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The (new) Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist and the Crossroads Facing the International Communist Movement

By Robert Borba

In mid-2012 a group from within the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) headed by UCPN(M) leaders Kiran, Gaurav, Badal, Gurung and others split off and announced the formation of a new party, adopting the name of the original Maoist party that led the 10 year People's War from 1996 to 2006, the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist. The re-founded CPN-M declared that it had broken with the revisionism of the UCPN(M); it denounced UCPN(M) leaders Prachanda and Bhattarai as "neo-revisionists" who had "betrayed" the nation and the revolution; and it proclaimed that it was re-taking the revolutionary road. Six months later it held what it called the 7th Congress of the CPN-M in Kathmandu, where it also announced that it would be working to re-consolidate the international communist movement around Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.¹

In a world that is so urgently crying out for revolution, the declarations of the CPN-M naturally aroused interest and hope that these developments might lead to a revitalization of that Party and the revolution, particularly among those who had been inspired by what the revolution in Nepal had achieved earlier and who had been so bitterly upset by its U-turn in recent years. In February 1996, the original CPN(M) dared to launch a revolutionary war against the imperialist-backed government, which at that time took the form of a monarchy that had established a parliament a few years previously. Starting from a small force, it grew rapidly during the course of the 10-year-long People's War, winning the support of millions as it established red political power throughout much of Nepal's countryside and forged a People's Liberation Army of many thousands. As part of its struggle for a new democratic revolution, it challenged the caste system and the patriarchal oppression of women and laid the foundations for agrarian revolution. In the course of developing the People's War, the leaders of the revolution advocated a close connection with revolutionary forces throughout South Asia as part of advancing revolution in the region and around the world. At a time when revolution, and especially communist-led revolution, had been declared dead, and a new generation had been told that the cure of revolution was worse than the disease of capitalism, many people around the world took heart at the lofty goals that these revolutionaries had proclaimed.

With the advance of the revolution, new challenges emerged. Severe divisions emerged among the ruling classes even as they united against the revolution. Following a massacre of the royal family by one of the princes, a new king, Gyanendra, took power and went all out to crush the revolution. In the process he also attacked the parliamentary opposition and suspended parliament, alienating many in the urban areas, but also streamlining the reactionary state. The military battles with the Nepal Army grew in scale and intensity. India, which considers Nepal its "backyard," and the U.S. and European imperialist powers, increased their involvement. The

1 *Note that in English, the Party's original name was CPN(M) and the new Party is called CPN-M. All urls, website references, were retrieved as of April 4, 2014, unless otherwise mentioned.*

advance of the revolutionary forces also gave basic questions about the kind of society they were fighting for new and greater importance, as this went from being a distant dream to a looming reality. How would the revolution advance from the countryside into the capital Kathmandu and its surrounding valley, and how could a leap be made to the nationwide seizure of state power? What transformations might really be possible in a small landlocked country like Nepal? Could a new economy be built, and could a revolutionary state power sandwiched between two giants, India and China, really hold out? What kind of united front was possible at a juncture when the monarchy's tight fist was antagonizing some forces, including among the urban middle strata, while not losing sight of the need for communists to persevere towards the goal of dismantling the old state and *all* its core institutions and establishing a new revolutionary power?

As these and many other questions were being posed with increasing urgency, and in the context of the fierce worldwide anti-communist campaign that has been waged for many years now, it is not surprising that differing responses emerged within the Party over how to answer them. These were not simple questions, and there are no ready-made formulas that solve them – but they are exactly the kind of questions that any revolution will face as it advances, and which can and must be solved in order to win and keep advancing.

Unfortunately, at that juncture, within the ranks of the CPN(M) the most theoretically comprehensive and increasingly dominant response concerning the kind of society being envisioned was represented by an article by Party leader Baburam Bhattarai in issue no. 9 of the English-language organ of the CPN(M), *The Worker*, entitled "The Question of Building a New Type of State." Bhattarai's article represented a sharp repudiation of the theory and practice of the communist revolution, and argued instead for a series of positions that ultimately amounted to renouncing the goal of the dictatorship of the proletariat and communism and replacing this with the revisionist concepts of multi-party competition in the electoral arena within a bourgeois-democratic framework, and arguing for other bourgeois-democratic principles. Rather than a vision of a revolutionary state power in Nepal being led by a communist vanguard to undertake dramatic and liberatory social and economic transformations while serving as a base area to advance revolution in the region and throughout the world, Bhattarai's was a vision that would lead – and has led! – to accommodation with the existing system. This is a line with a strong currency in the world today, a line that argues, sometimes in the name of radicalism or even "communism," that revolution and a radically new state power is neither possible nor desirable in today's world, and which seeks inspiration by turning back to 18th-century bourgeois democracy, before Marx opened the pathway for understanding why and how it would be possible for humanity to reach a whole new vista.

At an historic meeting in 2005 in Chunwang, the CPN(M) officially adopted the thrust of Bhattarai's position, presented in and flowing from the arguments in his article, that the immediate goal of the revolution would no longer be a new democratic state (a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat) but a "transitional republic." As far as is known, there was no alternative line or clearly opposing viewpoint put forth in refutation or for debate. The practical consequences were soon to follow.²

2 For more on the historical background to this struggle and on Bhattarai's arguments and the RCP's response to them, see in particular the RCP's October 2005 Letter to the CPN(M). "Letters to the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) from the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, 2005-2008 (With a Reply from the CPN(M), 2006)." <http://www.revcom.us/a/160/Letters.pdf>

In 2006, the CPN(M) undertook a complicated set of maneuvers. It formed an alliance with the country's seven major political parties, and a mass uprising overthrew the absolute monarchy. In November of the same year the Party entered into a Comprehensive Peace Agreement that called for confining the great bulk of the People's Liberation Army in cantonments with its weapons locked up under United Nations control, the dismantlement of the red political power, and the participation of the CPN(M) in an interim government. Ten years of People's War were ended. In April 2008 elections were held. The CPN(M) emerged as the largest party in a new Constituent Assembly, and became the leading force in the country's governing system over the next five years. Eclectics and revisionism had led the Party to call for "restructuring" the state instead of the revolutionary goal of overthrowing and dismantling it. And, indeed, the Party found itself playing a central role in the new governmental structures of the old, reactionary state against which they had been waging revolution only a short time earlier.

During this period the Party also merged with a series of old revisionist forces that had opposed the People's War, and changed its name to the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). Since then, the Maoist forces in Nepal have generally settled into becoming a social-democratic opposition, much like the reformist forces they had rebelled against to launch the People's War in the first place. Any hopes the masses of Nepalese people might have had for liberation from imperialism and reaction now lie in tatters, unless a new revolutionary force emerges that clearly repudiates and ruptures with this package and is able to make revolution anew.

What happened? How is it that after the sacrifice of many thousands of lives in revolutionary war and many more imprisoned and tortured, things have now come to this dire state? This entire experience – the developments in the communist movement in Nepal and furthermore, the way it has been dealt with by the international communist movement (ICM) – is bound up with the crossroads that the communist movement worldwide has been facing in recent years.

Part 1 of this article takes a deeper look at the line of the new re-founded CPN-M and its summation of the struggle that led to the split from the UCPN(M). Part 2 looks at how the new CPN-M is being evaluated internationally and what this reveals about that crossroads. The context for these developments is analyzed more sweepingly in *Communism: The Beginning of a New Stage, A Manifesto from the RCP,USA* and in the "Letter from the RCP,USA to Participating Parties and Organizations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM)" from May 2012, which the reader is urged to study. These can be found on revcom.us. The Letter is also available in *Demarcations* no. 3.³

Part 1: The situation today and the claims of the CPN-M

Throughout the years of the People's War the original Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) had declared that its immediate goal was to overthrow the old reactionary imperialist-backed state and establish a new democratic state power. New democracy, as Mao conceptualized it in the course of the Chinese revolution, represents a democratic revolution of a new type in the nations oppressed by imperialism in this historical era. Led by the proletariat, it would decisively break

3 *Communism: The Beginning of a New Stage, A Manifesto from the RCP,USA*. <http://www.revcom.us/Manifesto/index.html>. "Letter from the RCP,USA to Participating Parties and Organizations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM)" http://www.demarcations-journal.org/issue03/letter_to_participating_parties_of_rim_revolutionary_communist_party_usa.htm.

the stranglehold of foreign imperialism and thoroughly uproot feudalism. Mao stressed that such a revolution would quickly transition to a stage of socialist revolution, and that in an overall sense the new democratic revolution was part of the world proletarian revolution.

Nepal today is anything but that. Despite the predominant role of the UCPN(M) in Nepal's government over the five years from 2008 to 2013, there have been no major changes in the way the society is run or in the conditions of the oppressed. Despite the series of Maoist-led governments, there has been no major land reform, much less any agrarian revolution. The PLA was completely dismantled in 2012, and the revolutionary institutions of political power long before that. When it entered the peace process the Party put the fight for a "new democratic constitution" at the heart of its struggle to "restructure the state" – but no new constitution has been adopted at all, much less one that would in any way resemble a new democratic one. Instead, the Party has gotten bogged down in endless parliamentary struggles and alliances and counter-alliances. There have been no major nationalizations of key sectors of the economy, even of the kind sometimes carried out by social democratic parties.

In every respect, Nepal has remained thoroughly entrenched in the web of imperialist economic relations that have long kept the country dependent on India and the global imperialist system more generally. Nepal's almost 30 million people continue to suffer in extreme poverty and oppression. Almost 60 percent live on less than 2 U.S. dollars a day, while unemployment and underemployment is so widespread that over a million have left the country to work abroad, over 5 percent of the country's adult population. More fundamentally, they have lost any prospect of getting out from under the domination of the imperialists and reactionaries and beginning to transform their conditions as part of a process of world revolution.⁴

Worst of all, for five years the faces that the oppressed saw presiding over this continuing exploitation and oppression as leaders of the government and the largest party in parliament up through the November 2013 elections were those of the former leaders of the revolution. While the impoverishment and oppression felt by Nepal's people continues to fuel anger and rebellion, it would be difficult to overstate the level of cynicism and discouragement this situation has led to. And within the Maoist party itself, despite repeated outbreaks of resistance to the reversals of recent years, this resistance has again and again wound up in accommodation with the dominant, revisionist line.

So what does the emergence of the reconfigured CPN-M represent: has it ruptured with the revisionism that captured the Party in recent years? Does it represent a force that can now retake the revolutionary road in Nepal? And if not, then what is needed now – and what does all this tell us about the situation of the communist revolution today, and the challenges it faces?

Before getting into the line of the CPN-M, it is worth going deeper into the relationship between the Party's situation and that of the entire international communist movement. With the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and China (in the mid-fifties and 1976 respectively) and the subsequent end of the first stage of communist revolution, and in the face of the many

4 Remittances account for a staggering 25-30 percent of the country's GDP, including 50 million USD a year from Gurkha soldiers serving as mercenaries in the British Army, and the country's distribution of wealth is one of the most uneven in the world. The recent deaths of dozens of Nepalese working in Qatar on preparations for the 2022 World Cup in recent months, a number of whom were young men dying of heart attacks, starkly reveal the conditions of near-slavery in which many of these migrants work. "Study Shows 68 percent of Nepali Migrant Workers Are Female:" <http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2011/feb/feb15/news10.php>

serious challenges faced by the world's communists, the above-cited letter from the RCP, USA to the participating parties and organizations of the RIM analyzed that "the understanding on which the movement was based – what we have called Marxism-Leninism-Maoism – is 'dividing into two': its revolutionary, correct and scientific kernel is both validated and is advancing to new levels, while secondary but nonetheless real and damaging errors in politics and theory have been identified and can and need to be struggled against as part of making the leap that is required. This is the approach that Bob Avakian and our Party have taken and have called on others to join with us in filling that great need."

In opposition to this advance in the science of communism, Bob Avakian's new synthesis of communism,⁵ two erroneous trends have arisen, which form a sort of mirror opposites: "either to cling religiously to all of the previous experience and the theory and method associated with it or (in essence, if not in words) to throw that out altogether." At the same time, "these 'mirror opposite' erroneous tendencies have in common being mired in, or retreating into, models of the past, of one kind or another (even if the particular models may differ): either clinging dogmatically to the past experience of the first stage of the communist revolution – or, rather, to an incomplete, one-sided, and ultimately erroneous understanding of that – or retreating into the whole past era of *bourgeois* revolution and its principles: going back to what are in essence 18th-century theories of (bourgeois) democracy, in the guise, or in the name, of '21st-century communism,' in effect equating this '21st-century communism' with a democracy that is supposedly 'pure' or 'classless' – a democracy which, in reality, as long as classes exist, can only mean *bourgeois* democracy, and *bourgeois dictatorship*."

5 To summarize the new synthesis, Bob Avakian wrote the following, "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.

"In a sense, it could be said that the new synthesis is a synthesis of the previous experience of socialist society and of the international communist movement more broadly, on the one hand, *and* of the criticisms, of various kinds and from various standpoints, of that experience, on the other hand. That does not mean that this new synthesis represents a mere 'pasting together' of that experience on the one hand, and the criticisms on the other hand. It is not an eclectic combination of these things, but a sifting through, a recasting and recombining on the basis of a scientific, materialist and dialectical outlook and method, and of the need to continue advancing toward communism, a need and objective which this outlook and method continues to point to – and, the more thoroughly and deeply it is taken up and applied, the more firmly it points to this need and objective."

Making Revolution and Emancipating Humanity, Part I. Beyond the Narrow Horizon of Bourgeois Right.
<http://www.revcom.us/avakian/makingrevolution>

Over the last eight years the Nepal party has represented one of the most clearcut examples of the latter tendency. More specifically, the RCP letter introducing the series of polemics between the RCP and the CPN-M⁶ summed up what it viewed as key problems in the line of the CPN(M), which centered on: "1) the nature of the state, and specifically the need to establish a new state led by the proletariat and its communist vanguard, as opposed to a strategy centering on participating in, and what amounts to 'perfecting,' the reactionary state... ; 2) more specifically, the need to establish, as the first step, upon the overthrow of the old order, a new democratic state which would undertake the development of the economic base and corresponding institutions of the nation free from imperialist domination and feudal relations, based on new production and social relations brought forward through the course of the People's War, as opposed to establishing a bourgeois republic which focuses on developing capitalism and finding a place within the world imperialist network; 3) the dynamic role of theory and two-line struggle (struggle within communist parties and among communists generally over questions of ideological and political line), vs. eclectics, pragmatism and attempts to rely on 'tactical finesse' and what amounts to bourgeois *realpolitik* – maneuvering within the framework of domination by imperialism (and other major powers) and the existing relations of exploitation and oppression." As part of this maneuvering within the existing imperialist framework, nationalist tendencies in the Party came to overwhelm more correct tendencies to see the revolution in Nepal as part of the world revolution and the advance towards a communist world. Instead a narrow nationalism has come to the fore that reduces the purpose of the revolution to "what's good for Nepal."

How does the new CPN-M view all this? The Party leadership would like to portray the years 2005-2012 as a period of sharp two-line struggle in which the "revolutionary faction" was basically clear on the line problems, a period in which this faction continuously raised the red banner of MLM and fought for a correct line against the revisionist line, and that this went on until finally the revolutionary faction had gained enough strength to split the Party and constitute a new party founded on the correct line that it had essentially represented all along. In his political report to the new CPN-M's founding meeting, "Let's forward the revolution by waging ideological struggle against neo-revisionism!," Party Chairman Kiran states, "History of Nepalese communist movement is the history of sharp two-line struggle between Marxist line and Revisionist line. We have been struggling against rightist revisionism with various forms and colors for long. Now we are in the course of complex two-line struggle against the serious types of neo-revisionism which have existed within one faction of the leadership of our glorious party, Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). We have been struggling for long against the rightist and centrist tendency that existed in the Party." He argues that this "two-line struggle" is being waged between the "revisionist faction" and what he repeatedly calls the "revolutionary faction" or "Marxist faction" and attempts to show the two lines at various junctures.⁷

Unfortunately, the new CPN-M's founding documents and its publications since then all point in a different direction. Far from rupturing with the revisionist line on the central questions pointed out above, the new Party's break is only organizational. Politically and ideologically it remains stuck within the same erroneous framework that led to the reversal of the revolution. Instead of

6 "On Developments in Nepal and the Stakes for the Communist Movement," *Revolution* 160, March 2009, reprinted in *Demarcations* no. 1. http://demarcations-journal.org/issue01/nepal_article.html

7 This report reviewing Party policy since the 2005 Chunwang meeting enshrined the revisionist line was the key document for the June 2012 meeting that consolidated the new CPN-M. See "Let's forward the revolution by waging ideological struggle against neo-revisionism!, the Political report presented to the CPN-M National Convention on 18 June 2012 by CPN-M Chairman Kiran," published in *Maoist Outlook*, August 2012. <http://www.bannedthought.net/Nepal/CPN-Maoist/MaoistOutlook/2012/MO-01-01.pdf>

identifying and repudiating the line that guided the Party's activity in the seven years preceding the split, what we get is a mishmash of halfway critiques that point to some of the most blatant examples of accommodation with reaction but perpetuate key erroneous conceptions that led to this accommodation and reduce the problem to the actions of a couple of individuals, the "traitors" Prachanda and Bhattarai. This is an inversion of reality – the real problem was the revisionist line that has been in command of the entire Party since 2005.

Before examining the line of the new CPN-M and how it treats key questions directly facing the revolution in Nepal, it's important to clarify from the outset that the problems with the new Party's line are expressed not only in what it addresses, but also in what it doesn't address. Search as one might, nowhere in the various documents issued by the new Party will you find any substantive consideration of what kind of new democracy the Party is seeking to bring into being, how it would break free of the domination of India and the world imperialist system, how its system of democracy and dictatorship would be organized so as to enable the new revolutionary power to dig up the age-old divisions that rip through Nepalese society, and how their understanding of all this relates to their summation of the 20th-century communist revolutions.

Yet it was precisely Bhattarai's theoretical attack on the experience of the 20th-century revolutions and on the key instruments of proletarian power – the dictatorship of the proletariat and the institutionalized leading role of the vanguard party, which he described as "tragic" and even "totalitarian" – that greased the path for the Party's slide into reformism and bourgeois-democratic conceptions of the state, and into revisionism more generally. The new Party's 7th Congress explicitly left aside these issues, even while, as we shall see, adopting measures fully in line with Bhattarai's reformist vision.

The failure to address Bhattarai's attack on the theory and practice of the dictatorship of the proletariat was especially tragic, as his arguments were in many ways simply a "copy and paste" of an earlier attack in the late 1980s by K. Venu of India on these same issues, and they had been refuted at length by Avakian in a polemic entitled "Democracy: More Than Ever We Can and Must Do Better than That" in *A World To Win* magazine no. 17 and also found in *Phony Communism is Dead, Long Live Real Communism*.⁸ It was bad enough that this refutation went unheeded earlier, but to continue to fail to refute some of the key arguments made by Bhattarai now, almost a decade later, will be fatal. To put it simply, for communists to leave aside the question of what kind of state and society they are out to build, and how it will lead towards the goal of classless society, and instead narrow the focus to how to get the immediate struggle going, is just another version of the economist line that holds, as Lenin put it, "the movement is everything, the final aim nothing." Abandoning the goal of a communist society did indeed have a great deal to do with why the immediate struggle itself came under the wing of the imperialists and reactionaries.

But to return to "Let's forward" – how does it analyze the central question of the old CPN(M)'s view of the state? First, it is telling that there is no criticism of the concept of "restructuring of the state" which was so central to Party policy throughout these years and repeated like a mantra in the documents of the opposition faction as well. What "Let's Forward" does provide is a summation of the Party's line on the role of parliament and its own participation in the Constituent Assembly (CA) process:

8 Bob Avakian, *Phony Communism is Dead... Long Live Real Communism*, RCP Publications, Chicago, second edition, 2004.

"Nepalese people and the political forces are raising voices to pressurize the writing of constitution in favor of country and people." The CPN-M analyzes the reasons why it was not possible to write such a "forward-looking" constitution, and concludes that Prachanda and Bhattarai "are most responsible." They argue, "Marxism does not negate the thesis of using the parliament and the government. But the utilization can only be with a revolutionary way and not by opportunistic behavior. To use the parliament and government in revolutionary way, first the Party should be revolutionary, disciplined and devoted to Marxism." Here we would like to ask the CPN-M: Haven't revisionist parties time and again papered over their accommodation to the existing system with empty professions of being "revolutionary, disciplined and devoted to Marxism"? For "devotion to Marxism" to be anything more than an empty phrase covering reformist practice, there must be complete clarity first of all in the Party's line on the crucial and decisive question of the nature of the state and its larger role in the transition to a communist world. This clarity would have meant a radical rupture with the existing line and practice of the Party.

The new Party, which had more than 90 CA members loyal to it, continued to participate in the CA, where it was the fourth largest party for a year, until the CA was formally dissolved in Spring 2013. "In parliament also the revolutionary faction are playing the necessary role. Especially they prevented some of the bills and law which were against the country and people. Even in the time they were in government they have performed positive role in general, though there were some limitations and lacks." And finally, "The Party has taken the decision of making a balance between government and the street through the Constituent Assembly and to initiate the drafting of people's federal republican constitution and integration of army simultaneously. But Prachanda-Baburam went in the opposite direction."

Now consider the context for this summation: following a ten-year People's War, with all the sacrifices that entailed, the Party laid down its arms, dissolved the revolutionary political power in the countryside and then entered into a parliamentary process under the banner first raised by Bhattarai of "21st century democracy," with its conflation of democracy and communism and its liquidation of the class nature of the state – all this in a global context where communism and the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat is being assigned to the garbage heap of history from every side – and now the CPN-M offers a summation that the line of using "a balance" between the government and "the street" was fine, but the problem was that damned Prachanda and Bhattarai said one thing but did another, i.e., "went in the opposite direction"! In reality this entire summation and in particular the formulation of "making a balance between government and street" is one of the hallmarks of the eclectic view of the state that was formulated by Prachanda himself: on the one hand we'll use parliament, on the other we'll rise up from the streets.⁹

9 Bob Avakian explains eclectics as follows: "Here it is important to emphasize that the essence of eclecticism (and the way in which it serves revisionism, when it is communists, or those professing to be communists, who adopt and apply such eclecticism) is not simply to pose things in terms of "on the one hand 'this,' and on the other hand 'that'"—but to do so in a way that obscures the essence of the matter, and specifically undermines what is in fact the principal and defining aspect of the contradiction.

"For example, take the statement: "True, imperialism involves the intense and vicious exploitation and oppression of people in many parts of the world; but it has also led to the development of many beneficial forms of technology and to a high standard of living for significant numbers of people." Both aspects here—what precedes the semicolon (before the word "but") and what follows after that—are true. But which aspect is principal, defining, and essential? Clearly, it is the former: the highly exploitative and oppressive nature of imperialism, and the very negative consequences of this for the great majority of humanity. But the way this

Indeed, as is summed up by an article by KJA, "Save the Revolution,"¹⁰ "the means proposed for achieving this people's republic is to avow strict loyalty to bourgeois-democratic principles and indeed to the very institutions that are clearly admitted to be tied to a bourgeois republic, and still in the hands of reactionary classes." What kind of rupture could this summation possibly represent with the revisionist understanding of the state that took the Nepal revolution into the parliamentary swamp?! In this eclectic world of the CPN-M, you can keep the same eclectic policies but just replace the bad guys with the black hats with good guys with white hats and, presto, revisionism is defeated. In the real world, things are very different.

At a more fundamental level this problem is indicative of the CPN-M's failure to rupture with the conflation of communism and democracy that was articulated by Bhattarai and underpinned the Chunwang decisions in 2005. This problem with deep roots in the international communist movement has been the subject of extensive analysis by Avakian. In a concentrated summation of the relation of democracy to classes and communist society, Avakian observed, "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. So long as society is divided into classes, there can be no 'democracy for all': one class or another will rule, and will uphold and promote that kind of democracy which serves its interests and goals. The question is: *which class* will rule and whether its rule, and its system of democracy, will serve the *continuation*, or the eventual *abolition*, of class divisions and the corresponding relations of exploitation, oppression, and inequality."¹¹

Avakian's observation was the fulcrum for the critiques of Bhattarai's arguments in the RCP's first letter to the CPN(M) in October 2005 – critiques that were roundly rejected by the CPN(M) letter of response, which labeled this approach as mainly just repeating the "ABCs of Marxism." But isn't it clear that the new CPN-M's line continues the eclectic and erroneous thinking on the state the UCPN(M) put forward previously? To this day it continues to uphold the need to write a "forward-looking" constitution to be adopted under the existing reactionary state. It continues to consider the 2008 elections a big victory for the revolution, when in fact it was a giant step away from revolution. Both of these are indicative of a continuing failure to rupture with the longstanding conflation of communism and democracy, and instead maintaining illusions that communists can somehow make democracy work in the interests of the people without overthrowing the state that represents and enforces the capitalist-imperialist economic base.

But perhaps the most telling is the way that it handles the issue of the backbone of any state power, the armed forces.¹² Here is how "Let's forward" deals with the critical issue of the armed

sentence is formulated, it blunts that essential truth by, in form, putting the secondary aspect (as embodied in the second part of the above sentence) on an equal footing with the principal aspect. This serves, at least objectively, as an apology for imperialism.

"All eclectic approaches have the same basic character and effect: They serve to muddle things and to deny or undermine the principal aspect and essence of things." (Bob Avakian, *Out into the world – as a vanguard of the future*, 2009. (<http://www.revcom.us/avakian/Out%20into%20the%20World/ba-out-into-world-en.html>) Prachanda had trained the Party in eclectics for years, and it was one of the key targets of the first RCP letter to the CPN(M) in October 2005. The CPN(M)'s letter of response did not even mention the issue.

10 KJA, Save the Revolution. <http://thenextfront.com/?p=41>

11 Bob Avakian, *Basics*, RCP Publications, Chicago, 2011, p. 17.

12 The new Party's confusion around the role of parliamentary elections is undoubtedly related to its continuing failure to settle accounts with Bhattarai's views on democracy and dictatorship, including his argument that multiparty competition is the key means to resolving the class struggle under socialism, exposed at length in the RCP letters. Even though the new Party boycotted the 2013 national elections for a second Constituent

forces, in this case the People's Liberation Army, which had been key to building the embryonic revolutionary state power in Nepal's countryside:

"The Nepalese peoples have expected the respectful integration of the army and a new constitution from the Constituent Assembly after it has come to the peace process." It then asserts that the two-line struggle between them and the Prachanda faction was "whether to integrate the PLA into the Nepalese army with respectful condition [usually explained as meaning "with dignity"] or to liquidate this force after disarming them." The CPN-M repeatedly laments the failure to integrate the PLA "with dignity" and chalks this up as one of Prachanda and Bhattarai's greatest failings.

The final dismantling of the PLA in 2012 was a severe blow to the revolution and undoubtedly a humiliating experience for the thousands of soldiers who had once seen themselves as front-line fighters for revolution in Nepal and around the world. A tiny handful of officers were integrated into the Nepal Army, while virtually all the rest of the PLA were simply sent home with a payoff from the state. But what kind of "two-line struggle" is this – whether to integrate the PLA "with dignity" or not?! What possible "dignity" or "respect" could be involved in the liquidation of the revolutionary armed forces and their integration into the imperialist-backed reactionary army!

For several years the Nepal Party, echoed by much of the Maoist movement internationally, had given repeated assurances that despite being confined to UN-supervised cantonments the PLA formations were still together and training regularly and could quickly recover their arms and reconstitute a revolutionary fighting force. The reality was very different: confined to cantonments, the PLA was cut off from the base areas that nourished it; PLA arms were stored in UN-controlled containers; the cantonments were inspected regularly by UN officials; and PLA pay was funded in large part by the "international community," not least of all the British Overseas Development Cooperation, reflecting the imperialists' determination to ensure the success of the "peace process" (with close monitoring and in-depth advice from international NGOs like the International Crisis Group). And not least of all, through its participation in parliament and government more generally, the UCPN(M) succeeded in re-legitimizing a reactionary state power that had been de-legitimized in the course of ten years of revolutionary war. The Party allowed the soldiers of the PLA to be portrayed as "outliers" who needed to be brought into line, while the Nepal Army was given legitimacy as the army to continue to enforce state power. The same approach was taken toward the new organs of power that were the fruit of the People's War. They were not upheld in any way as part of the new state power that needed to be further fought for and consolidated; rather it was the old organs of power and the Constituent Assembly modeled on the bourgeois and reactionary parliaments the world over that set the framework of legitimate institutions of power and governance.

In these circumstances, the calls by Kiran and the opposition faction for integration "with dignity" did not represent a revolutionary line, which would have required, at a minimum, opposing the surrender of the revolutionary army and base areas. The Kiran faction's banner of "integration with dignity" shares the dominant faction's eclectic and non-revolutionary view of

Assembly, it rejected them on the grounds that the previous CA "had not worked," and that the elections would be "manipulated" by "foreign powers," rather than on a clearer understanding of why, in class-divided society, elections cannot be the main means for the masses to exercise power and transform society. What is needed is the dictatorship of the proletariat, led by the vanguard communist party, a new state power and institutions that will unleash the process wherein the masses can transform society in a revolutionary direction.
<http://www.bannedthought.net/Nepal/CPN-Maoist/PeoplesVoice/PeoplesVoice-01.pdf>

the reactionary state and its apparatus of armed repression, and winds up in the same kind of pragmatism and attempts to rely on tactical finesse.

As the RCP's November 2008 letter observes about the opposition faction, "Every revisionist party always has a left" – a force that, however discontented it might be with some of the fruits of the party's overall revisionist line, nonetheless refuses to make (or incapable of making) a decisive break with revisionism and so winds up acting as a buffer within the party that absorbs the repeated eruptions of discontent at the gap between the party's radical professions and its ongoing compromise and conciliation. Isn't this the objective role the opposition faction in the UCPN(M) was reduced to – honeyed promises of "integration with dignity" which ultimately did nothing more than help this bitter pill go down more smoothly? Contrary to what the new CPN-M states or may even believe, the history of the Nepal Party prior to the split was not a history of continual two-line struggle between a revolutionary faction and a revisionist faction, but instead amounted to nothing but a series of complaints by an increasingly disgruntled opposition that over and over again failed to break out of the revisionist framework that had trained and tamed the Party, exactly because it shares common erroneous conceptions.

This comes out too in the CPN-M's summation of the ill-fated "People's Revolt" [sometimes translated as "insurrection"] of May 2010, when the Party was still united as the UCPN(M). The Party brought hundreds of thousands of people into the streets of the country's major cities, in particular Kathmandu, for several days, with the purpose of carrying out a "People's Revolt," called "Jana Andolan 3" to evoke the two weeks of Jana Andolan 2 in April 2006 that led to the elimination of the monarchy. Those coming were told that these days would bring "victory or death." After a series of massive demonstrations, however, the uprising petered out, with the masses returning in disarray, and often distress, to their homes.

What accounted for this clear failure? The problem in the eyes of the new CPN-M was that "Prachanda didn't go in the way to prepare for the work and implementation of the decision. The special people's demonstration... couldn't achieve its goal." It repeats the refrain, "the Prachanda faction deceived us several times." In other words, once again Prachanda said one thing but did another.

But as an RCP supporter observed to the 7th Congress of the CPN-M, "The main problem with Prachanda is not that he didn't do what he said, but that he acted in conformity with the revisionist line. In a fundamental sense he did exactly what he said he would do. Prachanda implemented exactly the revisionist line that was adopted and dominated the Party for the last seven years."¹³ The collapse of the May 2010 "People's Revolt" was the direct fruit of the Party's reformist conception of state power: while preparing for this people's revolt the Party was still working within the Constituent Assembly, writing a new "forward looking" constitution and engaged in being the "best representatives of the peace process," all as part of "restructuring the state" – none of which, by the way, is repudiated by the new CPN-M. Going hand in hand with this eclectic view of the state was a view that progressive forces within the reactionary army would split off and help the revolutionaries to power. In fact, this was in fact the underlying strategy for the revolt's success.

Any serious effort at a revolutionary uprising requires winning a section of the masses to an understanding that the existing state cannot be a vehicle for real change, but must be

13 "Critical Crossroads in Nepal: Presentation to the Newly Reorganized CPN-M," *Revolution*, no. 297, March 10, 2013. <http://revcom.us/a/297/critical-crossroads-in-nepal-en.html>.

systematically dismantled through revolution.¹⁴ Along with his classic work, *The State and Revolution*, read Lenin's other fierce polemics against reformist illusions between April and October 1917 to get a sense of how he hammered relentlessly at this theme from countless angles in order to rid the revolutionaries themselves of illusions that they could just keep building the mass movement, gradually building up the strength of the revolutionary Soviets while weakening the existing state, in some kind of linear evolutionary sense.¹⁵ The line guiding this "People's Revolt" was an eclectic mishmash: it was not based on a strategy for overthrowing the old state power and establishing a new revolutionary power independent of imperialism, at best it represented an attempt to win over a section of the old state, and in particular a section of the supposedly "patriotic" military chiefs, and share power with reactionaries.

Taken as a strategy, the notion of breaking away a section of the reactionary Nepal Army and uniting with it to defend the country's "national sovereignty" is a recipe for disaster.) Unfortunately, it still exercises influence over the CPN-M today, as we will see. As an article entitled "On the Critical Crossroads in the Nepal Revolution, and the Urgent Need for a Real Rupture with Revisionism" in the RCP's paper, *Revolution*, warned just beforehand, "[I]t must be said that this whole outlook and approach is full of, and in fact is based on, classical revisionist illusions. As a basic point of method, it ignores (or discounts) the general dialectical materialist understanding that things can, and often do, turn into their opposite – and specifically how this has frequently occurred when revolutionary forces have been drawn into the dynamics of electoral/constitutional processes, without smashing and dismantling the old, reactionary state, and the whole way in which the dynamics of such a process sap and rob the revolutionary forces of their initiative and strength."¹⁶

If a party is not firmly based on Marxism, invariably other criteria will determine the party's actions. While party members may be free to voice discontent at one or another symptom of revisionism, and while large sections of the members and leaders may *wish* the party would return to a revolutionary path, a party disoriented by revisionism is very likely to end up accommodating with the reactionary system, especially at moments of crisis. This is exactly what happened a year after the aborted 2010 revolt after Nepal's Parliament repeatedly failed to form a government. What did the Kiran group do? In a maneuver intended to deal a blow at UCPN(M) Chairman Prachanda, who himself coveted returning to the position of prime minister, the Kiran faction provided the indispensable votes of its 90+ Constituent Assembly members to elect as PM none other than... the "traitor" Bhattarai! And this was less than a year before the organizational break to form the new CPN(M)!

The CPN-M refrain that the essential problem was not the line of the Party but instead the "betrayal" of good policy by "traitors" leaves no choice but to once again raise the quote by Frederick Engels about this question:

"...when you inquire into the causes of the counterrevolutionary success, there you are met on every hand with the ready-made reply that it was 'Mister This' or 'Citizen That' who betrayed the people. Which reply may be very true or not, according to the circumstances. But under no

14 See the introduction by Frederick Engels to Karl Marx's *The Civil War in France*, pp. 15-18, as well as Section III of Marx's work itself, where he says, on p. 64, "[T]he working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes." He emphasized this as one of the main lessons of the 1871 Paris Commune. Foreign Languages Press, Peking, third edition, 1977.

15 V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vols. 24, 25 and 26, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964.

16 "On the Critical Crossroads in the Nepal Revolution, and the Urgent Need for a Real Rupture with Revisionism." http://revcom.us/a/200/Nepal_crossroads-en.html

circumstances does it explain anything, not even how it came to pass that the people allowed themselves to be thus betrayed. And what poor chance stands a political party whose entire stock in trade consists in the knowledge of the solitary fact that 'Citizen So-and-So' is not to be trusted."¹⁷

Indeed, how is it that those now leading the CPN-M "*allowed* themselves to be betrayed"? Whatever Bhattarai's personal intentions, isn't it utterly clear that the dozens of Party leaders and thousands of comrades who fought through the ten years of People's War did not set out to "betray" the revolution? The only hint of an answer to this is given in two short paragraphs in "Let's forward" on the shortcomings of the "revolutionary faction," which argue that their main errors were "fideism, liberalism and metaphysics." By fideism, they explain that they mean "to believe in any power or individual with full devotion. We believed that the faith on the leadership of Prachanda which we had shown is our weakness." The self-criticism of liberalism essentially means, in their words, "to remain indifference to any negative aspect," in other words, again, not struggling harder with Prachanda. As for metaphysics, this means, in their words, "[T]he thought in which the subject always observes the things, events and process only by one angle. It observes only either positive or negative parts but not as a whole." So once again, in the absence of any other reference at all to how this might apply to other policy, this seems to refer simply to the way that the "revolutionary faction" viewed Prachanda, i.e., one-sidedly and religiously.

When you look for a materialist explanation of how a leadership that led major breakthroughs in the course of ten years of People's War went off the tracks, there's just nothing but empty denunciations of two "traitors," with no idea of how to prevent the same sort of "betrayal" happening again. The CPN-M has yet to come to grips with the fact that the problem is not any particular personality, nor a matter of the right tactics, but the ideological and political line of the Party itself. So it is hardly surprising that, as we will now see, the likelihood that its solution for extracting itself from the revisionist swamp it is in has, in Engels' terms, only a "poor chance" – until and unless it takes a radically different approach to identifying and fighting against the revisionism that has done such havoc.

It is easy to blame the revisionist U-turn on two "traitors." But this also misses Mao's whole point that "the ideological and political line determines everything." What are the political and ideological elements that led Prachanda and Bhattarai to conclude that it was impossible to pursue the revolution to the establishment of new democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat? Why should we assume that others are immune from these same tendencies and influences? And what are the criteria for determining if "betrayal" has taken place? Revisionism is not essentially a question of intentions.

CPN-M's main slogan today: "People's Revolt on the Foundation of People's War"

The first question that should occur to anyone who learns that this is the central slogan of the new CPN-M just has to be, *what* People's War? The war has been over for almost a decade now. The red base areas were liquidated years ago, and the PLA is now utterly dissolved. Furthermore, not only have the practical means of waging revolution been thrown away, but the whole orientation of fighting for a radically different society, as part of the world proletarian revolution, has also been transformed into using the existing state to make minor reforms on

¹⁷ Frederick Engels, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1977, p. 4.

behalf of sections of the masses. So what could it possibly mean in this situation to say that the People's War is the "foundation for a people's revolt" and what kind of People's War would it be anyway?

The CPN-M leadership has an answer to this: the "foundation of People's War" refers to the hundreds of former PLA soldiers who are still loyal to the CPN(M), and the support that the People's War won in the hearts of millions. Or as Gaurav put it in his speech to the 7th Congress in January 2013: "Our base areas are gone but the people are still there. Our courts are gone but the people are still there. Our schools are gone but the people are still there... Our revolution will not be like Russia's revolution. And it will not be like China's revolution. It will be like Nepal's revolution... On the basis of the gains of the people's war we will make a people's revolt ."¹⁸

First, these two factors – the existence of PLA veterans and the sympathy of people from the former base areas – could indeed be powerful assets for a new Party that had broken with revisionism and was developing a revolutionary line and program. But without a rupture with the revisionist line, and in the absence of a powerful campaign to take this rupture to the masses of people to arm them with this understanding, then the CPN-M's "foundations" amount to wishful thinking, or worse, dangerous populism.

Even if there had been a real rupture with revisionism, referring to the remnants of the PLA and the memory of the People's War as constituting the "foundation of People's War" would be dangerously misleading, and yet another example of the pragmatist, instrumentalist approach to reality known as "political truth" – declaring as "true" that which is politically expedient – that became so deeply rooted in the Nepal Party under Prachanda, and continues to plague the new CPN-M. War is not constituted of memories and veterans, it is a very concrete state of affairs – a "state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country," as the Oxford English Dictionary defines it.

Furthermore, promise of a "people's revolt on the foundation of People's War" is part of an eclectic strategy that again fails to rupture with the Party's previous policy. This slogan is coupled with the CPN-M's ongoing strategy of "making a balance between government and the street" – this "People's Revolt" corresponds to the "street" aspect, while the "government" focus of the CPN-M policy is on mobilizing for a "national round table" to include what it calls all the country's "patriotic, left and progressive forces." This mainly involved work with other parliamentary parties, and centered on the alliance led by the CPN-M to oppose the arrangements made by the other main parliamentary parties, including the UCPN(M), for the national elections held in November 2013. (The November 2013 elections ended in a big defeat for Prachanda and Bhattarai's UCPN[M]), which finished in third place.)

Today years of a wrong line have left the communists in an objectively far weaker position. Knowledge of the workings and membership of the new Party has been exposed, the PLA is now fully demobilized and dismantled, and the Party would also face the necessity of having to mobilize masses who had "heard it all before" and may well prove capable of sensing that, while the faces may have changed, it's the same old line. And, since far from settling accounts with the revisionist line and rupturing from its reformist conception of the state the new CPN-M is still operating from within that same overall framework, unless this is fundamentally broken with

18 As quoted in "Maoists regroup in Nepal: Ruptures and obstacles;" *Liam Wright*, Kasama, <http://kasamaproject.org/component/content/article/64-winter-has-its-end/4393-maoists-regroup-in-nepal>

there is no more chance of a successful attempt at a real revolution than in the ill-fated "people's revolt" in 2010.

In short a "people's revolt" is not a revolution; it will not lead to the new state power that can only come by breaking out of the framework that the CPN-M is still locked inside of.

The new CPN-M's focus on a "national round table" uniting all the patriotic and progressive forces in Nepal is linked to a strategy that identifies defense of the country's "national sovereignty" as the key link in advancing the revolution right now, with India considered the principal threat to Nepal's sovereignty. An all-around critique of this policy and the CPN-M's eclectic understanding of internationalism and the way that is linked to its reformist approach to the state is beyond the scope of this article, which will confine itself to two main points. First, Nepal's national sovereignty is an idle question if it is left within the existing reactionary set-up rather than developing a strategy based on the need to do away with the reactionary state entirely and establish a revolutionary state *led by the proletariat* that ruptures with the existing world imperialist system. It creates the illusion of some "third way," some alternative to the rule of either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, which in fact does not exist.

Second, this continues a wrong pragmatic approach to the "tactic" of "using contradictions among the enemy" and maintains wrong verdicts that arose under the revisionist line about the nature and role of major reactionary powers, and it raises nationalism above proletarian internationalism. Consider how the new CPN-M invited a representative of the Communist Party of China as its "chief guest" at the meeting launching its founding congress, and runs articles arguing that China is playing a "positive role" in the world.¹⁹ To the degree that this is being done to counter the influence of India, historically the dominant power in Nepal, it ignores the fact that China has become the global sweatshop of imperialism, every bit as much a vicious oppressor of hundreds of millions of its own people as India, if not more so – the main difference being that China is not the principal power *dominating Nepal*. Yes, it is necessary to take account of contradictions among the reactionary powers, but even if there are tactical maneuvers that might be appropriate, what possible justification could there be for having the Chinese ambassador as the Party's "chief guest" at its founding congress?! What kind of impact will this kind of cynical realpolitik have on the new generation coming into political life in Nepal and all over the world – such as Africa's youth, who see China joining in the imperialists' rapacious pillaging of that continent's natural resources, and who are then told by Maoist revolutionaries that China is a "positive force" in the world!²⁰

This cynical realpolitik also reflects and reinforces the nationalist outlook that had risen to predominance in the Party in recent years. This took many different expressions – from describing the world's imperialist powers as the "international community" to distancing themselves from the revolutionary war led by the Maoists in India (as Prachanda did at a meeting in Delhi in 2006.)²¹ During the 2008 CA elections, the Party campaigned to make Nepal a "dynamic hub between China and India" so as to develop the country into "the Switzerland of

19 See issue no. 1 of the English language publication associated with the CPN-M, *Red Front*, for several examples. <http://www.wprmbritain.org/?p=1382>

20 For more on the need for communists to be "emancipators of humanity" and the new synthesis's rupture with tendencies in the international communist movement to conflate nationalism and internationalism, see the article "Polemical Reflections on Bernard D'Mello's Essay 'What Is Maoism?' Scientifically Comprehending, Firmly Upholding and Going Beyond Maoism for a New Stage of Communism," *Demarcations*, no. 2. http://demarcations-journal.org/issue02/demarcations-polemical_reflections.html

21 Interview with Prachanda, *The Hindu*, February 6, 2006.

South Asia." There is not one word of criticism of this naked narrow nationalism in the dozens of pages written by the new CPN-M and its leaders on the Party's history available in English – and if it exists elsewhere, the CPN-M should make it known!

From late 2005, the RCP,USA waged sharp struggle against the erroneous positions of the old CPN(M) (and then UCPN[M]) in numerous letters and articles – so, now that the new CPN-M has ruptured from the UCPN(M) and denounces it as revisionist, what does it make of this long and well documented struggle? While not a word has made it into print – which is already telling in itself of the lack of seriousness of the new CPN-M leadership – one argument made by some people goes as follows: while your Party made many relevant criticisms, taking up these positions much earlier would have left us in the Kiran faction isolated and alone in some kind of dogmatic purity. As proof of this, the proponents of this argument point to the fate of other former Party leaders, like Matrika Yadav and Mani Thapa, who rebelled at earlier points in the peace process against specific policies being taken by the Party, but have not succeeded in building a mass revolutionary alternative. Without getting into discussion about the particular merits of leaving the Party at one time or another (which is beyond the purview of this author), the main answer to this, to the extent that it is a viewpoint held by those in the CPN-M, is that years of conciliation with revisionism, of swallowing one compromise after another with the established order in pursuit of what is commonly called the "politics of the possible" has left the new Party without a revolutionary line even today! The Party is still stuck in a morass of reformism, social democracy, nationalism, eclecticism and pragmatism, with a fundamentally erroneous conception of state power, of new democratic revolution and how it would lead to communism, and of the scientific methodology required to lead the revolutionary struggle.

And it must be pointed out in response to this claim that still today, almost a decade after Bhattarai issued his theoretical salvo against the theory and practice of communism, his polemic has yet to be answered by anyone from the Nepal Party, even though it still largely dominates the Party's thinking. So in other words, to the charge that taking on the revisionist line in the Party with a revolutionary line would have led to isolation, we would like to ask: how do you know, *since no one's ever really tried it?!* And if you are going to allow numbers to take priority over line, as you do with this argument, then there will also be strong pressure to end up back in the arms of the UCPN(M) of Prachanda and Bhattarai – which is, after all, still much larger than the new CPN-M, and still upholds Maoism in words.

More fundamentally, how many times has the truth of Mao's observation been confirmed, that if the line is incorrect, even if you have soldiers, you will lose them? And if the line is incorrect, leading no place good, what is the point anyway? Wasn't the loss of the thousands of PLA soldiers as a revolutionary force – with or without "dignity" – yet more proof that the domination of the wrong line will lead to devastating losses? While conciliation with revisionism will undoubtedly win some adherents, ultimately it will lead to isolation from those who are most oppressed, those in whom the thirst for revolution burns most fiercely. Nor is it the job of revolutionaries just to reflect the short-term sentiments of even broad masses – time and time again, sticking to the revolutionary road requires struggling against the illusions bred by the workings of the system and more generally what Lenin described as "the spontaneous striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie."²² This is a key task of the communist vanguard, so as

22 V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done*, Foreign Language Publishers, Peking, 1973, p. 48.

to keep the eyes of the masses on the prize of revolutionary state power, amidst the chops and changes of tumultuous times.²³

Rather than emerging as a revolutionary alternative to the UCPN(M) following a prolonged two-line struggle against revisionism, the new CPN-M instead has rejected only some of the gross manifestations and some visible expressions of that revisionism, with no real rupture with the political and ideological line and framework that gave rise to it. What needs to be done in the face of this is to go deeply into the foundations of the wrong line that prevented this rupture from taking place despite the desire and intentions of many of those who claim to want to carry forward the revolution. But it will also require looking in more detail at how the struggle in the Nepal revolution relates to the larger crossroads being faced by the international communist movement.

Part 2: The International Communist Movement and the new Party

A number of groups in RIM and some others enthusiastically greeted the split by the Kiran-led forces from the UCPN(M). Yet what a profound irony it is that many of those who are now hailing the new Party and being embraced by it in turn were also cheering as the revisionist line led the Party over the cliff in the first place!

The first example of this is two organizations at the heart of the initiative to regroup Maoist parties associated with the magazine *Maoist Road* (hereafter referred to as "roaders"), the Maoist Communist Party of Italy (PCMI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) – Naxalbari (CPI[ML]NB). The second example is an utterly counter-revolutionary website in the US, Kasama, "founded by Mike Ely several years ago with the intent of attacking the RCP and Bob Avakian in particular in very unprincipled ways... this website, while posing as a platform and forum for discussion of revolution and communism, has over several years engaged in activities that promote anti-communism and strengthen counter-revolution."²⁴ Kasama's opportunist line and methodology, inseparable from its overall counterrevolutionary activity, serves well as teacher by very negative example. A feature of Kasama's counter-revolutionary activity was to opportunistically attach themselves to the revolution in Nepal, promoting and celebrating exactly the line that was leading things away from revolution. When the RCP, USA was proceeding from a true internationalist perspective of waging struggle to help the Party in Nepal get back on a path to revolution, Kasama was attacking the RCP for its principled stand. All of these organizations have distinguished themselves for their long-standing defense of the revisionist line in Nepal and their virulent attacks both on the RCP's critique of that line and on the new synthesis more generally.

In 2013, Ajith, who has written the bulk of the theoretical articles produced by the CPI(ML)NB, published a lengthy attack "Against Avakianism,"²⁵ as he pejoratively terms Avakian's new synthesis of communism. In passing it includes a defense of his earlier positions on Nepal. Ajith

23 For more on this see Bob Avakian's analysis in *Ruminations and Wranglings* in the section, "Fundamental errors of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist): wrong conception of the problems, wrong 'solutions,'" on how the Nepal Party has theorized the view that spontaneity is always with the revolutionary forces after the initial seizure of power, and why this is wrong. <http://www.revcom.us/avakian/ruminations/BA-ruminations-en.html>

24 "Outright Piggery from the Camp of Counter-revolution," *Revolution* no. 249.

http://revcom.us/a/249/outright_piggery_from_the_camp_of_counter_rev_en.html

25 Ajith, "Against Avakianism." *Naxalbari*, July 2013, no. 4 "http://theNaxalbari.blogspot.com/2013/07/Naxalbari-issue-no-4.html"

angrily argues that "the charge made by the RCP that our Party was an 'enthusiastic supporter of the dismantling of revolution in Nepal' is an outrageous lie." As evidence for this, he argues that over the period from 2006 to 2010 the CPI(ML)NB issued a number of articles that made one or another criticism of the line of the CPN(M). This is true – and it is precisely what all of those "roaders" did – they questioned or sometimes even criticized one or another *aspect* of the CPN(M) line, or more generally, its "tactics," and warned of various dangers and pitfalls lying ahead, *while upholding the essence of the line and hailing the main practical steps the CPN(M) was taking, in particular the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the entry of the CPN(M) into the Interim Government in 2006 and the victory of the CPN(M) in the elections to the Constituent Assembly in 2008.* These groups and many other Maoists internationally hailed the results of the 2008 CA elections, which brought the UCPN(M) into heading up the government with Prachanda as Prime Minister, as a "victory," usually as a "victory of the People's War" – never mind that the PLA had been virtually surrendered, the revolutionary base areas dismantled and, most especially, that the elections were a maneuver by the imperialists and reactionaries to lure the Party off the revolutionary path and channel the mass revolt into the well-worn rut of parliamentary politics.²⁶

But there is no need for an in-depth excavation of how at every major step in this period the CPI(ML)NB supported the "dismantling of the revolution in Nepal," because evidence of this comes from Ajith's own pen just a few sentences later. He writes: "Later [2006-2007], when the CPN (Maoist) took the turn to ceasefire, alliance with ruling class political parties and interim government our Party took up an exhaustive study of the issue. *On the whole the new tactics of the CPN (Maoist) was accepted as justified.* At the same time serious dangers contained in it were also noted."²⁷ [Emphasis added]

Isn't this the same eclectic approach (which becomes even more clear as Ajith continues his argument) that has been instrumental to the "dismantling of the revolution" in Nepal for eight years now – on the one hand this, on the other hand that, while never identifying what constitutes the principal aspect of the matter! On the one hand, the "tactics" of the Party were "justified," but on the other they posed serious dangers – when what was happening on the ground in Nepal was step-by-step accommodation with the existing reactionary set-up, under the revisionist line adopted in 2005 at Chunwang.

Ajith accepts there were some problems with the Naxalbari line, but again tries to minimize them. After referring to the "doctrinaire approach exhibited by the RCP," he writes: "While rejecting doctrinaire evaluations of the CPN(M)'s tactics some correct aspects seen in the criticisms were acknowledged by us and we observed: 'It was pointed out that the CPN(Maoist) was disarming its ranks and the masses, *ideologically and politically*, by accepting such conditions (cantoning the PLA and dissolving local power centers), as they surrender revolutionary army and revolutionary power, *at least verbally*. This is correct. In failing to examine the issue from this angle, from the angle of the ideological significance of the CONCESSIONS made by the CPN(Maoist), we too made a pragmatist error.'"²⁸ [Emphasis added. Capitals in original.]

26 For instance, see the following article "Maoists of Turkey: Peoples of Nepal Should Be Given Strong International Support," by the Maoist Communist Party of Turkey (MKP). <https://southasiarev.wordpress.com/2008/09/22/maoists-of-turkey-peoples-of-nepal-should-be-given-strong-international-support/>

27 "Against Avakianism." See also *New Wave*, December 2006. <http://bannedthought.net/India/CPI-ML-Naxalbari/TheNewWave/nw-2-full-final-1.pdf>

28 "Against Avakianism," footnote 266.

Here is a fuller exposition – from 2010 – of the CPI(ML)NB's view that Ajith is seeking to minimize: "The October 2006 Central Enlarged Meeting (CEM) of our Party concluded that '... the political-organizational plans of the CPN(Maoist) adhere to the tasks and orientation of new democratic revolution. Contrary to the propaganda done by the enemy and the revisionists, as well as the doubts created in the minds of some comrades, *the present tactics of the CPN(Maoist) do not in any way indicate a desire to abandon the road of revolution for the sake of a share in the existing power.* On the contrary, they indicate an MLM orientation and its application. Their tactics are serving the strategy of new democratic revolution. They are applying these tactics to fight and complete the new democratic revolution. The CPN(Maoist) is leading a great political struggle and it is our internationalist duty to uphold and build support for it."²⁹ (Emphasis added)

Ajith admits error only to minimize it and render it meaningless. The surrender of the army and the dissolution of red political power were merely "verbal"!? This will be astonishing news to the thousands of PLA soldiers whose arms were sequestered and who were confined to UN-supervised cantonments, and to the reactionary police who returned to the posts from which they'd been driven by the People's War all over the countryside! Ajith's treatment of these developments as merely "verbal" and as "tactics" belies the seriousness of war itself, which is waged not just ideologically and politically, but by opposing very material forces – which is why Mao insisted that whatever negotiations might be entered into with the enemy, the PLA and the revolutionary base areas must never be given up.

This approach of repeatedly treating such matters as just a question of "the CPN(M)'s tactics" reflects Ajith's own stubborn negation of the decisiveness of ideological and political line and the fact that the CPN(M)'s surrender of the PLA and red power were not mere wrong tactics but *flowed from, reinforced and served the revisionist line adopted at Chunwang in 2005.* This is what Ajith is trying to resist with his denunciations of the "doctrinaire evaluations of the CPN(M)'s tactics." In doing this Ajith shares the wrong line of the CPN(M) itself, which in its Reply to the RCP's first letter dismissed the critique as "teaching us the ABCs," i.e., "doctrinaire" – as if it were worthless if not downright reprehensible to recall basic guiding principles of Marxism which have proven to be true, including in this very instance.

Indeed, with an impervious barrier between line and tactics like this, you couldn't slip a razor blade between the views of Ajith and the views of... yes, indeed, the infamous "traitor" Bhattarai. In a 2009 interview, Bhattarai argued, "To break with the old mode of production and leap into a new one, you have to break all the relations within the state backed by the army. And that inevitably requires the use of force. This is a law of history and a basic principle of MLM which nobody can revise... There is no question of our Party ever ending this basic principle... By adhering to this basic principle we waged armed Protracted People's War (PPW) from 1996 to 2006. But after 2006 we made a certain departure *in our tactical line.*"³⁰ [Emphasis added] Bhattarai goes on to reassure readers that the CPN(M) will never surrender the PLA or dissolve the base areas, and over and over repeats that what looks like blatant reformism is really merely a "tactic" – a misrepresentation that Ajith was and still is unable to see through, precisely because he shares key elements of Bhattarai's approach.

29 From "On the line and tactics of the Nepal Maoist movement," Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) NAXALBARI, October 2010 <http://bannedthought.net/India/CPI-ML-Naxalbari/Naxalbari-Magazine/Number03/OnNepalLine-101000.pdf>

30 "Nepal: Interview with Comrade Baburam Bhattarai." <http://www.wprmbritain.org/>

For Ajith, the RCP's "doctrinaire" quality is reflected in its Letter of March 19, 2008 to the Nepal Party where the RCP acknowledges that "in the specific conditions prevailing after the collapse of the absolute monarchy in April 2006 it would have been difficult and perhaps undesirable to continue uninterruptedly the armed struggle or refuse to enter into negotiations with the SPA [Seven Party Alliance]." Ajith mocks this, arguing, "If this objectiveness of the possibility for negotiations (also implying a possible temporary settlement) is accepted, *then the line and tactics that allowed the party to utilize it* cannot be summarily dismissed. On the other hand, if it is denied or treated superficially then the admittance of 'specific conditions' and negotiations will only be a meaningless gesture." (Italics in original.)

Here is a concise statement of Ajith's understanding of the relationship between political and ideological line and objective reality. For Ajith, line is understood as being what "allows the Party to utilize" a specific situation – so if the line "allows the Party to utilize" the situation, then that is the criterion for its correctness, i.e., it cannot be "summarily dismissed." Here line becomes *determined* by the necessity embodied in specific objective conditions – it conceives of development only as what can be linearly extrapolated out of those conditions. What is needed instead is to grasp communism as a science that is used to analyze the contradictoriness of reality, and yes, the necessity arising out of objective conditions, which has to be transformed through struggle – but the necessity confronting the communists, and the constraints acting on them, are not only determined by the specific immediate situation, which Ajith is trapped by, but rather have to be considered within the context of the larger necessity confronting humanity – the need for revolution. In other words, in assessing the need to make tactical adjustments – and adjustments were certainly called for at the time of Jana Andolan 2, as is clearly spelled out in the Letters from the RCP to the CPN(M) – it is essential to ensure that you do not compromise or undercut the overall strategic goals and principles in response to the exigencies of the moment. The basic and fundamental question, as addressed in the RCP letters is what is the framework and strategic perspective from which the negotiations are being approached, not the line and tactics "that allow[ed] the party to utilize it."³¹

This is why, for Ajith, putting the PLA in cantonments and dissolving the revolutionary base areas did not necessarily go against core principles of a Marxist understanding of state power. Nor does he see these "tactics" as the predictable fruit immanent to the revisionist line adopted at Chunwang, but instead treats these as mere "tactics" that stand or fall based on their "usefulness" to the Party. The question of usefulness *to what* becomes lost from sight, as does revolution itself, which becomes submerged under the familiar economist approach of, the movement is everything, the final aim nothing. And this begs the question of what if in some given conditions adhering to revolutionary principle might very well lead to defeat or setbacks in the short run? Since, in Ajith's view a line then becomes an impediment that does not "allow the party to utilize" the conditions at all, then clearly there is no choice other than to dump principle. (Isn't this exactly what happened to the Marxists in World War 1 – the principle of internationalism was not renounced formally, at least by the leader of the German socialists and theoretician Karl Kautsky, but in his eyes internationalism could not be applied – and so the leading socialists

31 Summing this up more generally, Avakian argued in *Making Revolution, Emancipating Humanity*, Part 2, that the communists must seek to "grasp the living dialectical relation between the objective and subjective factors and the ability of the latter (the subjective factor – the conscious actions of people) to react back on and to transform the former (the objective factor – the objective conditions)." <http://www.revcom.us/avakian/makingrevolution2/index.html>

called on their workers to side with their own rulers to gun down the workers of the "enemy."³² Practical reality trumped "doctrinaire" principles.

Despite Ajith's talk of the PLA's cantonment being merely "verbal," he and his Party were in fact fully aware of what was happening in real world Nepal. As *New Wave*, the CPI(ML)NB publication, wrote in December 2006: "According to the new agreement, more or less on the lines proposed by CPN(M), the weapons of the PLA will be kept within its cantonments, under UN supervision. But the CPN(M) has retained the right to carry weapons to safeguard its leadership and the cantonments. The Nepal Army will be confined to its barracks, except for guard duties, and an equal number of its weapons will also be locked up under UN supervision. It will be governed by a new Military Act and the necessity to democratize and downsize it has been accepted. The trusted servitor of Indian expansionism, Prime Minister GP Koirala, has been forced to back off from his arrogant position that the Maoists cannot be accepted as a political force so long as they keep their weapons. *All of this is also a sharp blow at the attempts of U.S. imperialism and Indian expansionism to prevent any granting of equal status to the PLA in relation to the Nepal Army.*"³³ [Emphasis added]

What a stunning display of naked eclecticism on the question of state power – the PLA and its weapons are confined to isolated cantonments in the country side, cut off from their roots among the masses, wild illusions are promoted about the promise to "democratize and downsize the Nepal Army," but for Ajith and the CPI(ML)NB this constitutes a "sharp blow" against imperialism and expansionism! Here again we see Ajith's naked eclecticism at work... but how important is all this anyway, Ajith would like us to believe, since in his world these are merely "tactics"!

This dualistic separation of line and tactics is why today Ajith sums up that in 2008, "New tactics had to be formulated, but premised on the reality that the Chunwang process was exhausted by mid-2007 itself. New tactics are needed; not because the CA elections are over and monarchy abolished, but because *the Party had made sufficient headway by 2007 in the tactical aims set by it in 2005*, as part of preparing for the final assault for political power. After all, this was the declared aim of the Chunwang tactics." [Emphasis added]

But what was the real content of this "headway" that Ajith labels "sufficient": by mid-2007, the PLA had been surrendered, the base areas dissolved, and the Party was part of the Interim Government engaging in the CA process to re-legitimize the reactionary state – so what on earth does it mean to say that "the Chunwang process was exhausted by mid-2007"! When was it ever any good in the first place?! This was not a matter of a revolutionary political and ideological line with corresponding tactics that had made "sufficient headway" and become "exhausted," this was a wrong line leading the Party to throw away the fruit of years of revolutionary war and embark on a road which would lead them to help oppress those they had formerly been leading towards liberation.

32 This is the thrust of Karl Kautsky's argument that the resolutions passed by the Socialist International before World War I vowing to respond to imperialist war by seeking to make revolution had become inoperative because "never is government so strong, never are parties so weak as at the outbreak of war," and consequently, in the words of a fellow renegade, "Hopes for revolution have proved illusory." V. I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second International, Collected Works*, vol. 21, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, pp. 215 and 212, respectively.

33 "On Developments in Nepal." <http://bannedthought.net/India/CPI-ML-Naxalbari/TheNewWave/nw-2-full-final-1.pdf>

The point is that the Party could have maintained a correct political and ideological line in this period and found *revolutionary* tactics to seize on the mass upsurge in 2006 against the monarchy and develop broader and deeper unity, especially with intermediate forces in the Kathmandu Valley. Take, for example, the problem of how to respond to the widespread hopes – and illusions – about democracy among the middle classes in the Kathmandu Valley. As was argued in the RCP Letters to the CPN(M), there would be much to learn from the method and approach brought forward by Avakian, in part encapsulated by the conception of "a solid core with a lot of elasticity." This approach applies throughout the process of making revolution, before and after the seizure of power. It is possible and necessary to allow a flowering of diverse political opinions and political groupings, with a view towards taking society towards the radical ruptures involved in the achievement of communism – the rupture with all traditional relations and all traditional ideas, in both word and deed. Is it really so unimaginable that tactics that reflected and served the achievement of this strategic goal could have mobilized masses, including significant ranks of the middle classes in the Kathmandu Valley, amidst the situation of tumult and crisis existing in Nepal in those and the following years?

Note that Ajith's critique of the new synthesis is over 100 pages in length, but not even two pages are devoted to the struggle over Nepal. It's impossible not to wonder whether this isn't in part because Ajith would like to brush this protracted struggle, which was bound up with the collapse of RIM, under the rug, since it's so revealing of the impotence of the dogmatist line (mixed with plenty of old-fashioned rightism) of the "roaders," and their inability to offer any substantive critique of the debacle in Nepal, or any solution. We would like to ask Ajith this: how do you explain the fact that by your own admission your Party was not only unable to identify the revisionist line in Nepal, but instead outright supported the surrender of the PLA and red base areas as part of a "sharp blow" against imperialism and expansionism and then hailed the 2008 election victory, a key step in the legitimization of the discredited reactionary state, *several years after the RCP had begun sounding the alarm urgently in RIM about precisely this danger?! And as for your proposed new international Maoist organization, which is to be built on "taking People's War as its reference point and strategic anchor,"* we would like to ask you what assistance you think it will be able to offer revolutionaries in the future when you have not thoroughly summed up and ruptured from the underlying methodological errors that blinded you to the importance of the surrender of the PLA and red political power that are such indispensable elements for waging any real People's War?

As for the Maoist Communist Party of Italy, one of the other leading forces in the "roaders," their views are basically just a vulgarized repetition of Ajith's more articulated line. Having hailed the 2008 CA elections victory, the PCMI as late as autumn 2009 – four full years after the initial RCP Letter to the CPN(M), and a year after the CPN(M) had formed a government with Prachanda as PM in Nepal – conducted a nationwide tour of Italy by Parvati, Bhattarai's wife and herself a champion of the revisionist line in the Nepal Party. This did not prevent these hardened practitioners of realpolitik from appearing at the new CPN-M's 7th Congress in 2013 and denouncing the "traitors" Bhattarai and Prachanda, without, needless to say, a word of self-criticism for their own years-long support of the revisionist line.³⁴

While examining the proposals of the "roaders" for the ICM is beyond the scope here, it's worth a brief consideration with respect to how these proposals relate to the revolution in Nepal.

³⁴ Given this penchant to belittle theory and their imperviousness to critical thinking in general, it's not too surprising that the last thing on the minds of this trend is any self-critical interrogation about their role in cheering the Nepalese revolution over the cliff.

Together with the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan, and despite the shameful history of support for revisionism in Nepal by all three of these parties, they claim to have a solution for the revolution in Nepal, and for the international communist movement more generally – which is to adopt "People's War as its reference point and strategic anchor" – a point emphasized by the PCMI in its presentation to the CPN-M's 7th Congress.

This reflects the tendency pointed out in the *Manifesto* from the RCP, common to both of the "mirror opposites" in the international communist movement, to "reduce 'Maoism' to just a prescription for waging people's war in a Third World country, while again ignoring, or diminishing the importance of Mao's most important contribution to communism: his development of the theory and line of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and all the rich analysis and scientific method that underlay and made possible the development of that theory and line." This tendency is particularly marked in the trend championed by Ajith, but is perhaps taken furthest by the Revolutionary Communist Party of Canada. In its statement to the CPN-M 7th Congress and, without a word on the need to dig up the revisionist line that derailed the Nepal revolution, the RCP of Canada concludes: "The experience of your Party over the last 20 years also showed the power and superiority of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. It especially demonstrated that *the best way to defend and develop MLM, and especially to make it a real force for revolutionary change, is to apply it in practice.*"³⁵ (Emphasis added)

This summation of the experience of the Nepal Maoist Party piles error on error. A pragmatist *disdain* for theory was one of the main reasons why Bhattarai's theoretical onslaught on communist theory and practice was never answered, allowing a revisionist line to run rampant in the Party and lead it into the swamp in the first place. And now the Party is being urged that the "best way to defend and develop MLM... is to apply it in practice," which can only mean continuing along this same path, when what is called for more than ever is a radical rupture with this whole approach and a firm and comprehensive – *and theoretical* – repudiation of the theory that led this revisionist practice.³⁶

The turn to the right in Nepal: in some quarters an occasion for joy

Looking back almost a decade later, it should be clear that the line and practice of the Nepal Party in the critical period of 2005-2006 represented a decisive turning point, away from the pursuit of the revolutionary overthrow of the state and the establishment of a new revolutionary power to serve world revolution, and instead towards a path that would lead to increasing accommodation with imperialism and reaction. This also dealt a sharp blow to revolutionaries and the hopes of the oppressed around the world. But for some, this was an occasion for joy – and particularly so for Mike Ely, founder of Kasama. Ely enthusiastically and wholeheartedly embraced the line and practice of the Nepal Party, carrying out campaigns of support for the

35 Statement of Fred Engler, for the Central Committee of the RCP of Canada), *NEPAL: Salute from Revolutionary Communist Party of Canada to Communist Party of Nepal- Maoist* <http://maoistroad.blogspot.fr/2013/01/nepal-salute-from-revolutionary.html>

36 It's worth pointing out that advocating or even waging armed struggle itself does not save a party from economism. Doesn't delinking the communist goal from the revolutionary war needed to win state power wind up turning the armed struggle into nothing more than an armed economism: the movement, though armed, is everything, the final aim nothing? Is it any wonder then that the outlook of the RCP of Canada and PCM of Italy has, in both cases, wound up in combining decades-old calls to launch "protracted people's war" in these countries with practice that is mainly focused on the kind of militant trade unionism that has long characterized revisionist parties in the imperialist countries?

revolution in Nepal and issuing pamphlets to promote the Nepal Party, welcoming the Party's entry into the Interim Government and hailing its participation in the 2008 CA elections.³⁷

The problems of the CPN(M) and especially the failure of the May 2010 revolt to lead to victory has been reduced to a question of "traitors" by many international supporters of the revisionist line in Nepal, including Kasama, which wrote: "But just as they [CPN(M)] were on the verge of a major breakthrough, in 2010, as they mobilized millions to shut down every city in the country for six days through general strikes and blockades, the revolution was betrayed by Prachanda and Bhattarai. These leaders blinked, and backed down, and called off the strikes."³⁸

Kasama does not and cannot go after the eclectic line that robbed the revolution of any initiative and strength, precisely because it shares this same eclecticism. In an April 2013 article on Nepal, Kasama still argues, "The ruling army of Nepal is unlike the state of other oppressed countries where the state is usually directly integrated into global imperialism. In Nepal, the state has historically been of a feudal-nationalist type (one that bitterly oppressed the people while resisting integration into the imperialist world system)."³⁹ No, Kasama, the principal aspect of state power in Nepal is that it is very much integrated into the imperialist world system and enforces the interests of imperialism and reaction, and in particular of your own ruling class, the U.S. imperialists, with brutal efficiency. It is worth noting that Kasama has nothing to say about the "minor" fact that during the period of this ill-fated revolt "betrayed" by Prachanda and Bhattarai, Kasama itself promoted both of them for their "fresh thinking" and "creative" application of Maoism in formulating this thesis about the state and imperialism that formed part of the theoretical basis for the Party policies Kasama now hypocritically condemns.

Kasama's approach to the decisive issues facing the Nepal revolution incorporated a social-democratic conception of the state. Consider how Ely analyzed the Nepal Party's participation in the 2008 CA elections, under the influence of the Chunwang line: "... when the other parties agreed to electing a Constituent Assembly it was a major (shocking) and bitterly fought concession to the front-rank quintessentially-communist demands of fifty years. [A]nd it was a step away from parliamentarism and a refutation of the right of parliament to decide the future of Nepal. And it represented a de-legitimization of the rotten Nepali parliamentary politics." His conclusion: "the arguments of the Nepali Maoists have been anything but a call for a 'peaceful parliamentary road.'" ⁴⁰

37 Along with glowing post-election interviews Kasama published on its site with Bhattarai, Prachanda and Parvati, see such posts as "Leupp: A Maoist Sweep – Electoral Revolution in Nepal" (<http://kasamaproject.org/south-asia-revolution/395-27leupp-a-maoist-sweep-electoral-revolution-in-nepal>) or "Prachanda: Nepal's People Will Seize Power," (<http://kasamaproject.org/south-asia-revolution/1044-76prachanda-nepal-s-people-will-seize-power>) and the longer FIRE pamphlet produced and distributed by Kasama in 2009, which hailed the CA election victory as "pushing forward the revolutionary process under new conditions."

(<http://kasamaproject.org/south-asia-revolution/1743-75new-pamphlet-a-revolution-at-the-brink-stand-with-nepal>). Kasama's support for the blatantly revisionist line in the Nepal Party continued even longer than in the case of most of the dogmatist forces like Ajith, extending up through Prachanda's 2009 visit to the United Nations in New York and beyond. Kasama posted a link to an interview with Bhattarai (yes, *that* Bhattarai, the "traitor") conducted by a World People's Revolutionary Movement-Britain delegation to Nepal in early autumn 2009, without a word of criticism, and moreover urged its readers "to circulate these pieces widely." <http://www.wprmbritain.org/?p=926>

38 "Maoists regroup in Nepal: Ruptures and obstacles:", *Liam Wright* <http://kasamaproject.org/projects/revolution-in-south-asia/4393-maoists-regroup-in-nepal>

39 "It's on [sic] – revolutionary openings in Nepal," April 2013. *eric ribellarsi* <http://kasamaproject.org/south-asia-revolution/4428-legitimacy-crisis-and-revolutionary-opportunity-in-nepal>

Ely is not very far from Orwellian double-speak here. In Ely's world, the revolutionaries walking into the imperialists' CA parliamentary elections trap somehow represents a "step away from" parliamentarism, and instead of this electoral participation giving a new face-lift to the discredited reactionary state, which is what actually happened, somehow this becomes "de-legitimization of parliamentary politics." Are there any conditions under which it might have been possible and necessary to take part in these kind of elections? This cannot be ruled out absolutely. But 1) there was a revisionist line leading all this, a line that among other things had dropped advocacy of a new democratic revolution in favor of an illusory classless "transitional republic," with all the reformist illusions about state power that entailed, and 2) these elections were *preconditioned on an agreement* by which the PLA had been confined, its arms locked away, and the red base areas dissolved.

Isn't it crystal clear that the parties' agreeing to the Constituent Assembly was not a "concession" but a way to bring the Maoists into the fold of parliamentary elections and politics? Ely's revisionism is openly on display when he deems the demand for the Constituent Assembly a "front-rank quintessentially communist demand."

Kasama's approach was also marked by pragmatism, empiricism, eclectics and a corresponding dose of relativism, all of which go hand-in-hand. If, for instance, you make an eclectic analysis of a phenomenon and conclude that it has both negative features and positive features, but cannot distinguish which is principal, then how is it possible to have any certainty about which will prevail – leaving you open to being swept along by the tide of events. This went along with Kasama's strident dismissal of the value of a scientific analysis of the political and ideological line leading the revolution in Nepal.⁴¹

Here is how Ely himself puts this, writing about Nepal in February 2009, a year after the CA elections: "Speaking for myself, I constantly feel partially [sic] blinded by only having very fragmentary information.... and I find it hard to get an overall picture of where things are going. ... And luckily we don't NEED some final verdict in order to act on some important international responsibilities – and we need to grasp that in revolution there really are no final verdicts, and the slim reed of forward progress is always contested, controversial, and whipping about wildly in contingent winds."

It should be clear now that what has been "whipping about wildly in contingent winds" are in fact the "slim reeds" of Ely and Kasama – now tailing after the revisionist line associated with Bhattarai and Prachanda, now self-righteously denouncing the two of them as "traitors," whipped back and forth, naturally without a word of self-criticism, since for Ely being whipped about wildly like this is the natural state of revolutionaries. Here we see making a principle out of tailing "contingent winds" instead of applying communist methods to achieve strategic principles and goals.

Ely goes on, "It may be that this revolution in Nepal gets derailed. It may be that it eventually doesn't find its way through all the complex contradictions it faces. It may be (ultimately) that a

40 "Mike Ely: And if a Showdown Comes in Nepal...?", *Mike Ely. Comments Section, Mike E.*

<http://kasamaproject.org/south-asia-revolution/1267-99mike-ely-and-if-a-showdown-comes-in-nepal>

41 For more on Ely's agnosticism and relativism, and how this relates to his opposition to Avakian's critique of "class truth," see the pamphlet by an RCP writing group, *Stuck in the "Awful Capitalist Present" or Forging a Path to the Communist Future?*, especially the section on "Truth, a painfully tenuous link to reality?"

<http://www.revcom.us/a/polemics/NineLettersResponse.pdf>

wrong line gets consolidated. It may be that they ultimately get crushed by the National Army." This may happen, or that, or... who knows? In Ely's world, nothing is predictable, for in this world of relativist agnosticism, political and ideological line is no longer decisive. In Ely's world, who could possibly tell in advance that a line that conflated communism and democracy, that created an illusory sub-stage to the new democratic revolution, that put the PLA in cantonments and dissolved the red base areas, that centered the Party's work on parliamentary elections in the capital under the classic revisionist signboard of "restructuring the state" – who could possibly predict that such a line was bound to lead to capitulation?!

As the RCP writing group sums up in relation to Ely's relativist epistemology, "Revolutionary transformation requires a robust epistemological basis, a high degree of scientifically founded certainty in understanding of problem/solution that is grasped, acted upon and deepened by conscious forces, by a revolutionary people – including that without state power, all is illusion. By Mike Ely's criteria, and what he is arguing for, we will be paralyzed, as these are relative truths with 'a tenuous link' to reality [or as Ely puts it above on Nepal, a "slim reed" that "is always contested, controversial, and whipping about wildly in contingent winds"], and therefore provide little basis to act on and transform reality – especially in a radically different way. This is nothing but a call to tail spontaneity, to weasel out of radical ruptures and ultimately forsake revolution and communism altogether."

This relativist epistemology is what underlies Ely and Kasama's repeated attacks on the RCP's position as "dogmatism" based on "purist models," which Ely derides as "getting trapped in a permanent engagement about whether this revolution violates this or that principle (drawn mechanically) from Marx's *Gotha Programme* or Lenin's *State and Revolution*." He concludes: "[A] method that makes judgment on a few press releases [!!] will never understand the actual process of either revolution OR counterrevolution."⁴²

Leaving aside Ely's caricature of the RCP's analysis, which in actuality dealt with *the line of the Nepal Party* as expressed in key Party documents and in many different domains of practice, what should be utterly clear to anyone now, several years later, is that this kind of pragmatist contempt for political and ideological line will never lead anywhere except to accommodation with the existing reactionary order, to, as the writing group puts it, "forsake revolution and communism altogether," as in the case of Ely.

Kasama's epistemology also incorporates a big dose of empiricism, which can be seen in its numerous claims that it was presenting the "real" state of affairs in Nepal in contrast to RCP's bookish "dogma." It published numerous accounts of "fact-finding missions" which claimed to show as late as 2008 and 2009 that red political power continued to exist in the rural base areas and that the PLA had not really been dismantled, and various other blatant lies and deceptions that are now clearly exposed. Even as late as 2011, Ely was still trying to cast doubt on the dissolution of red political power, in arguments like the following: "Little is known about the revolutionary projects in the liberated zones. We know that there were revolutionary communes and courts – and we have heard off and on over the years (sometimes that they have been

42 Although written by Mike Ely, Kasama has a disclaimer to this article, saying it does not necessarily represent "the common view of the Kasama Project", yet it has been elevated from the comments in the thread to the main blog for a purpose, to further this type of thinking and methodology. "Dissecting Some Easy Rejection of Nepal's Revolution." *Mike Ely* <http://kasamaproject.org/projects/revolution-in-south-asia/1050-82dissecting-some-easy-rejection-of-nepal-s-revolution>

weakened after 2006, sometimes that they are being jump-started again).⁴³ As if in the situation prevailing then, in 2011, institutions of red political power could somehow be "jump-started" and spring up in the countryside, unprotected by a PLA and not linked to any broader red political power – and despite the Party's overall wrong line! This was part of Ely's effort to create an atmosphere of agnosticism and divert attention from the fact that the revisionist line he had long supported had definitely, with no element of uncertainty, led to the reversal of these precious institutions. Since belief in the continued existence of red power in the countryside and of the PLA was "useful" to Kasama, in particular for its campaign against Avakian and the RCP, then it must be true – no matter that in real life the PLA and the base areas had been liquidated long before, which no one denies any longer, and which flowed from the very real revisionist conceptions of the CPN-M that Ely trumpeted.

Ely and Kasama were not merely wrong in all this. This was not just some argument over esoteric principle. Many thousands of people died fighting for a revolutionary future for Nepal, and to serve the world revolution, as the Party had put it. A spirit of internationalist solidarity ran deep in that revolution – and millions had been mobilized – and in this crucial period of life and death struggle over line, as Nepal's revolutionaries looked to their comrades abroad, what did they find? Not the icy bath of revolutionary polemic so urgently needed to wake them up, but "Marxist" reassurances that the cliff they were heading over was really just a bend in the road that would take them on to victory. In contrast to the principled internationalist approach of the RCP which bent every effort to prevent the revolution from going into the abyss, forces like Ajith, PCMI and the like, while not the ones directly leading the revolution over the cliff, certainly did their part to cheer them on – with all the harm that did not only to the revolution in Nepal, but to the international communist movement as well.

In light of all this, it is fitting that the delegate chosen by Kasama to address the CPN-M 7th Congress in January 2013 was Liam Wright, who allied with Kasama in attacking the RCP. At the heart of Wright's post on the Kasama web site explaining his shift of allegiance was a lengthy defense of Baburam Bhattarai's "New State" article. Note that this was in 2010. In it Wright argues: "I would contest [argue] that Bhattarai's piece ["The Question of Building a New Type of State"] contains important communist thinking and is an example of creative application of communist theory to the concrete conditions in Nepal. Even with some problems with his summation of the history of the communist revolution, as well as some other secondary shortcomings, the main aspect of the piece is overwhelmingly positive and thoroughly communist."⁴⁴ Wright goes on to defend Bhattarai's revisionist theses on how multiparty electoral competition under socialism is the solution to preventing capitalist restoration, on how the standing army should be immediately dismantled under socialism, and so forth.

Given Kasama's longstanding support for the revisionist treachery in Nepal, what a startling sight then to see these erstwhile champions of the "fresh thinking" represented by the "overwhelmingly positive and thoroughly communist" Bhattarai now standing before the 7th CPN-M Congress congratulating the Party on its rupture with the "traitors" Prachanda and Bhattarai! And, needless to say, like their dogmatist "roader" counterparts, doing this without a hint of self-criticism! (And it is telling of the depths of the cynical pragmatism that the new

43 "One Approach to Nepal's Options: Bhattarai On Restructuring and Choices," *Comments Section*, Mike E, <http://kasamaproject.org/south-asia-revolution/3140-72one-approach-to-nepal-039-s-options-bhattarai-on-restructuring-choices>

44 "Critique of the RCP: Goodbye to a Residue of the Past", Liam Wright <http://kasamaproject.org/communist-organization/2773-5critique-of-the-rfp-goodbye-to-a-residue-of-the-past>

CPN-M has sunk to, that the Party promotes counterrevolutionaries like Kasama in full knowledge of the role they have played in relation to both the Nepal revolution and in making their life-purpose attacking the RCP and Avakian.)

The narrative that these groups would like to pass off as fact is that for years there had been a clear two-line struggle in the Nepal Party, between a revisionist faction and a revolutionary faction, and that by continuing to support the revolution in Nepal, they were ultimately preparing better grounds for the revolutionaries to prevail, as they now have. Being able to point to signs of life in the Nepal revolutionary movement today is thus important to the credibility of this narrative (as in the Kasama headline, "It's on – revolutionary openings in Nepal," which was the web site's home page headline for weeks in April 2013), as well as to concealing and pushing into the background their own role in giving support to the revisionist line at every crucial step over the years.

Few inside the ICM have dared to continue to follow the UCPN(M) of Prachanda and Bhattarai along its increasingly exposed path of capitulation to imperialism. The UCPN(M)'s revisionist line cannot help but become expressed in policies that have a clear and palpable impact in the real world: the final handing over of the PLA; presiding over an economy that is grounded in the exploitation of Nepal's wretchedly poor population, along with its caste system and patriarchal relations, all of which is viciously enforced by its apparatus of institutionalized repression, including its police, army and judiciary. This has increasingly been accompanied by a more nakedly pro-capitalist discourse, such as ex-PM Bhattarai's now open advocacy of a prolonged period of "capitalist development" in Nepal, supposedly in order to build up the ranks of the working class and prepare for a transition to socialism that will of course never come. With the real essence of the UCPN(M) increasingly exposed, however, those very forces who championed revisionism in the UCPN(M) before can now turn around and denounce it and hope to make the new CPN-M a vehicle for their aspirations.

A brief and concluding note on the new CPN-M, the struggle in the RIM, and the new synthesis of communism

Since the 7th CPN-M Congress in January 2013, some Party leaders have blamed the RCP's advocacy of the new synthesis of Avakian as a cause of the crisis in RIM today. Gaurav, for instance, has argued that the capitulation of Prachanda on the one hand, and the RCP's advocacy of Avakian's new synthesis as a qualitative advance in communism on the other hand, are responsible for the demise of RIM (in Gaurav's words: "the efforts to impose different types of 'synthesis' has merely bred split in the ICM").⁴⁵

The new CPN-M's view of the problems in the ICM is in fact based not on an evaluation of the correctness or incorrectness of the political and ideological line, but on *very different criteria*, as its history of RIM reveals.

Gaurav goes on to argue, "During the time of inception of the RIM in 1984, the then Communist Party of India (ML)(People's War), Maoist Communist Centre of India and Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) were not included, which was the biggest weakness." His main argument

45 "International communist movement and our role," by C.P. Gajurel [Gaurav], CPN-M Vice Chairman, *People's Voice*, a monthly bulletin of the CPN-M International Department, May 2013.
<http://kasamaproject.org/files/peoples-voice-1.pdf>

seems to be that these parties should have been included because they are "significant parties" "waging people's war."

What Gaurav omits here is any reference to the political and ideological line that led to and united the formation of RIM at that time – albeit unevenly and with contradiction – or of the line of those parties that did not support the formation of the RIM. The CPP, for instance, had upheld the reactionary 1976 coup in China by Hua Guofeng and denounced Mao's supporters, the so-called Gang of Four, as "ultra-leftists," and at the time of RIM's formation was even describing the Soviet Union of the 1980s as "socialist." There is also the "minor" matter that both the CPP and the CPI(ML) (PW) opposed the formation of an international organization of communists that would function as an "embryonic political and ideological center." The MCC did in fact join RIM in 2002 prior to the former's merger with the CPI(ML)(PW) to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist) in 2004.

This consistent tendency to not examine the fundamental ideological and political lines at stake is also what underlies Gaurav's assertion that "the efforts to impose different types of 'synthesis' has merely bred split in the ICM" – and including in this the struggle for Avakian's new synthesis of communism. This is also the underlying methodology that allows Gaurav to equate and lump together as "different type of 'synthesis'" Prachanda's revisionist turn and capitulation, and Avakian's advance in the science of communism, with no reference to the actual content of either. For all this talk and negative pronouncements, there is no shred of actual engagement with the new synthesis, especially its method and approach – and no substantive reason given for its rejection or any indication of disagreements.

Gaurav elides the entire history of line struggle and polarization in the RIM over cardinal questions of communist revolution that erupted over developments in the People's Wars in Nepal and Peru. As pointed out above, at a time when the RCP was struggling with the original CPN(M) over the direction of the revolution in Nepal, much of the RIM was cheering them on, if not passive. The letter to RIM parties and organizations incisively states, "The extreme failure of RIM to respond energetically and correctly to the emergence of the revisionist line in Nepal was not inevitable, but it is, unfortunately, consistent with underlying and long-standing erroneous ideological and political tendencies that have grown over time within RIM and the ICM more generally."

Another concentrated manifestation of this, preceding the debacle in Nepal, was constituted by tendencies in RIM towards instrumentalism, pragmatism, and, among some forces, lack of principle, in the approach to developments that took place in the Communist Party of Peru following the capture of PCP Chairman Gonzalo in 1992 and the emergence of what came to be called the Right Opportunist Line (ROL) calling for an end to the People's War there. This is detailed in the RCP Letter to RIM Parties and Organizations.

All of this, including the underlying lines and frameworks that led many RIM parties to tail the revisionist road being taken by the erstwhile CPN(M), is completely glossed over by Gaurav. If the line being promoted by Prachanda and Bhattarai were clearly understood as revisionist, why wouldn't the efforts of the RCP to wage struggle against it and help the CPN(M) get back on the revolutionary road be thoroughly welcomed, grappled with and learned from by those who say they were struggling against this line in their Party?

This applies not only to Gaurav, but others with a similar approach in the international communist movement, such as Ajith. In "Against Avakianism" he makes the accusation, "[T]he MPP and Nepal issues were sought to be employed as tools to subvert the RIM and enthrone Avakianism."⁴⁶

First, any honest review of the RCP's polemics around Nepal – its four letters to the Nepal Party between 2005 and 2009, the article in *Revolution* just before the aborted People's Revolt of May 2010, the statement by a supporter of the new synthesis to the new CPN-M 7th Congress in 2013, and others published in Nepal itself – would show that these repeatedly identify the basic questions of political and ideological line that were at stake. The approach and main points went up against the wave of spontaneity that pragmatically tailed the tactical "successes" of the Party, even while it increasingly went off the revolutionary path.

Let's recall some basic facts about how this struggle developed (for a more sweeping overview of the development of the line struggle in RIM, again see the letter to RIM parties and organizations). In October 2005 RCP issued a private letter to the CPN(M) warning against the threat posed to the Party by what Bhattarai was advocating in his New State article. This letter was then circulated internally within RIM. What was the response? Resounding silence with a few exceptions, Ajith most definitely *not* being one of them. As we have seen, much of the Maoist movement instead let themselves be swept along by the seeming "tactical" successes of the CPN(M), while the increasingly urgent series of letters from RCP warning of the growing danger of revisionism were put aside as unimportant or irrelevant if not downright "sectarian" and "doctrinaire" with hostile overtones. Far from the "Nepal issue" being used to "subvert the RIM," the RCP sought to sound the alarm and encourage the participants in RIM to wage the much-needed struggle as the revolution was increasingly taking the revisionist road.

Then, over the next few years, as the ugly consequences of the CPN(M)'s revisionism became increasingly hard to ignore, groups like the PCM Italy and Ajith's CPI(ML)NB, rather than engage in self-critical reflection about what had led them to tail along behind and even hail this revisionism, instead chose to excuse or apologize for their shameful record. It is one thing to make a serious mistake, but to theoretically excuse it or even defend it can only lead ever deeper into the swamp. It is an opportunist line that labels the call for the RIM to take up this reflection, interrogation and struggle as an attempt to "subvert the RIM."

Second, as for Ajith's charge that the RCP tried to use the "Nepal issue" to "impose" the new synthesis on RIM, nothing could be farther from the truth. From the beginning the RCP sought to engage with the key questions facing the CPN(M) *on their own merits*, not by the "imposition" of a set of precepts or principles. In other words, the RCP was looking scientifically at whether or not the propositions being advanced by the Party post-Chunwang corresponded to objective reality, in particular to the need of advancing the revolution in Nepal and internationally. Were Bhattarai's summations of the first wave of communist revolution in the 20th century correct, or not? How did this relate to the Chunwang propositions about "democracy in the 21st century" and the relation of democracy to the kind of society the Party envisaged? What were the implications for the strategy for revolution in Nepal, and in particular the proposal of a new "sub-stage" of the

46 The MPP (Peru People's Movement) was a Europe-based grouping that adopted a thoroughly unprincipled approach to the developments that took place in the Communist Party of Peru following the capture of PCP Chairman Gonzalo in 1992 and the emergence of the ROL. See Letter to Participating Parties and Organizations of the RIM. www.demarcations-journal.org/issue03/letter_to_participating_parties_of_rim_revolutionary_communist_party_usa.htm

new democratic revolution – was this indeed applicable to advance revolution, given the existence of the monarchy?

Some in RIM argued as if it were unimportant to seriously engage such questions, if not impossible. This reflected, as the RCP Letter to RIM parties and organizations sums up, that, "[T]he response and reaction to the development of a revisionist line (or perhaps better put, general *lack of response* to the revisionist line) on the part of many RIM participants is itself a reflection of deep and developing differences over fundamental questions of line. These differences touch not only questions of line on the state and revolution, but also on the nature of proletarian internationalism and how to approach major questions of political line, that is to say, either in light of scientific communist principles and theory and the Marxist method more generally, or according to non-communist standards and approaches, such as realpolitik with its underlying instrumentalism, pragmatism and empiricism."

The RCP, in its polemics and line struggles with the Party in Nepal, has manifested Lenin's scientific understanding that, in Lenin's words, the revolution in each country should be seen as "my share in the preparation, the propaganda and the acceleration of the world revolution." This is in contrast to the dominant, prevailing – and incorrect, unscientific – view of internationalism as concentrated in the view of James Connolly who argued that internationalism was the support or aid that one revolution extends to another – in other words, "I'll support you making revolution in your country and you support me in mine" – with the corollary of, "don't criticize me and I promise not to criticize you."⁴⁷ This tendency to ignore crucial line questions in a fraternal party was further reinforced by the pragmatism that had sunk such deep roots in the ICM, i.e., why worry about the theoretical endeavors of Bhattarai or even the CPN(M) Central Committee anyway, given the supposedly major tactical gains the Party was making on the ground?

Here again it has to be commented and reiterated that while those who like Ajith et. al. are claiming to uphold the banner of "Maoism," they decisively reject Mao's basic truth that "ideological and political line is decisive."

On these questions of state and revolution, what the erstwhile CPN(M) derisively termed the "ABCs of Marxism," the new synthesis of communism comprehends an even greater scientific understanding of and approach to the basic teachings of Marxism, including dialectical and historical materialism, the nature of the state and the need for communist revolution. Avakian points out that these have NOT been falsified despite repeated efforts to do so.⁴⁸ The re-envisioning of the socialist transition encompassed in the new synthesis firmly takes as its starting point and foundation "making revolution and seizing power," not something else. There is a continuity on these core cardinal questions in the science of communism as it has advanced

47 Bob Avakian, *Advancing the World Revolutionary Movement: Questions of Strategic Orientation*. http://revcom.us/bob_avakian/advancingworldrevolution/advancingworldrevolution.htm

In contrast to the Connolly conception, Lenin explained his view like this: "The Socialist, the revolutionary proletarian, the internationalist, argues differently. He says: 'I must argue, not from the point of view of "my" country (for that is the argument of a wretched, stupid, petty-bourgeois nationalist who does not realize that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of my share in the preparation, in the propaganda, and in the acceleration of the world proletarian revolution. That is what internationalism means, and that is the duty of the internationalist, of the revolutionary worker, of the genuine Socialist.'" (V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. Foreign Languages Press, Peking 1972, p. 80.)

48 See Avakian's polemic against Karl Popper in *Making Revolution and Emancipating Humanity*, Part 1.

that is further scientifically buttressed and reinforced in the framework of the new synthesis of communism. Furthermore, in addressing secondary shortcomings in the past revolutions and socialist societies, such as on the question of dissent and intellectuals, within this new framework, Avakian gives further impetus and materialist backing to the possibility, desirability and viability of this new radically different type of state. Indeed, these are some of the very questions posed by the revolution in Nepal, and to which Bhattarai has offered a bourgeois-democratic synthesis. In contrast, critical aspects of Avakian's conception and framework of a "solid core with a lot of elasticity" were brought to bear in the RCP's argumentation as a radically different, revolutionary communist, alternative and synthesis.

Ajith, caught in a dogmato-religious framework, can only envision the new synthesis as the "imposition" of a new set of precepts rather than representing an advance in the *science* of communism, putting communism itself, including the breakthrough contributions of Marx, Lenin and Mao, on a more scientific foundation, with a corresponding *scientific epistemology* and method and approach, that is, more materialist, more dialectical, more comprehending of the contradictory nature of reality and its transformation, and ultimately more in line with reality and getting to communism. The new synthesis has been, and continues to be, a matter of fierce struggle in the international communist movement, including among parties of the RIM as the communist movement faces the objective choice of being vanguards of the future or degenerating into residues of the past.

Let's take a step back and look at what was happening overall in RIM. There were three distinguishable but interrelated things going on: 1) There was a need for struggle within and by RIM against the revisionist line coming to dominance in the struggle in Nepal, which was not responded to by most other parties in RIM. 2) At the same time there was struggle within the RIM and within the RCP itself in the form of a Cultural Revolution⁴⁹ over what is communism today, and Avakian's new synthesis as an advance in the science of communism. 3) The RCP was applying this science, this dialectical materialist understanding, to the problems and trajectory of the revolution in Nepal and struggling with the CPN(M) on this basis, centered on an even greater scientific certitude and understanding of cardinal questions of state and revolution, and on this basis also applying this to problems such as the nature of the socialist state power, intellectuals and the middle strata, etc. in opposition to Bhattarai's New State article and other important questions.

The method and approach at the heart of the new synthesis represents a radically different approach, a scientific epistemology, that thoroughly ruptures with the pragmatism, empiricism, and instrumentalism that has characterized the revisionist turn and road taken by the erstwhile CPN(M) and continues to pervade and dog the new CPN-M, as it does most of the international communist movement as well. The revolution in Nepal confronted and continues to confront very hard and challenging questions – for example, on the viability of a new economy and new state in the face of hostile powers and imperialism, or the nature of the socialist state, or "what is to be done" and how to break through at the current juncture. While not easy, applying a thoroughly dialectical materialist approach opens up the possibility of discovering and crafting pathways through obstacles, recognizing the contradictory and multi-layered nature of reality. It makes possible transforming necessity, and radically transforming the world towards communist revolution. This was also the approach applied in the RCP's letters to the Nepalese comrades,

49 See Section VI of the *Manifesto*, "A Cultural Revolution within the RCP," for more on this.

proceeding from and struggling for principle and strategic objectives, while confronting and seeking to solve the real problems and challenges in forging ahead towards these objectives.

The struggle over the Nepal revolution is not synonymous with the crossroads facing the ICM today, but there is a great overlap. And how could it be otherwise: as the leaders of the revolution in Nepal faced the challenge of advancing from the countryside to seize nationwide power, a whole host of questions that were objectively facing revolutionaries everywhere gained greater and greater urgency: is it even possible to seize power in one country, and if so, what would be the relation to the larger world revolution and the longer-term struggle for a communist world? How to win over the middle strata in urban areas, including intellectuals and artists, and how would they relate to the poorer strata in the countryside and city? What forms of democracy are needed to maximize the ferment and creativity that can be unleashed, while digging up the continuing divisions in society, and doing this consistently with exercising dictatorship over would-be new oppressors? How would the vanguard party handle all the different contradictions dividing the oppressed themselves – caste and ethnic discrimination, the patriarchal shackles enchaining women, and so on? How would the Party lead the seizure of power, and what would be its role in the revolutionary state power set up after victory?

The ever more forceful posing of these challenges in 2004 and 2005 confronted the Party leadership – there was no neutral ground in a hard-fought battle, and the Nepal leadership did respond, as has the entirety of the ICM, in one way or another. And as seen above, the responses given in Nepal and by too many others have largely taken the form of the mirror opposites identified in the *Manifesto* from the RCP. The fact that the RCP was able to identify the revisionist line that arose in Nepal and present revolutionary communist responses to these challenges was in large part because Avakian had deeply and all-sidedly analyzed the theory and practice that had led the great revolutions of the 20th century. This is also a demonstration of the truth that, as the RCP letter to RIM parties observes, "in even the most viciously exploited and oppressed countries, the revolution... is confronting the same fundamental questions facing the whole international communist movement, questions whose correct resolution is crucial to enable future advance."

To develop a critique of what has happened in Nepal and regroup the revolutionary forces there, it is crucial that those forces who genuinely want to find a path to advancing the revolution in Nepal as part of the whole world struggle to bring about a communist world make a radical break with the eclecticism, nationalism and pragmatism, including in particular the conflation of democracy and communism. The new synthesis is necessary in developing this kind of thoroughgoing critique, so as to begin to forge a core of revolutionaries and communists who can wrench themselves out of the quicksand gripping the revolution there. And this needs to be done in close connection with analyzing the key fault lines in Nepalese society today, in order to begin to draw up lines of demarcation between revisionist accommodation with the existing system and revolution.

As was stated in the RCP supporter's message to the new CPN-M's 7th Congress, "To conclude: 20 years ago, as the revolutionaries faced the setback that had occurred in Peru, the Nepalese revolutionaries stepped forward, saying we will leap into the breach. Today the situation of the communist movement at the planetary level is much more critical and requires much greater boldness – to step forward to be part of rescuing the communist project and leading it forward to greater heights. But this will not be done without a wrenching rupture with the revisionist line

that has dominated the movement in Nepal for years now – as Mao said, the correctness or incorrectness of political line is indeed decisive."

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