individuals or parties in revolutionary struggle is a very valuable experience but if this is not synthesized correctly not only will it not become a “guide” for revolutionary practice but it could end up guiding counter-revolutionary practice. We can see that with empiricist interpretations one cannot correctly understand the relationship between theory and practice. Yes! Prachanda was able to use the people’s war as leverage in the CPN(M)’s dealings with the parties of the state of Nepal. But the drunkenness of those “Maoists” was short-lived, and they who had been so excited, instead of expressing their distaste at these dealings, whispered: “Oh! What a great practitioner! What a great victory!”

In fact, the practice/experience of Nepal did prove the correctness of theory, but not of the “theories” of the CPN(M) which they claimed had been born out of their own practical experience. The Nepal experience once more proved the correctness of those theories that have come out of *other* practice – from the experience of the victorious proletarian revolutions and the bitter defeats of the communists in other places and other times.

### **“Theoretical Big Talk” but “Small Organizational Body”!!**

*Shola* angrily evaluates our emphasis on the importance of theory as “theoretical big talk ... which itself is a form of theoretical sluggishness”, and it adds: “this theoretical big talk only covers over the main shortcomings of this party – having dangerously small organizational body and thick intellectual fabric, being vastly separated from its class social base with a small degree of having a ‘hand on the fire from afar’ and having practical

paralysis – and creates a kind of false and baseless satisfaction for its leadership which in turn results in deepening and developing aforementioned shortcomings further.”

Let us assume that the entire horoscope presented by these white-bearded wise men on our party and “its organizational body” corresponds to reality. But we would like to pose to these respected comrades this question: did the strong “organizational body” of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and its vast links with its “social base” prevent it from betraying the revolutionary dreams and aspirations of that same social base? Let us look at the experience in Afghanistan: did not the likes of “SAMA” and the “Rahaii Organization” use these same kind of pitiful pragmatist arguments, such as “having a hand on the fire from afar” or “practical paralysis”, against the communists in order to justify their right opportunist line of aping and following the reactionary Islamic currents? And by the way, what is your summation of the fact that many of the left and the communists fought and sacrificed under the flag of the Mujahedeen during the war against the Soviet army [Mujahedeen is the generic name for Islamic forces in Afghanistan who fought the Soviets as part of the US-imperialist-led forces – trans.]? Was the nature of this struggle revolutionary or counter-revolutionary? How was joining the war fronts led by the Islamic forces justified and which theories was it based on? You have been engaged in that bitter experience not so much “from afar”. So what is your summation of those “theories” which were wielded to justify and produce that kind of practice?

We would like once more to remind *Shola* that: political and ideological line is decisive in the character and practice of any party. Theory and practice are not separable. The practice of economists and pragmatists is also based on theory, as is the practice of the communists. The revolutionary slogan of “be realistic! demand the impossible!” has as much theoretical basis as the pragmatist slogan of “the possible is what IS”. Both are formulations based on practice. One correctly reflects reality and the other is wrong. One is a guide to revolutionary practice and the other a guide to capitulationism and class reconciliation. If practice is not guided and based on revolutionary theory, then it definitely will proceed on the basis of non-revolutionary theory and consequently will become non-revolutionary, and even counter-revolutionary practice. This is true even of practice by revolutionaries. Theory is always a guide to practice, and all practice is based on some theory. The meaning of the Marxist word “praxis” expresses this inseparability. Therefore, we had better ensure that this “guide” is correct (and its surpassing the practice is part of its being “correct”) in order to really light up the path of practice. This is a very simple but powerful truth. Downplaying this truth is tantamount to downplaying the role of the conscious element and would lead to crossing it out. If theory tailed practice and the objective situation, how could it play the role of a guide?

*Shola* claims that our Party denies the role of practice in producing theory and has fallen into absolutism regarding the role of theory. By this *Shola* means that practice is primary over theory and our party gives priority to theory and this has become a justification for our so-called “inaction” and “practical paralysis”. Another level of *Shola*’s argument on the relation between theory and practice is that grand theories can come only out of grand practice and it concludes that the “field” of struggle in the USA is so pitifully dismal that it is impossible for communists from there to develop communist theories.

In order to argue for the viewpoint of the primacy of practice over theory, *Shola* gives an example of the development of Marxist theory – a wrong example. *Shola* claims that the theory of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” was developed by Marx after the Paris Commune (1871), and that this theory was indebted to the practice of the Commune. *Shola* has invented this history, which does not correspond to reality. Marx in his famous work “The Class Struggles in France from 1848 to 1850” wrote that the “dictatorship of the proletariat is a transition point” for achieving communism. This was 20 years before the Paris Commune!

In addition to the fact that *Shola* distorts history in order to “prove” its point of view, this is a sign of *Shola*’s positivist understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. *Shola* thinks that a specific theory could only be an outcome of a specific practice, while Marx concluded the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat through broad study of the history of social development of human beings and the emergence of classes and its expression in philosophy and politics, etc. Positivist tendencies consider only those practices that have produced “positive” results as a measurement for the correctness of a theory. The reality is that: First, practical defeats are not necessarily a reflection of errors or shortcomings of a theory. Second, even defeated examples of practice are sources for measuring, rectifying and developing theories. One disastrous example in Afghanistan was the unity of the Rahaii Organization and SAMA with the Islamic forces (which in reality was unity with the feudal and comprador system of Afghanistan). This is a very important source for studying and criticizing their theory of “national resistance”, which led to such a disastrous practice.

## **Dogmatism Makes Marxism Brittle**

Dogmatism is not able to understand that knowledge is relative. In periods when this relative knowledge becomes insufficient and wrong, dogmatists are not able to recognize this reality and deal with it. Dogmatism makes Marxism brittle and turns it into something lifeless. Dogmatists repeat with religious faith that they are Marxist and revolutionary but are not able to deal with the problems of revolution or explain the complicated phenomena that emerge in class struggle. Dogmatism paralyzes the revolutionaries practically too, because revolutionary practice means changing the world and changing the world is not something that can be done by will power. For this, one has to grasp its inner contradictions and the possibility of overthrowing it and act on that basis. Theory has to reflect the outside objective world. If theory becomes frozen then it will lose its connection to that outside world. Dogmatism is in fact a form of idealism. Lenin says, since Marxism is not a dogmatic soul and is a living guide to action, because it is engaged with the material world and social conditions and because its aim is to change this – for all these reasons any sudden change in the material conditions of society inevitably influences Marxism and is reflected in it. For these reasons Marxism and Marxists experience crisis – a crisis of development. Dogmatists don't like the word crisis because they only see the negative aspects of it. They cannot see that a fever is a reaction by the body to deal with it. Marxists want to respond to this challenge because they want to change the material reality.

## **When Theory Tails Practice**

The ICM has always witnessed currents that have contempt towards theory and worship the poverty of theory. Economist and pragmatist leaders always prescribe and inject the masses with “palpable” and “close to the heart” theories and turn the masses into “infants”, and this is the same method that the bourgeoisie uses for controlling the masses. On the other hand, the communist leaders from Marx to Mao have explicitly expressed the importance of the role of revolutionary theory. Lenin laid out the crucial role of revolutionary theory in the extraordinary Marxist classical work *What Is to Be Done?* One of the components of Marxism developing into Marxism-Leninism is the advanced understanding that Lenin presented in this work. Clearly this development was not connected to a change in the “objective situation” or changes in the capitalist system. Rather, it was a product of better understanding the necessities of the class struggle and communist revolution. In *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin explained his advanced understandings in opposition to and struggle against the economists, who claimed their empiricist views to be Marxist and wanted to impose them on the revolutionary movement. They tried to do so by resorting to the statement of Marx that “every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programs”.<sup>17</sup> They used this statement to attack the crucial importance of revolutionary theory in developing the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and to justify their own “economist” (or reformist) line. Lenin responded to them: “to repeat these words at a time of such theoretical confusion is like wishing mourners at a funeral ‘many happy returns of the day!’”<sup>18</sup> But Lenin did not rest with this biting analogy. He continued and explained that actually, this quote from Marx is taken from the Gotha Programme where he warns “If you must unite, Marx wrote to the party leaders, then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not allow any bargaining over principle, do not make “concessions” in questions of theory.”<sup>19</sup> And at the end he concludes that, “without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement”<sup>20</sup>.

Lenin's approach that the “element of consciousness” is decisive in the success of proletarian revolution is one of the cornerstones of Leninism and was decisive in the victory of the Russian revolution. But it was buried by right and left currents within the Bolshevik party and during the Stalin period. In the Comintern, the economist and pragmatist lines spread dangerously and left deadly impacts on the ICM.

Mao dealt with the problem of revolutionary theory and the necessity of developing it on a qualitatively higher level than Lenin in solving the problems and contradictions faced by the Chinese revolution, especially in dealing with the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and the complexities and problems of socialist construction. But even before the victory of the revolution, continuous emphasis on and attention to the question of theory and line struggles within the party was a high priority for Mao in leading the revolution and maintaining the revolutionary character of the party. The Cultural Revolution and many of his theories in this sphere, including “grasp revolution promote production”, are part of his further advancing of a “What is to be done”-ist understanding under socialism. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution represented a great struggle against economist views that appeared under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat and helped to advance the grasp and understanding of the role of consciousness in the revolutionary transformation



of that society.

Mao never tired of repeating that “the correctness or incorrectness of political and ideological line decides everything”. This thesis of Mao is an expression of the importance of revolutionary theory in changing society and the world. Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. The character of any practice is decided by the political and ideological line leading it. No other criteria, such as the degree of mass support or firepower, can ever replace this.

Contrary to widespread belief, Mao’s famous work “On Practice” was not written in order to emphasize that practice is more important than theory. He wrote this during the campaign to rectify the party’s style of work and in struggle against dogmatists and subjectivists who, without looking at “objective reality” and by merely using the method of quoting out of context of time and place, weaved opinions. It was actually a struggle against those who had a religious and non-scientific approach to Marxism. In opposing them, Mao applied dialectics, explaining the relationship between matter and consciousness and their constant transformation into each other. He threw light on the importance of the superstructure, politics and consciousness in leading revolutionary practice for changing the world, concepts that Mao revived, applied and developed not only in relation to revolutionary war but also in the process of constructing socialism and conducting the Cultural Revolution.

Unfortunately, despite these great efforts by Lenin and Mao in raising the level of understanding of the communist movement about the decisive role of consciousness, the tendency to downgrade the role of theory and slavishly worship practice without paying attention to its character (which is decided by the leading political and ideological line) developed increasingly, eating away at the ICM from the inside, like termites. The prevalence of this kind of thinking was on the one hand a way of emptying the revolutionary essence of Marxism, keeping only the shell. On the other hand, it became an obstacle for Marxism to influence the new generation of fighters in each and every country.

Let us look again at *Shola*’s pronouncements in order to understand how it sees the relationship between theory and practice: “These syntheses (new synthesis of Bob Avakian) practically do not arouse as much militant passion and thinking endeavor as ‘Gonzalo Thought’ and ‘Prachanda Path’ did – neither internationally nor within US society itself, because its direct fields of practical and mass [struggles] in the US are so non-exciting and tedious, they are incomparable with those passionate direct fields of practical and mass [struggles] of ‘Gonzalo Thought’ and ‘Prachanda Path’.”

We would like to suggest to the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan that, instead of becoming so excited by “passionate direct fields”, pay some attention to the class character of those fields. In the case of Nepal ask yourselves: which theory led this party in the reactionary direction? What was the path that led the leaders of this party to trample upon the principles of communism and revolution and go on joining the system of oppression and exploitation? Swamp is swamp, and the path leading to it must be exposed and not extolled.<sup>21</sup>

This experience demonstrates that we should never forget that all theories have their roots and basis and foundations in practice, and in front of all practice marches a definite theory and politics that shows the way to practice. The question is, where does each theory lead and what is the class character of the practice that is being carried out? Mao said: you are always applying politics whether you are conscious of it or not. The new synthesis of Bob Avakian is deeply anchored in and based on the revolutionary practice of our class worldwide – especially the socialist revolutions in the USSR and China, and later in efforts to find out why capitalism was restored there. This is the greatest revolutionary practice of our international class, its peaks. It is not without reason that the revisionist theories of the CPN(M) too developed through a wrong and anti-communist summation of these experiences, which in turn shaped that Party’s capitulationist practice. No kind of trick can hide the truth that within RIM two lines – Marxist and revisionist – emerged in summing up the state under the proletarian dictatorship in the USSR and China, the content of proletarian dictatorship and democracy, and the path of constructing socialism in a world dominated by imperialism.

The experiences of the 20th century socialist revolutions are the greatest practical sources of enriching Marxism and bringing about the new synthesis. These great practices and their positive and negative lessons have to be captured by theory to open the way for further revolutionary practice of the internationalist proletariat. The guiding theories of those great practices have divided into two. This division into two is a source of the development of theory, of it becoming more correct and more liberatory and therefore more powerful. The correct aspect, which is the main aspect, must be taken up, and along with developing correct analyses of the changed objective situation, be recast in a new framework of Marxism. This path has been taken by the new

synthesis, with great strides, and it is developing further, and we must selflessly help to build it up.

### **Mao said: Pay Attention to Historical Experience**

Bitter experiences warn us to look at theoretical poverty as a sickness in the communist movement. *Shola's* warning about “theoretical absolutism” is a deadly prescription. Let us compare the problem of lack of practice and will and courage in the struggle with that of theoretical poverty and see which one of them has been the bigger problem overall. Even a glance at some contemporary historical experience in the region in which Afghanistan and Iran are located shows that theoretical poverty and the lack of revolutionary theory and revolutionary theoreticians have been very big and deadly problems. This is a region full of sacrifice, of enduring hardship and the torture and imprisonment of revolutionaries. But the partial learning of Marxism as well as theoretical sluggishness, combined with relying on ready-made theories, quoting them blindly and turning them into articles of faith, has eroded the communist essence of the movements. In this region during the last turbulent decades, the masses have repeatedly rebelled, but every time the rebellions have been wasted under the banner of nationalist and Islamic forces and as a result have not become revolutionary movements either.

Let us look at Iran. Does the history of tens of thousands of communists and revolutionaries passing through and resisting medieval prisons and torture chambers and finally being executed demonstrate practical idleness? Why in 1979 was a reactionary Islamic force able to push aside all the other forces, including the communists, and hijack a great revolution in the making, which had led to the overthrow of a powerful, imperialist-dependent regime? Why did many of the organizations that had ruptured with Soviet revisionism and the Tudeh party become disoriented and fall into disarray? Why did the Union of Iran Communists analyze the nature of the contradiction between the Islamists and imperialism as “anti-imperialism” and fail to grasp the reactionary character of this contradiction? Was all this because of practical sluggishness on the part of the communists?

The left movement of Afghanistan is another very important example from recent decades. Its practice and fate during the anti-occupation war against Soviet social-imperialism was another bitter experience of the communist movement, and it is very important to sum it up. Unfortunately, as far as we know, no one has made a serious summation of this movement. The question goes begging, why in the 1980s did that big force that had come out of the Maoist movement of the 1960s – under the guise of a “resistance war” – become the reserve of reactionary Islamic forces, whose articles of faith included the enslavement of women and the spread of religious obscurantism? Should this be summed up or not? Why did a big section of that movement – *i.e.* the Rahaii Organization – become a follower of the revisionists in China and finally enter into cooperation with the Pakistani state and the CIA? Why did another important part of that movement – SAMA – openly and formally raise the slogan of an Islamic Republic or Islamic government?

Remembering this history is bitter. Summing up this history is an urgent task for the communists. The questions crying out to be dealt with are: which theoretical justifications were used by forces who considered themselves “left” or “revolutionary” for uniting with the social program of the Islamist and Jihadi forces? Why did their nationalism, under the guise of giving priority to a “national resistance war” or “anti-imperialist struggle”, permit them to unite with a religious feudal-patriarchal social program? Why couldn't those forces who considered themselves communist and revolutionary link the war against the occupying Soviet forces with the vision of smashing the ruling class system and realizing new-democratic revolution and socialism in Afghanistan? Which “Leninist” and “Maoist” concepts were misused by these “left” forces in order to justify their reactionary practice of uniting with the Western imperialist and local Pakistani powers? When a country is occupied (even in a socialist country, such as the USSR by the Hitler army during WW2), is the character of the war a national and patriotic war or does it have class character? Shouldn't an anti-occupation war be carried out within the framework of proletarian revolution and based on its vision and social program? Should the masses be mobilized around this vision and goal and the anti-occupation feelings and demands be situated and defined within this framework, or vice versa? What are differences between these two approaches in political line and practice?<sup>22</sup> Why weren't communist schools set up in opposition to religious schools? The false mask of “communism” and “socialism” worn by the Soviet imperialists was a big problem for the communists in Afghanistan. What was their approach to this problem? Did they learn from Mao, and explain to the masses that the Soviets were false communists? Did they expose that the USSR's betrayal of the proletarians and peoples of the world actually began by overthrowing socialism in the USSR itself, subjugating the proletariat and peoples within the USSR itself? Did they use this as an opportunity for spreading real communism? Or did

they mainly resort to the spontaneous nationalist and traditionalist feelings of the masses and try to preserve the honor of communism and the communists through sacrificing in the national resistance war against the occupying forces? Some of these “left” people went as far as joining Islamic prayers in order to win the trust of the masses rather than struggling against religious obscurantism.

Don't we need to ask why Islamism spread like a prairie fire in this region and the communist movement went along to the brink of death? How did the “national resistance movement” in Afghanistan get turned into a war of one imperialist power against the other, and in the final analysis the “supportive” power had as much role in destroying the people and the country as the occupying power? Finally, is Bob Avakian's analysis of the unity and contradiction of Islamism-imperialism, which are two outmoded strata, and how siding with one leads to reinforcing the other, a correct reflection of reality and a guide to our practice in the complicated political theatre of the Middle East and the world?

One might ask: what is the use of providing correct and revolutionary communist answers to these biting questions? And how would this serve practice (of course, liberatory and revolutionary practice, and not reactionary practice)? We would say at least the new generation of fighters will learn from this bitter experience to vigorously and obsessively interrogate and consciously evaluate the class-social content behind every banner and behind every proclamation of “national resistance” and “liberation front” and “liberation organization” and any “war”, so that they do not step into practices that are reactionary and destructive. But the “use” of this kind of summation is more than that. And in fact it is very much needed for planting the pole of revolution and communism in the theatre of Afghanistan, Iran and overall in the Middle East.

Let us now go to Kurdistan. Is there any doubt about the sacrifices and heroism of the revolutionary *Peshmerga* fighters of Kurdistan? Why did the Kumala Ranj-e-daran which had been formed by the communist generation of the 1960s turn into a representative of the bourgeois-feudal classes of Iraqi Kurdistan in unity with US imperialism?

In Nepal, the communists did not suffer from lack of practice. They were not afraid of the armed-to-the-teeth enemy. They showed practical conviction to the liberatory cause. They formed a people's army and mobilized the workers and peasants in revolution. Was it because of their shortage of practice that this revolution stopped in the middle of the road and succumbed to some handouts from the capitalist system?

The “Crossroads” article of the CPIMLM CC tries to deal with these kinds of problems. What do we expect from all these experiences? These experiences, with so many losses, are calling on us to wake up. All these experiences, so much heroism and sacrifice, are enough to put aside pretenses and confess to the theoretical backwardness of the whole movement. Posturing and answers that only cover the effects are no longer a solution. If we limit ourselves to self-satisfying answers, we will not be able to lead the desperate masses who constantly rise in revolt or to lead the searching minds of the young generation who seriously want to look at the problem of liberating this world from the enslaving chains of reaction and imperialism.

There has always been two-line struggle between Marxism and revisionism over different aspects of communist theory and practice: in philosophy, over organizing revolution, on socialist economy and the dictatorship of the proletariat, etc. These debates are not unrelated to actual life nor divorced from it. Wherever revisionism prevails, it will have a deadly and destructive impact on revolutionary practice. No one should doubt this. Despite a mass of new problems confronting the communists since the defeat of the proletariat in China, unfortunately some communists, including the C(M)PA, do not see the necessity of dealing with them.

### **Without Theoretical Work, No Communist Vanguard Can Remain a Vanguard**

The economists, in order to downplay the importance of revolutionary theory, usually equate theoretical work to academic enterprise and scholasticism. But ongoing theoretical work and the study of theoretical issues in different fields of science and new scientific discoveries and achievements is one of the major responsibilities of revolutionary communists. Any communist party that downplays this work and looks at it as a negative endeavor will commit serious errors and will turn into a backward and dogmatic party, because understanding the system ruling the world and changing it is no simple matter. It requires ongoing and updated thinking – it requires a world view, political strategy, military strategy, tactics, philosophy, ideology, an analysis of emerging contradictions and a summation of achievements as well as mistakes and setbacks. This is not some lock whose key is made once and from then on you only need to get the eternal key and use it. No doubt theoretical work that stands apart from the practice of changing the world would turn into its opposite and

instead of opening the gateways for revolution would turn into an obstacle. But at the same time the separation of theory from practice should not be looked at narrowly and in an empiricist way. Rather, we must look at the biggest and most important revolutionary experiences to shed light on smaller fields. Consider, for example, those who want to develop communist theory without paying any attention to the great experience of the two socialist revolutions in the Soviet Union and China (principally China). This is an example of the separation of theory from practice.

Yes, theory is a guide for our practice, and since it is guiding our practice we had better ensure that we have a correct analysis of the class structure and concrete situation in our societies. For example, let's look at Afghanistan. How is the scene of class struggle in Afghanistan to be analyzed? How do you analyze the similar nature of the reactionary forces within the "resistance" on the one hand and the regime and the ruling system and imperialist occupiers in Afghanistan on the other? Is it correct to set priorities over which one should be overthrown first by a revolution? And finally the question is, what kind of practice and its highest form (revolutionary war) needs to be waged in order to realize the immediate as well as long-term interests of the workers, peasants and women in Afghanistan? And what kind of program and canvas of social transformations should guide that practice?

The war in Afghanistan is not only a military war. It is a complicated class war with two outmoded social forces occupying the political scene. The task of the revolutionary proletarian forces is to change this unfavorable polarization and enable the masses to fight under the banner of a political line and horizon that represents their interests, instead of becoming the cannon fodder for one or the other of these reactionary forces.

The proletarian revolutionary force has to boldly put forward its political, ideological, social and economic alternative in opposition and against these two (rotten) outmoded forces and *continuously* and *comprehensively* demonstrate its political and ideological demarcation from those two outmoded forces through agitation, propaganda and initiating movements of resistance and other specific campaigns, such as a campaign against war, campaigns against religiosity and patriarchal social relations. If a practice or a war of resistance does not carry with it this content, it cannot be considered a revolutionary practice or a war of resistance that represents the interests of the oppressed and exploited people. A revolutionary proletarian force must constantly propagate those political, ideological and social views that represent and project the future social system it is fighting for and tirelessly take it to the masses, even before initiating the people's war. Specifically, in countries such as Iran and Afghanistan in which the ruling classes fortify their rule and their hold over a section of the masses through enforcing religious morality and the enslavement of women, waging war against religious morality and the enslavement of women is an indispensable component of carrying out the class struggle, and in reality without this talking about the preparation of people's war is meaningless. This line is especially crucial for arousing and organizing women as a key social force in the proletarian revolution. Communists must boldly propagate their emancipatory world view and a morality that flows from the communist world view and method, including atheism and opposition to religious beliefs and illusions of god. The proletariat, youth and women should be the pillars for this movement.

Precisely because in Iran and Afghanistan the system uses religion to impose its oppressive and repressive social and cultural relations on the society, every progressive social movement has to confront and fight against theocracy. Otherwise, it will not be possible to develop a culture of daring, audacity and righteousness in the fight against these regimes and the imperialists. This is the most important form of "cultural revolution" amongst the masses in opposition to the reactionary "cultural counter-revolution" of the Islamists. This is part and parcel of critiquing the old state and the struggle to overthrow it. Avoiding this kind of struggle will lead to reformism in the fight against the old state.

The particularity of the state in Iran and Afghanistan is that they are theocratic states. Therefore, in order to challenge and fight against the oppressive, degrading, humiliating relations and values imposed by the system in these two countries, the masses need to consciously and scientifically attack religion to get a sense of the emancipatory power of atheism. The goal of this "cultural revolution" is to introduce to the masses the kind of society that the communists are fighting for. This is a kind of practice that can project the future too. This kind of "cultural revolution" would be like a shock to the thinking of the masses and would bring ferment among them to consciously take their destiny into their own hands. In order to build a revolutionary movement in countries like Iran and Afghanistan – and even in the US where religious fundamentalism is one of the top weapons of the bourgeoisie for imposing capitalist-imperialist rule – carrying out this kind of ideological struggle is crucial and decisive and should not be considered a minor and secondary field of struggle. Rather,

in order to change the aforementioned unfavorable polarization dominating the Middle East (the polarization of imperialism–Islamism), it has a decisive and strategic importance. Engaging in such a struggle would enable the masses of different classes and strata to see that the communists are not just an “oppositional” force against the ruling classes, but rather they are a serious and determined force with a clear vision of a totally different social system that they are fighting to establish.

Revolutionary practice means the presence of the nature and character of the future society in our words as well as our practice today. If our theories are wrong, our practice would not achieve the goal of “social transformation”. One should look for the footprints of liquidationism [liquidating the fundamentals of MLM – trans.] here and not in the new synthesis. The footprints of revisionism are to be found in the line that promotes the choice between the “bad and worst” amongst the enemy forces, not Bob Avakian’s criticism of Lenin’s “Left-wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder”. The footprints of liquidationism can be seen when the filthy remnants of the past passionately push their medieval ideologies or promote imperialism, the communists raise a white flag or with magnifiers in hand, look for progressive bits and pieces within the “national bourgeoisie” or the reactionary Islamists. Revisionism should be exposed where joining the bourgeois state becomes the goal of the “people’s war”. This situation should be challenged and transformed radically.

### **Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

The Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan claims that the RCP’s documents are “pale” (*i.e.* weak) on the subject of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It would suffice to make a quick comparison between the documents published by the RCP in the past one year with those of the C(M)PA in the past 10 years or compare the new synthesis documents published in the last few years with the combined documents of all the participating parties and organizations of RIM in the same period to see how baseless this verdict is.

Instead of issuing arbitrary verdicts, isn’t it better for the C(M)PA to put its efforts first of all into engaging with whether Bob Avakian’s evaluation of some shortcomings and mistakes in the thinking of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao and his analysis of the mistakes committed in the experience of socialist construction in the USSR and China are correct or not? Is his evaluation of the achievements of those experiences being the principal aspect correct or not? And secondly, whether an organic combination of all this analysis has given rise to the emergence of a more scientific, more correct, thus more powerful Marxism, or are these merely some attempts within the old framework?

In many of his writings, Bob Avakian emphasizes the necessity for the leadership of a vanguard party and the establishment of the state of the proletarian dictatorship throughout the whole period of socialist transition [to communism], and he points to the material foundations and basis for this necessity. For example, he talks of the “actual dynamics of the material reality with which we are confronted and what pathways for change are there”, and he emphasizes: “... it really is either/or...: either it’s the seizure of state power by masses of people, led by a vanguard of this kind, and then the advance to communism throughout the world, and the final abolition of state power and of vanguards; or it’s back to capitalism, or the perpetuation of capitalism without ever having a revolution in the first place. Those are the choices. Why? Because that’s the way reality is, that’s the way human society has evolved. All we’ve done is recognize it and act on it. This underscores yet again the importance of a materialist understanding and of proceeding from where we are, where the historical development of human society has led (once again not “was bound to lead” but has led): what pathways that opens for change, in fact for a profound transformation and leap, in human society and its interaction with the rest of nature.”<sup>23</sup>

In the same article he talks about the new synthesis of the “dictatorship of the proletariat “: “what we are talking about is not the stereotypical vision, and is not even the pre-new synthesis version of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We are talking about an emancipating vision on a whole new level.”

Bob Avakian points out that the “Constitution for a New Socialist Republic in North America (draft program)” is an example of the application of the new synthesis vision of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This document is of great importance for the whole ICM and has been published in our Party’s central organ – *Haghighat* #57, 58, 59 and 60 – with an explanatory introduction by *Haghighat*. Grappling with this document by comrades of the international communist movement would undoubtedly shed light on the achievements and shortcomings/mistakes of the past socialist states as well as on a more emancipatory model of that state in a future that is possible and should be presented/introduced to the world even right now.

It is worthwhile to review the struggle between the RCP and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) over the class content of the state in general and that of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. This two-line struggle started with an internal letter from the RCP to the CPN(M) in 2005, which was distributed publically in 2009 under the title “On Dangerous Developments in Nepal”.<sup>24</sup> Our Party published the first part of this document in that same year.<sup>25</sup> It should be pointed out that in this struggle, the majority of the participating parties and organizations in RIM did not take any explicit or implicit position. The leadership of the CPN(M) also did not respond to this letter until July 2006, but the practical consequences of the CPN(M)’s line had already begun to assert itself. One of the key theses of the CPN(M), which had been ratified through a resolution by its Central Committee, was the concept of the “New State”. The resolution announced that the immediate goal of the revolution in Nepal was to establish a “transitional republic” instead of carrying out New Democratic Revolution (a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat that Mao advanced for countries dominated by imperialism). The ratification of the central thesis of the “New State” and the goal of establishing a “transitional republic” by the CPN(M) became a very important factor in the political scene of Nepal. A series of agreements were signed with reactionary parties that paved the way for co-opting the CPN(M) into the reactionary ruling system and overturning the achievements of ten years of people’s war.

In response to the RCP, the CPN(M) wrote:

“... this republic, with an extensive reorganization of the state power as to resolve the problems related to class, nationality, region and sex prevailing in the country, would play a role of a transitional multi-party republic. Certainly the reactionary class and their parties will try to transform this republic into a bourgeois parliamentary one, whereas our party of the proletarian class will try to transform it to a new democratic republic.”<sup>26</sup>

This is a totally anti-Marxist viewpoint, because it denies the fact that any state is the instrument of the rule of this or that class. This Marxist law is not a lifeless dogma, rather it is a fact that has been proven many times by historical experiences on a world scale and has been summed up scientifically. The RCP letter poses this question to the CPN(M): “Which class will the army and the other organs of institutionalized power serve in the ‘transitional republic’?”

These letters by the RCP emphasize the class nature of the state and point out that any state will necessarily be of a definite class character and will carry out the interests of a definite class: the interests of the proletariat or the interests of one or another reactionary class (or a combination of them).

To emphasize the class nature of the state, the letter dated October 2006 quotes Bob Avakian: “In a world marked by profound class divisions and social inequality, to talk about ‘democracy’ – without talking about the class nature of that democracy and which class it serves – is meaningless, and worse.”<sup>27</sup>

### ***Shola* and the “Main” Deviation in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement!**

*Shola* writes: “The post Marxism-Leninism-Maoism raised by the Revolutionary Communist Party USA and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran (MLM) are the deepest and most extensive deviation in terms of their theoretical dimensions to have been expressed in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. This deviation is more dangerous than other deviations in Nepal and before that in Peru. And because of this we think that in the framework of the struggle against the expressed deviations amongst the participating members of RIM, struggle against this Post M-L-M is the main task today.”

Reading these lines one expects an exposition of the key components of the “deviations in Nepal and before that in Peru” by *Shola* in order to be able to compare them with the “deepest and the most extensive” one “expressed in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement”! But there is no need to wait, because *Shola* is not concerned with clarifying lines at all and only issues verdicts of blasphemy.

In any case this is by far the clearest position they have ever come up with in a major political and ideological two-line struggle that has arisen in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM).

With the prevalence of the revisionist line in the CPN(M) and consequently its freefall into the swamp of reconciliation with the local and international bourgeoisie, this two-line struggle became sharper. As a result of the April 2008 elections in Nepal, the CPN(M) became a ruling party in the country’s reactionary system. The Central Committee members of the party one after another promised the ruling classes of Nepal and the so-called “international community” (meaning the imperialist and reactionary countries such as the US and Britain

... China and India, etc.) to remain loyal to and serve this bourgeois state. The people's revolutionary power that had been built through 10 years of people's war was dismantled by the Party. The old police forces were returned to the liberated areas in the countryside. The People's Liberation Army was disarmed and its members were walled off in specific areas, while the imperial army, now under the name of the Nepali Army, stayed put in their previous positions. And all this took place under the leadership of a Minister of defense from the "Maoist" party. The leadership of the Party openly opposed the communist principle of the need to smash the bourgeois state machinery and establish a proletarian state. Baburam Bhattarai, a Party leader and the current Prime minister of Nepal, in a speech addressed to a gathering of the World Bank, declared that he more than anyone is loyal to the principles of liberal capitalism. And while the so-called communist parties from around the world were sending messages of congratulations to the CPN(M), these events were creating serious doubts among the world's revolutionary communists (such as Bob Avakian, who does not "arouse any passions" in C(M)PA) because these revolutionary communists understood what a blatant betrayal had been committed against the masses of workers, peasants, and women of Nepal, as well as the international proletariat.<sup>28</sup>

What defines the revisionist line of the CPN(M) is its opposition to the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its replacement with the theory of "democracy of the twenty-first century" and its replacement of the theory of smashing the old state of the exploiting classes with that of taking part in the old state and dissolving within it – theories which led to a great betrayal stopping the revolution of the workers and peasants of Nepal.

With this horrendous setback, it became clear that at the heart of the line divisions within the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement lies the question of communism, communist revolution and its future: Will communism be redefined in a variety of bourgeois frameworks and become a mere thin cover for non-communist and non-revolutionary visions and paths? Or will its buried principles be rescued and developed, putting the communist theories on a more scientific and clearer basis, so that once again they become a sharp weapon in the class struggle?

In this great struggle, three theoretical poles took shape, clearly putting forward their lines on communist theories and communist revolution. On the one hand, there is the line of the CPN(M) leadership that laid out the pragmatic and eclectic "Prachanda Path" in opposition to the central task of seizing political power and in rejection of the achievements of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the socialist countries of the 20th century, replacing the dictatorship of the proletariat with the bourgeois line of "democracy of the 21st century".

On the other hand, Bob Avakian's line systematically sheds light on the class character of the state and applies it in charting the path of revolution in the imperialist countries. And more importantly, basing himself on the theoretical and practical achievements of the socialist revolutions of the 20th century and rupturing with their negative aspects, he recasts the communist theories and puts them on a more scientific basis, which includes a new understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There is a third line as well. This line believes that all that previous experience and science of M-L-M is sufficient to make revolution. This line takes refuge in religious glorification of the past heritage and chooses a middle ground, now hitting on the nail and now hitting on the horseshoe. This trend shows a lot of unity with the revisionist and bourgeois-democratic pole represented by the CPN(M) leadership. To justify this kind of unity, they weave together many "revolutionary" arguments and use 10 years of people's war waged by the CPN(M) as justification for their sitting between Marxism and revisionism.<sup>29</sup> Consider once again the argument made by *Shola*, cited above, that the new synthesis "... do(es) not arouse as much militant passion and thinking endeavor as 'Gonzalo Thought' and 'Prachanda Path' did – neither internationally nor within US society itself because its direct fields of practical and mass [struggles] in the US are so unexciting and tedious and are incomparable with those exciting direct fields of practical and mass [struggles] of 'Gonzalo Thought' and 'Prachanda Path'."

First of all, one wonders on what basis, on which investigations and observations, *Shola* issues its verdict that the new synthesis does not invoke "militant passion" in the world and in the US? Is one to assume that *Shola* has complete mastery over the theater of class struggle in the US and the world, so that its verdict is based on fact? Secondly, it would be better if *Shola* explicitly said which "direct fields of practice" in Peru and Nepal it is referring to?

After 1992, with Gonzalo's call to turn the process of the revolutionary war into a peace process, the people's war in Peru was dealt significant blows, and for several years now it has been remnants of the PCP carrying out scattered military actions with the aim of strengthening the "peace line". The people's war in Nepal, since 2006 based on the principles of "Prachanda Path", was put to rest and the Nepal party entered into the reactionary

state. Now the question is, what does *Shola* mean by “passionate practical fields”? Don’t you see the logical and inevitable consequences of that “path”? Have you shelved the Maoist principle of “correct political and ideological line is decisive”? *Shola* should know that several years before writing these words, “Prachanda Path” surrendered the Nepali revolution and dragged it into the mud. It is really astounding that the comrades of the C(M)PA are still joyous about it! Come to your senses and ask yourselves what is the meaning of all this?!

This contradiction shows how using criteria with ambiguous content (“direct fields of ...”, etc.) can only lead to **opportunism of the worst sort, i.e. eclecticism**. Based on the truth that “the political and ideological line” is decisive, the RCP comrades had predicted the practical consequences of the line of the CPN(M). When life showed its actuality, the parties and organizations of the RIM were expected to act upon their internationalist duty and enter into struggle against this political and ideological line and the disastrous path taken by the CPN(M). Instead, what followed was an avalanche of congratulations and complements for the victory of the CPN(M) in the election and its entry into the reactionary state. This showed the serious retrograde trend amongst the communist parties and organizations of RIM. The irony is that some of the forces who did not support the ten years of people’s war in Nepal (when the revolutionary line still dominated the CPN(M)), or hardly ever mentioned it at all, suddenly grew excited by the auctioning of the Nepali revolution in the political trading market. Maybe this is what *Shola* means by “Prachanda Path” arousing “passion and endeavor” internationally!

*Shola* announces that the reason why it thinks “Prachanda Path” has been able to create “militant passion and thinking endeavor” and the “new synthesis” has not been able to do so is that the “direct fields of practical and mass [struggles] in the US” are “non-exciting and tedious” compared with those led by “Prachanda Path”! But the comrades of the C(M)PA know well that at one point the “direct practical fields” dominated by the Jihadist forces, which used a barrage of rockets and bullets (donated by the Western imperialist powers) against the Russian social-imperialist army, aroused a similar passion among fighters in Afghanistan. Certainly the most honest of those fighters, especially those armed with a communist class outlook, do not get passionate about that episode and do not remember it with a sense of elation but rather regret the sacrifices in the battlefields that were led by the political and ideological line of the reactionary Islamists.

The “new synthesis” deals with these kinds of problems and catastrophes. So it is better to learn from it rather than labeling it “the main danger”.

The comrades of the C(M)PA have been very lenient and forgiving politically and ideologically towards the setback in the class nature of the revolution in Nepal. They should seriously explain what is the meaning of closing their eyes when a revolution that was on the verge of victory was taken to the slaughterhouse? What is the meaning of silence when the CPN(M) declared the criminal bourgeois democracy valid against the dictatorship of the proletariat and called pursuing the goal of communism impossible in today’s world situation? And worst of all, what does it mean to label those comrades who have fought against this retrograde trend and have made great efforts to prevent the CPN(M) from going down this path into the swamp as the “main danger”, the “main deviation” and even “counter-revolutionary”? Really, what is the story here?

## **Distorting Maoism and Reducing it to National Liberation and Armed Struggle**

Let us cast aside the pretension of being Marxist and Leninist and Maoist. Let us instead, try to grasp the meaning of these concepts and their application, because one of the facts of our times is that an astounding amount of confusion prevails around these concepts. The situation is similar to the time when Marx, in reaction to widespread opportunism disguised as Marxism, said: “If this is Marxism, then I am no Marxist.”<sup>30</sup>

The chaos in this respect is worse than at any time in the history of the communist movement. This reality requires rigorously focusing on the content of these concepts.

In most of the experiences that we pointed to, a very stunted grasp and in some cases an opportunistic reading of Mao’s theories prevailed. Unfortunately, most of those who declared that they were pro-”Mao Tsetung Thought” and “Maoism” turned Mao into a revolutionary democrat and his theories into theories of “national defense” and “national democratic revolution” or at best reduced them to military theories and new democratic revolution. But even Mao’s valuable theories in these spheres have been imprisoned in the narrow cage of nationalism and militarism, with the result of changing their quality and even turning them into their opposites.

Even in RIM there has always been an uneven understanding of “Maoism”, particularly in regards to the



understanding of the theory of “continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat” and the understanding of the dynamics of class struggle under socialism and the world-historic process of achieving communism worldwide. Unfortunately, *Shola* too has a tendency to reduce Maoism to “people’s war”. As we pointed out, not only do they measure all “deviations” from Marxism with the criteria of practice, and particularly the practice of people’s war, but they also understand Maoism itself as such. One can clearly see from the *Shola* article that it believes those movements that carry out a people’s war or something resembling it are more Maoist.

*Shola* declares our Party and the RCP,USA as non-Maoist and so-called “post MLM” and grants degrees and scores to different parties and individuals. But what scale does *Shola* use to grade and score? The entirety of the *Shola* article and its grading of the theories and amount of “passion” that they may or may not arouse in the *Shola* author provide the answer: all parties are measured and evaluated by *Shola*’s scale of “people’s war”. *Shola* goes so far as to compare the value of the experience of the Paris Commune with the bigger scale and longevity of present-day armed struggles!

With this kind of logic, one can understand why *Shola* does not see the fundamental problem with the CPN(M) leadership adopting a bourgeois political and ideological line, changing their orientation and world outlook, but it does see the problem in ending the armed struggle. But ending the people’s war was only a consequence of the change in the political program, and not turning away from “war” for its own sake. The political analysis of the CPN(M) was that the revolution could not be carried out. On the basis of this evaluation, they put aside the revolution and adopted a program of taking part in the republican state of the bourgeois-landlord classes, dependent on India and imperialism. A specific theory was guiding that capitulation in practice. With hindsight, one can see that there was a strong tendency in that Party to see the “people’s war” as a necessary means to enter and be admitted into the old state by the ruling classes in India and Nepal. Once they achieved this through “people’s war”, there was no need to continue it.

Reducing Marxism and in general a revolutionary line to armed struggle has deep roots amongst the revolutionary communist parties, and those in RIM were not immune to it either. The struggle against the Soviet revisionists, who were prescribing a “peaceful path” for revolutionaries all over the world in the 1950s and 1960s, certainly had something to do with the growth of this tendency. After the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, the Soviet revisionists and their dependent parties promoted a peaceful path of struggle and a “non-capitalist” road of development, advocating cooperation with ruling states. It was following this line that a big part of the left movement in the Arab world and Southeast Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh) became reserves of the states that were on the so-called road of “non-capitalist development”, and in Iran the Tudeh Party became a defender of the “White Revolution of the Shah and the people”. In the fight against this capitulationist line, and influenced by Mao’s call, the revolutionary communists the world over underlined the necessity of seizing political power through revolutionary violence, and this became a recognized dividing line between Marxism and revisionism. This was a very positive development. However, it had a negative aspect too, which was the tendency to reduce the line of demarcation between Marxism and revisionism to this. A one-sided emphasis on this aspect as well as a warped understanding of Mao’s theses on new-democratic revolution by the nationalist forces spread confusion about the content of Maoism. In the 1950s and 1960s, not only genuine communists but also many petit-bourgeois democrats as well as nationalist forces seemingly upheld “Mao Tsetung Thought” and played an important role in spreading a distorted understanding of Mao’s thoughts.

In socialist China, following the struggle against the Soviet bourgeoisie, a great class struggle against the “capitalist roaders” within the Communist Party of China itself commenced. The “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” was a revolution led by Mao and revolutionary communists within the CPC to prevent yet another catastrophe, the restoration of capitalism in socialist China. This revolution was able to prevent the restoration of capitalism for 10 years and it was able to demarcate a model of emancipatory socialism against the phony socialism in power in the Soviet Union, which led to rejuvenating and giving birth to a new communist international movement. Mao’s analysis of the complicated and contradictory nature of socialism and the light he shed on different aspects and dynamics of the class struggle and the contradictory nature of the Party and state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, etc., advanced communist theories miles ahead and further developed them. The waves of this revolution reached all over the world. This revolution showed how Mao Tsetung’s theories are way beyond mere revolutionary armed struggle and new-democratic revolution in semi-feudal countries dominated by imperialism. But radical nationalists were deaf to this and continued on their own path along with using – in fact misusing – and distorting Mao’s theories.

## Empiricist Outlook

In *Shola's* article there is a weird paragraph: "In general we must say that these syntheses, on the positive and dynamic side, show a certain partial qualitative rupture with the errors of the periods of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung, as well as partial findings about the shortcomings of that period. But these ruptures and findings must pass through hard tests in the theoretical and practical struggles in order to develop to the level of an "ism" following Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and for Avakian's contributions to reach the level of the contributions of Marx, Lenin and Mao."

Before proceeding, let us concisely put it that neither we, nor in our opinion Bob Avakian himself, are worried about whether the new synthesis should become a new "ism", and we should not label it as such. Rather, the concern is whether these theories are correct and can become our guide to change the world, and whether they can become our weapon to transform the communist movement into a powerful pole of attraction amongst the rebellious masses all around the world?

The relative correctness of these theories can be determined on the basis of the practical experience accumulated thus far and based on our present theoretical level. We should not slip into relativism in this regard. There is no doubt that the new synthesis has to go through many fields of practical and theoretical struggles to be tempered and become even more correct and scientific, not with the goal of becoming another "ism" but for being a theory to change the world.

Is *Shola* trying to say that we should not give permission for developing communist theories to those who have not led a successful revolution or are not engaged in a people's war? It seems that is what *Shola* is implying. So we would like to clearly put forward our position.

Bob Avakian is a great theoretician of communism. In the US he is famous for the fact that he has always stood by the oppressed and fought for their emancipation. Today, in no other imperialist country is there such a party as the RCP, as most of the communist parties of the new communist movement that came to life in the 1960s following the great rupture of socialist China from the capitalist Soviet Union have either died out or become parliamentary parties. This situation of the RCP is because of the theoretical and practical leadership of Bob Avakian. After the seizure of power by the revisionists in China in 1976, most organizations and parties of the new communist movement tailed the revisionist rulers of China or in one form or another became reformist parties and organizations. Bob Avakian led the exposure of the new revisionist rulers in China internationally. He went beyond merely exposing the "Three Worlds Theory" of these usurpers and reminded the communists the world over that these "capitalist roaders" had been exposed and targeted during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China (from 1966 to 1976) for their economic and social program by Mao and his followers in the CPC. Avakian rescued the immortal contributions of Mao Tsetung from the claws of the new revisionist rulers of China and their international followers. He dug out from under the rubble Mao's great ruptures from Stalin and **even went beyond Mao in summing up the experience of socialism in the USSR, what Mao and Maoists had not been able to sum up due to their time and subjective limitations.** Without the theoretical and practical endeavors of Bob Avakian and the RCPUSA, the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement could not have been formed. It is this kind of background which enabled this great theoretician to identify the dangerous situation that the international communist movement is facing and required him to search for the fundamental causes for this situation and to deal with them.

In the midst of this situation, one can hear the cry of hundreds of millions of human beings who repeatedly rise up under the assaults of the capitalist monster. And in the absence of genuine communist parties and leaders (not those who decorate their mixed bag of nationalism and bourgeois democracy with communist icing), these masses get influenced by Islamist and other reactionary forces and their energy and sacrifices are wasted or even worse, in the end reinforcing their chains of enslavement. Under such conditions, instead of advising a leader like Bob Avakian to "slow down" we should tell him: faster, better and more! And we must help him do so.

But *Shola*, on the contrary, says: why hasn't Bob Avakian walked through the passage of "theory to practice and practice to theory", and: he has adopted "... the method of Mullah Sadra who spent years thinking in a cave", and: he has reached "... once and for all the latest desired theoretical conclusion"!

Does *Shola* mean that the passage from practice to theory ought to be made by the practitioners themselves? Was it wrong for Marx and Engels to sum up the Paris Commune? If the lessons of the Commune were summed up by the Communards themselves and by the anarchists who were in leadership of the Commune, would that summation have been more correct and valid? Definitely not!

It is clear that Marx could not be part of all the world-historic class struggles. But he did sum up this history and presented it in a historical materialist way. And surprisingly, he did this through “years of thinking” but not à la “Mullah Sadra’s” method but through the scientific method of working with ideas. And fortunately his “Cave” was the library of the British Museum, which was a big reservoir of works and research. To do this work, Marx not only reached out to history books but also studied and learned from the summation of bourgeois scientists. An empiricist outlook undoubtedly disapproves of such a method. Lenin, who was only one year old at the time of the Paris Commune, had to sum that up further to be able to come up with *State and Revolution*. From an empiricist viewpoint, it was not permissible for Mao to sum up the Soviet socialist economy under Stalin, because he only had his hand “on the fire from afar”. According to this perspective, after the “capitalist roaders” coup in China and the restoration of capitalism there, Bob Avakian had no right to identify the true nature of the new rulers in China and sum up the experience of socialism and its overthrow there.

Under the crisis-ridden conditions of the internationalist communist movement, which began with the restoration of capitalism in China, many communist organizations and parties took refuge in the “caves” of nationalism and bourgeoisie democracy and wasted the forces of the communist movement in the fields of other class forces. But Bob Avakian and the party he led threw themselves into work in the international field in order to prevent this retrogressive trend to the extent that they had the knowledge and ability to do so. The new synthesis, in addition to being based on summation of the experience of socialism in the twentieth century, is also closely linked with the victories and setbacks of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and the Maoist movement in general.

With regard to RIM, *Shola* writes: “Before anything else there is a need to sum up our Movement, and if the Movement does not reach such a summation it cannot reach any other correct summation either. Such a summation is the key theoretical link in rebuilding and developing the whole Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. It is based on this summation that we can – and must – revisit the revolution in China, the Communist Party of China and Mao Tsetung and to do this in the next round not from the point of view of consolidating Maoism internationally and their main positive aspect which we have done that already in the last period, but this time around look at them with a critical eye and pay attention to the shortcomings, errors and possibly deviations in the Chinese revolution, in the Communist Party of China and Mao Tsetung himself, a work that up to now has not taken the form of an international movement.”

This judgment by *Shola* that, “if the movement does not reach such a summation it cannot reach any other correct summation either”, is another strange one. It is not clear at all whether *Shola* considers the content of the “new synthesis” incorrect or thinks that Bob Avakian doesn’t have the credentials needed to carry out this task or is critical of the prioritization in terms of dealing with the problems at hand? What does *Shola* mean by saying that these summations have not taken the form of an “international movement”? If by this the C(M) PA comrades mean that RIM should have had a unified and common summation, they should be reminded that RIM participants were divided over these same summations, and as a result two lines, Marxism and revisionism, have emerged. In order to re-forge international unity it is necessary to establish the correct line through the storm of two-line struggle. Any participant in RIM must acknowledge this reality and determine its approach towards the important two-line struggle that has been engaged. If *Shola*’s view is that the Movement should have issued a permit for Bob Avakian to do theoretical work – for example, through resolutions and approvals – we should say that at a time of breaking with revisionism, one should not wait for resolutions and permissions, as in breaking with Marxism revisionism too will not be hindered by any resolution.

*Shola*’s resorting to these arguments will damage both the ICM as well as their own Party. We would like to suggest that the C(M)PA comrades pay attention to the new synthesis critique of empiricist and pragmatic methodologies, which have had such deep roots in the history of the ICM.

The empiricism of *Shola* is so thick that it tends to limit the link between practice-theory-practice to the experiences of individual parties and even of individuals. For example, in an astounding and weird way *Shola*, assuming that our Party has only “a hand on the fire from afar”, labels as “inflated and vaunting” our summations and theorizing of our Party’s theory and practice from before the 1979 revolution, then in the tumultuous period of class struggle right after that, the Sarbedaran Uprising, the period of suffering security blows from the Islamic Republic, the struggles in Kurdistan, and so on.

If our Party had been completely vanquished, and the C(M)PA had summed up the line and practice of our Party, and based on that had shown the road forward to the remaining communists in Iran, that would have been neither “vaunting” nor “having hands on the fire from afar”. Rather, it would have been exactly what internationalism

is supposed to be. And in that case your Party being “Afghanistani” would not be a factor in determining the correctness or incorrectness of those summations. Here it is worthwhile remembering another example of the internationalist character of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. When the Union of Iran Communists [the precursor to the CPI(MLM)] was dealt a mortal blow, the RCP took it upon itself as a task to analyze the defeat of the revolution in Iran and to critically examine the line and practice of the UCI. When there were few remaining UCI members able to rebuild the organization, this critical study played a decisive role in its solidity. This critical examination was reflected in a UIC document entitled “With the Weapon of Criticism”.

We would like to go further in criticizing the empiricism and dogmatism of *Shola* and ask: whose theories are more correct, the theories of the SAMA practitioners who were fighting in the fields of the “anti-Russian resistance war” under an Islamic flag and supposedly in the service of the liberation of the peoples of Afghanistan, or the theories of your Party today? [We know that the leaders of SAMA considered themselves to be “communists” but hid this fact behind “democratic appearances” as they themselves put it]. If we are to consider valid only those summations of SAMA’s line which directly poured out of the mouth of those who practiced that line, then we know what they have said. And if today you make a summation of that catastrophic experience, should we call that “inflating and vaunting” or a path-breaking inspiration for the oppressed and exploited masses of Afghanistan as well as the world over?

## **Nationalism and Internationalism**

Another issue that has irritated *Shola* is that our “Crossroads” article is written as a call to the “Communists in Iran”, even though it is about the international communist movement and the threats it is facing. According to *Shola* this document should have been written and addressed to RIM as an internal document, and since this was not the case it is “Iranian-ism”, nationalism and a step in the direction of dissolving RIM.

*Shola* writes: “Basically this is an international subject and discussion and it has to be presented as an international discussion and arguing with the international communist movement and not merely addressed to ‘all Communists in Iran’. It was necessary to present its arguments first internally to the participants of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, including C(M)PA, and not to all communists in Iran in a sudden and open manner.”

The criticism that the “Crossroads” statement should not have limited its focus to the “communists in Iran” is reasonable and even acceptable. But in no way was it “Iranian-ism” and nationalism. Rather it was exactly internationalism. Because communist parties in every country should see the revolution in that country as part of the world revolution and carry out their tasks based on that and build the communist movement in their respective countries as a detachment of the international communist movement. *Shola*’s accusations force us to say that if we had more of this kind of “nationalism” the international communist movement would not be in the sorry state that it is in now. It is amazing that our striving to implement an internationalist line and taking “this line” to the movement of “our” country is considered nationalism. *Shola* may challenge the content of our document but may not treat as “nationalism” our efforts to popularize and apply that content in the country in which making revolution is – as Lenin put it – our “share” of carrying forward the world revolution.

Regarding the point about issuing a document like “Crossroads” openly, we say that this was not wrong. Rather, it was very proper and even late. We must also mention that it was not a sudden approach at all. At least since 2008, we have been discussing the new synthesis in our Party and more broadly with the parties and organizations inside and even outside RIM. We have even taken part in conferences organized for discussing the new synthesis and have expressed our views.

Even before issuing “Crossroads” our Party’s position was very clear on the retreat of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the reasons and basis for this backward retreat, as was our position on the situation in the communist movement, on RIM and on the views of Bob Avakian and their development into a new synthesis. “Crossroads” was not the first time that we declared our orientation but was rather a continuation of that and an application of the line that we defend. And it does not mean an end to our struggle and discussion with other parties inside RIM or those outside it. We also do not separate the process of carrying out a revolutionary line inside or outside the country, and we also believe that these life-and-death issues of line could not be resolved through organizational arguments (or excuses).

It seems that this accusation by *Shola* against our Party is not just a reaction to our position on the new synthesis but is a conscious and planned action with the purpose on the one hand of hiding its own nationalist

orientations and on the other of arousing certain nationalist sentiments – both of which accord with *Shola's* overall line.

Look at these lines by *Shola*: “First of all ... the fact that this document only addresses ‘all the communists in Iran’ before anything else means that it considers that the task of approaching all other communists of the world has been accomplished by the publication of the *Manifesto from the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*. This is nothing but an expression of total tailing and accepting the *Manifesto from the RCPUSA* without any observations or amendments.”

*Shola's* borrowing and even copying some of the most familiar lingo and slanders of the nationalists and their repetition of these in this article is really unfortunate and regretful. This is another warning sign of a retrogressive trend in the world outlook among communists that we are witnessing. Our party is a defender of the new synthesis of Bob Avakian and will do whatever it can to promote and popularize it, and will not be intimidated by the poisonous atmosphere being generated. And for the comrades of the C(M)PA, it is better to engage these theories and not worry about our “tailing”. Utilizing nationalist discourse and methods to attack the new synthesis will not help the struggle. It would be helpful if the comrades of the C(M)PA remembered the polemic a while back that was waged against their Party. In that polemic, opponents of the C(M)PA slandered them and said that the relationship amongst RIM parties was one of “religious mentoring” and that the C(M)PA was tailing “foreign line setters”. Instead of grasping the class and ideological nature of these kinds of slanders and rebuffing them, *Shola* astonishingly resorts to these same methods and uses them in political struggle with us! What can we say to this except that this shows that *Shola* shares the same outlook and goes along with and is in hasty retreat in the face of all this?

Adopting this kind of approach, *Shola* wants to send a message to its opponents that the C(M)PA is obeying no “mentor” or “foreign line setters”, and to prove this it is willing to use the same kind of literature and method as theirs against the communists. This is an undeniable retreat in the face of nationalism, and not only does it not lay the ground for unity with the communists, but on the contrary it prepares the ground for arriving at unity with nationalists.

*Shola* puts forward a certain system of thinking. Pragmatic and empiricist tendencies and an ideologically nationalist orientation govern this article, which has turned Marxism into a dogma and venomously attacks any line that would adopt a scientific approach towards Marxism and its development. The specific conditions and situation in Afghanistan – i.e. the imperialist invasion and occupation along with the influences of the Islamic reactionaries – have created a favorable atmosphere for the growth of nationalist solutions and alliances. Undoubtedly, it is not easy to resist these pressures and to persevere in presenting the masses with a revolutionary communist alternative. And there is no doubt that the defeat and retreat in Nepal has had its negative impact on the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and its participating parties and organizations. But these same very tough and complicated conditions more than ever make it necessary to urgently develop revolutionary communist theory and make this weapon sharper than ever.

In the history of Marxism, especially at sensitive periods in the internationalist communist movement, there have been many struggles between those who fought for a correct understanding of Marxism and to develop it on the one hand and on the other hand those who treated Marxism as a useful tool to be bent and shaped at will and have dragged it down to the level of pragmatism and nationalism.

Our hope is that the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan will pay attention to the dire situation of the international communist movement and will join the discussion and struggle over the correctness or incorrectness of the theories of the new synthesis and will revise harmful methods that are not beneficial for launching rich and inspiring theoretical wrangling, because we have no other choice than to scientifically take the communist theories to a higher level of clarity and correctness, forcefully popularizing them, helping the renewal of existing communist parties, while helping give birth to new revolutionary communist parties all over the Middle East and the world. Carrying out this task is impossible without the theories of the new synthesis. ■

– **Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)**

June 2011, reviewed 8 March 2013

## Footnotes

1 *Shola's* paper is available at: [http://www.Sholajawid.org/farsi/tazaha/HKI\\_hamBa\\_beraha\\_raft.html](http://www.Sholajawid.org/farsi/tazaha/HKI_hamBa_beraha_raft.html).

2 “What Is Bob Avakian’s New Synthesis?” By Lenny Wolfe. [http://revcom.us/a/129/New\\_Synthesis\\_Speech-en.html](http://revcom.us/a/129/New_Synthesis_Speech-en.html).

3 For an in-depth discussion of how the new synthesis builds on the principally correct foundations of Marxist philosophy

while criticizing its secondary weaknesses, see the articles in *Haghighat* on “Digging into the new synthesis”, especially part 1, “Is Marxism determinist or teleological? Questions and answers with Comrade M. Parto”, *Haghighat* no. 51. This is a series of articles that deal with different aspects of the new synthesis and important theoretical issues in Marxism. This and all future article references to *Haghighat* are in Farsi only.

4 For more on this subject, see the article in *Haghighat* no. 6, 3rd series, “Comotions around a death ... History of a Commotion”.

5 Bob Avakian, “Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles, but Humanity Can Soar beyond the Horizon, part 2, Building a movement for revolution,” in *Revolution*, 8 March 2011, [www.revcom.us](http://www.revcom.us).

6 In this work, Bob Avakian, while defending the theoretical framework of Marx, Lenin and Mao, also criticizes the secondary weaknesses and mistakes in some of their works. These mistakes have become a reference point for revisionists and left nationalists and pragmatists.” For example, Marx’s view on the national question and national defense is reflected in his summations of the Paris Commune (*The Civil War in France*). The national question and the relation of the struggle in one country to the struggle on a global scale was not established correctly either by the leaders of the Paris Commune (in the outlook and policies of the Commune leaders, who sought to appeal to the soldiers of the reactionary army on the basis of patriotism) or by Marx and Engels in their writings on the Paris Commune. As for the First World War, the majority of the Second International, led by Kautsky, joined the ranks of the “defenders of the fatherland” and betrayed the proletariat. In their effort to justify the line of “defense of the fatherland”, they used many quotes from Marx and Engels. Avakian summed up that Lenin, in refuting this line, correctly pointed out that these quotes from Marx and Engels were taken out of context and belonged to the period when capitalism was still free-market capitalism and had not yet developed into capitalist-imperialism. Lenin asked pointedly: the victory of which bourgeoisie is in the interests of the international proletariat?! But as Avakian observed, this was not the only issue: the outlook of Marx and Engels on the national question and the relation of the revolution in one country to the world revolution had limitations, and socialists who had betrayed the proletarian revolution were able to use some quotes from them to justify their positions. For example, writing on the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels said the proletariat is the best savior of the nation and a force to regenerate the nation. And in 1891 Engels talks about defending the fatherland during a war between Germany and Tsarist Russia. Bob Avakian says, “...as should be clear by now, we have to emphasize again that with all the points that are being focused on, of how there was primitiveness in Marx’s observations, there was also a great deal of historical sweep and farsightedness. But in an overall sense, and viewing it in that way dialectically, it is a verification and an example of the Marxist theory of knowledge and the relationship between practice and theory and the ultimate dependency of theory on practice, that practice is the ultimate source and point of determination of theory and of truth.” (*Conquer the World: The International Proletariat Must and Will*).

On summing up other problems in the history of the international communist movement, Bob Avakian refers to Lenin’s article “Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder” (vol. 31, *Collected Works*, English p. 77, Progress Publishers) and to an article that Lenin wrote in the last years of his life, “Better Fewer, but Better” (*Collected Works*, vol. 33, English pp. 487-502).

Avakian emphasizes that these works are very important and that we can learn from them, but that we also have to look at why various types of revisionists have been able to use them to justify their conciliation and capitulation. Avakian says that it is true that the revisionists, by taking some of these quotes out of their historical context, distort Lenin and use this for their conciliatory and capitulationist policies, but the reality is that this is not just a matter of “distortion”. In both these articles, Lenin slips into bourgeois logic, and it’s time to sum this up.

For example, in “Left-Wing Communism”, in the section on England, Lenin advises the communists in England to use parliamentary forms for their struggle and calls for the workers to support the Labour Party candidates (the “Left” faction of the bourgeoisie in Britain) against the right-wing candidates. With bourgeois logic, Lenin says, “If I come out as a communist and call upon the workers to vote for Henderson against Lloyd George they [the workers – BA] will certainly give me a hearing.”

This work of Lenin has been propagated and practiced by different types of revisionists and by the leaders of the communist movement in different periods as a work of “brilliant strategy and tactics”. This was part of the process of burying Lenin’s *What Is to Be Done?*

This problem is repeated in “Better Fewer, but Better”. For example, the revisionists in China have used this article extensively to justify their “three worlds” theory (for example, see *Peking Review* no. 45, 1977). In this article, Lenin divides up the imperialist states on the basis of the shares they won in the world war. Avakian continues his summation and extensively criticizes the policies of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union under Stalin during the Comintern (Communist International) period as marked by: “... bourgeois democracy, economism, national chauvinism, national defensism in imperialist countries, etc. These erroneous lines were continued and deepened and carried to a much more profound level during World War 2.... To put it in a nutshell, World War 2, on the part of the Soviet Union, was fought on a patriotic – that is bourgeois-democratic basis.... on the basis of Russian patriotism, overwhelmingly. And internationalism was flushed down the drain on a pragmatic and nationalist basis in order to defend the nation and beat back the attacks on it at all costs.” (*Conquer the World?*)

When Avakian gets to Mao Tsetung, he criticizes a subject that is very familiar to revisionists and pragmatists ... making use of contradictions among the enemies! And, defeating our enemies one by one!

Bob Avakian refers to Mao’s article entitled “On Policy” (vol. 2, Mao’s Selected Works). This article was written in the period of Japan’s invasion of China (at a time when large parts of the country had been liberated by the Red Army

under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party). At a time when the CCP had its own army, base areas, and a revolutionary state, the policy of “defeating our enemies one by one” was correct. But in this article Mao tends to generalize that experience and turn it into a principle. This tendency was turned into a line by various kinds of revisionists, left nationalists and pragmatists, who pass off their conciliation and capitulation as being “Maoist”. One of the reasons for the anger of the so-called “Maoists” at Avakian (“Maoists” both in the Third World countries and “Maoists” in Europe, where they conceive that Europe’s problem is the “North American superpower”) is because of his summation of this erroneous element in Mao.

7 For example, one of the strong tendencies within some of the parties and organizations of RIM was to see the 1949 Chinese revolution as a “bourgeois-democratic” revolution while Mao himself had called the new state in China which was established in 1949 a form of proletarian dictatorship. Another tendency was to reduce Mao’s contributions to the development of the theories of the communist revolution to his military theories and to “strategy of people’s war”. There was a strong tendency among RIM parties to bury Mao’s ruptures from the theory and practice of Stalin on the nature of socialist society, the character of socialist planned economy, the difference between the critics of socialism and the enemies of socialism, and the clarification of the relationship of Marxism to other sciences and Mao’s formulation that Marxism “embraces but does not replace”, as well as his ruptures with mechanical materialism in philosophy and Stalin’s metaphysics, etc., etc. Without these ruptures, Mao Tsetung would not have been able to develop a more advanced and more scientific understanding of the nature of socialist society and its dynamics and limitations and lead the construction of a socialist society which was qualitatively more advanced than the first socialist society (the Soviet Union). The understanding of RIM parties of the theoretical and practical contributions of Mao Tsetung, which had brought about a rupture and leap in communist theories and advanced our understanding of the nature of the communist revolution, was uneven. For example, most of the parties in the international communist movement viewed the Cultural Revolution in China as the implementation of the “mass line” or “democracy” (for example, the parties and organizations from Nepal and India who were in RIM). In fact, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was a revolution to prevent the restoration of capitalism in China and to guarantee that the society stayed on the path towards communism. Mao Tsetung emphasized that the fundamental goal of the Cultural Revolution was to revolutionize the thinking of the masses of people on a broad scale so that they would be able to distinguish Marxism from revisionism and understand why the danger of capitalist restoration still exists under socialism. In the RIM, summation of the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union and China went on at an elementary level, but even on that level there was strong resistance. For example, the section in the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* that criticized Mao for not taking initiative to form a communist international was strongly challenged. Right from the beginning there was very intense struggle over summation of the Comintern, the 7th Congress of the Comintern, which during the period leading to World War Two divided the imperialists into “democrats” and “fascists” and assigned the world’s communists the task of uniting with the “democratic imperialists” and their lackeys (for example, for the communists in India to unite with British colonialism and Indian feudals). Important theoretical differences also existed on the issue of what was imperialism, which led to diverging political conclusions on the nature of the reactionary classes and different strata of the bourgeoisie in the countries dominated by imperialism. There were tendencies among RIM parties to reduce the concept of “imperialism” to simply being a “foreign enemy”, without grasping imperialism’s organic relationship with the class system formed in the countries dominated by imperialism and the ruling classes in these countries. As a result, countries under the domination of imperialism were viewed as a homogeneous bloc vis a vis the imperialist countries. Differences arose not merely over theoretical formulations but also over how communists view the experiences of the socialist revolutions of the 20th century, so as to make the past serve the future.

8 For example, we can refer to efforts by the anthropologist and paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould who tried to develop a new synthesis of Darwin’s conceptualization of evolution. Many orthodox Darwinists (such as Richard Dawkins, the author of a good book called *The God Delusion*) did not accept Gould’s criticism of the shortcomings of Darwin’s theoretical conceptualization of evolution. But their approach was not, Gould has thrown out Darwin! – because they have a good understanding of Darwin’s theory and all the debates and issues surrounding it. Some other scientists who were incapable of opposing Gould’s scientific criticism attacked him ideologically, saying that Gould was trying to impose Marx’s methodology onto the theory of evolution. But the reality is that without developing a more scientific understanding of evolution this theory would be vulnerable to attacks by its opponents. More importantly, this would have a negative influence on a scientific epistemology and methodology, on world outlook, and it would definitely influence the medical sciences as well.

9 See the book or the movie *Ten Days that Shook the World* and how the representatives of the Comintern analyzed the Islamic currents in the Central Asian Republics of the USSR.

10 For example, see the debate between Sami Ramadani and Simon Assaf from the Socialist Workers Party in Britain: <http://socialistworker.co.uk/art.php?id=27876>.

11 The “Gang of Four” is the term the revisionists in China use to refer to four Maoist leaders in the Communist Party of China (Chiang Ching, Chang Chun-chao, Yao Wen-yuan and Wang Hung-wen) who were Mao’s comrades in leading the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the years 1966-1976. They were arrested in a military coup shortly after the death of Mao in 1976 and put on trial. The international media reported this trial as an important international event. The sessions of the trial coincided with a trip by Deng Xiao-ping (the revisionist leader who took power in China) to Washington D.C. and the announcement of “economic reform programs”. Chiang Ching (Mao’s wife) and Chang Chun-chao (a leading theoretician of the CCP whose works contributed greatly to the development of Maoism) stood firm on their positions and lost their lives in prison. The other two apologized and after a period of time were released.

12 Bob Avakian analyses: “What we see in contention here with Jihad on the one hand and McWorld/McCrusade on the other hand, are historically outmoded strata among colonized and oppressed humanity up against historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system. These two reactionary poles *reinforce* each other, even while opposing each other. If you side with either of these ‘outmodeds,’ you end up strengthening both. While this is a very important formulation and is crucial to understanding much of the dynamics driving things in the world in this period, at the same time we do have to be clear about which of these ‘historically outmodeds’ has done the greater damage and poses the greater threat to humanity: It is the ‘historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system’, and in particular the US imperialists.” (*Bringing Forward Another Way*).

13 Bob Avakian “Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles But Humanity Can Soar Beyond the Horizon, Part 2: Building a Movement for Revolution,” *Revolution*, 8 March 2011.

14 “Overcome Empiricism”, *Peking Review* 27 October 1972.

15 Baburam Bhattarai, “New State” in *The Worker*, organ of the CPN(M), February, 2004. Bhattarai along with Prachanda were members of the Standing Committee of the CPN(M). In this article he evaluates the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the socialist countries of the USSR and China as negative and declares that the future socialist state must institutionalize electoral competition among different parties. This article puts an extended democracy (including electoral competition) at the center of the socialist transition period and says that this extended democracy would be a “guarantee” for preventing capitalist restoration. He goes on to say that after socialism is established, the standing army should be dissolved and a militia will replace it. He considers the Paris Commune with direct election and recall of officials as a more positive example than the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR and China. These views have been analyzed and criticized by the RCPUSA in *Revolution* no. 160 (29 March 2009). It should be mentioned that in 2009 the CPN(M) changed their name to the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).

16 Mao Tsetung, Volume 3, “On Rectifying the Party’s Style of Work”, February 1942.

17 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., PLPH, Moscow, 1951, Vol. II, p. 15.

18 V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1973, p. 29.

19 Ibid. p. 29.

20 Ibid.

21 The imperialists invited Prachanda and Bhattarai to Europe and organized “democracy” classes for them as they had done with the leaders of the FMLN in El Salvador. What is Prachanda’s vision for Nepal? He himself said he wants to turn Nepal into the Switzerland of Asia! Almost everybody knows that Switzerland did not become such because of its dairy and mountains. Switzerland is one of the most important banking and money investment centers of the world capitalist system. This pitiful day-dreaming is merely a reflection of a mental state of a degenerated bourgeoisie of the countries dominated by imperialism. He once was a communist with inspiring internationalist ideals. The Nepal revolution had aroused and organized hundreds of thousands of women and men, of workers, peasants, and intellectuals who were ready to fight with their lives on their fingertips for overthrowing the oppressive and exploitative system of capitalism. And it had given hope to and inspired millions of others within Nepal itself and in India and all over that region and the world. This revolution was aborted in the middle of the road by the revisionist line of its leadership. When the leadership of this party started to retrogress, the biggest support for revolution in Nepal and the only internationalist path and way was to fight against the line of this leadership. The only way to preserve RIM as a political and organizational center of the ICM was to unite around fighting against this revisionist line in an all-around way. Among the parties and organizations of RIM, our party and the RCP took up this task, and most of the others, instead of accompanying us, took the path of the middle of the road. This was a sign of the sorry state of the ICM.

22 In a document entitled “4 Philosophical Talks” (1987) which studies the philosophical roots of the right opportunist deviations of the Union of Iran Communists in the period between late 1980-1981, we said: “Even when carrying out a national liberation struggle, the communists are the representatives of the future communist society. Today they are representatives and vanguards of the international proletariat in each country. Here we can clearly see the attraction and pull of respecting what exists and only maneuvering within that framework. ... In every oppressed country it is very easy for the communists to become like the revolutionary democrats. Not because they don’t think about communism or think that proletarian internationalism is bad. The point is that their political work among the masses is presented in terms of political power, new democratic revolution, national independence from imperialism, etc., and often the goal of all these things is forgotten ...”

23 Bob Avakian, “Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles But Humanity Can Soar Beyond the Horizon, Part 1: Revolution and the State”, *Revolution* no. 218, 28 November 2010.

24 RCP Letters to CPN(M): <http://www.revcom.us/a/160/Letters.pdf> – *Revolution* 160, 29 March 2009.

25 The first part of the document “Downward spirals of the revolution in Nepal”, Sarbedaran archives. [http://www.sarbedaran.org/archives/etelaiye/rep2nep2009f\\_p1.htm](http://www.sarbedaran.org/archives/etelaiye/rep2nep2009f_p1.htm)

26 RCP Letters to CPN(M): <http://www.revcom.us/a/160/Letters.pdf> – *Revolution* 160, 29 March 2009.

27 Ibid.

28 See RCP Letters to CPN(M) and the Letter of the CPI(MLM) to the CPN(M), Nov 2006. [http://www.cpimlm.com/showfile.php?cId=&tb=hagh3\\_s&Id=369&pgn=1](http://www.cpimlm.com/showfile.php?cId=&tb=hagh3_s&Id=369&pgn=1). See also: “Revolution in Nepal, great victory or a big danger”, *Haghighat* no. 40.

29 This polemic was written in June 2011. Today there is a group calling for the “reorganization of RIM”, consisting of



the C(M)PA, CPIML (Naxalbari), Maoist Party of Italy, and others. They oppose the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and support the new party in Nepal, which aims to reorganize the CPN(M) and is led by some of the former UCPNM leaders who have broken with the Prachanda/Bhattari party. The leaders of this new party believe that the main reason for the setback of the revolution in Nepal was “betrayal of Prachanda” and not the political and ideological line that they had developed and adopted together. The line of the leaders of the new party is so eclectic that it is not able to draw a clear line of demarcation with their revisionist and counter-revolutionary leaders. For more information see a report published in *Revolution* paper on the founding congress of this new party: <http://www.revcom.us/a/296/critical-crossroads-in-nepal-en.html>

30 A famous comment in a 1883 letter by Marx written to Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue and reported by Engels.