

Interview with C. P. Gajurel on Taking State Power



Conducted by Stephen David Mauldin, May 28, 2009

C.P. Gajurel is a leader of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), a member of the party's Central Committee and head of their International Department. In August 2003, when attempting to travel to London, using forged travel documents, Comrade Gajurel was arrested in Chennai, India. Nepali and foreign supporters launched a campaign to have him released. After the CPN (M) and the government of Nepal signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement, India dropped charges against Gajurel, of "conspiracy against India". He was released in November 2006 and returned to Nepal.

SDM: Thank very much for meeting with me. It's an honor. Just to begin, a very general question in the direction I would like to explore. The supposition is that the central question is how to seize state power now the Maoists have left government, the tactics now in these new conditions.

CPG: Yes. This is always the central question. It's not just the central question for the Maoists. All the parties are looking to seize state power, not just the Maoist party. But the Maoists are bringing about a new transformation in Nepal. It is more important that since the elections, where the Maoists emerged as the single largest party in the Constituent Assembly, we are leading the creation of the new constitution. Because of the election, the Maoist party has been recognized internationally as the legitimate leadership in Nepal. Now, this is our most important work, to use the CA for transformation of Nepal.

SDM: What about the perception by some communists in the international community that the recent years of participating in multi-party politics show these tactics are actually blocking advance of the revolutionary process?

CPG: If you only look at it the traditional way, from the way of traditional communist thought, it looks like this line will not help. In fact it has. Still, we have to see that in reality, seeing what happened recently, in the struggle during the last few weeks, the participation in the government did not completely work actually. We have had to make a new turn in withdrawing from the government, but we are still participating in the democratic process. Criticizing this as blocking the revolutionary process is incorrect. This shows a lack of knowledge of our real practice and the concrete situation in Nepal....

SDM: But the critics point out such retreats as disbanding the Revolutionary Peoples Councils in the countryside and other concessions and ask what evidence is there that the leadership is preparing the mass base should a new uprising be necessary.

CPG: When we entered into negotiations we had to lose something. Without, at that point, giving up actual state power, what we had attained in replacing the previous government in the countryside with the Revolutionary Councils, we would not have been able to gain the more important opportunity to develop peoples' power in the rest of the country, to have the opportunity to win the elections in the Constituent Assembly or run the government. We gave up power but actually spread the mass base in a new way. For example, we were able to increase our numbers through membership drives, there has been extensive growth of the revolutionary process in our affiliation with many workers' unions and through the increases in the student and youth organizations, especially the YCL. Also during this period, within the party we continued the two-line debate and we formed the Unified party [4], continued to build our mass base. We will complete the revolutionary process in creating a New Nepal.

SDM: There are indications also that rebellious forces are organizing outside UCPN (M) authority, particularly around land reform issues in the Tarai for example Matrika Yadav ...

CPG: Some who were with us from the beginning abandoned the party. We listened to their criticisms and with Matrika Yadav we tried, we asked him not to split with us. Since then his new party has opposed us with their own candidate in the recent elections the result was their candidate received only 135 votes. The real irony is one of our former leaders actually joined the UML [United Marxist Leninist party, despite the name, well known as reactionary]. Others are trying to develop a so-called "Left Wing" in parties and youth groups outside affiliation with the Maoists; but we consider these things as essentially insignificant. These groups have in fact been supportive of the Maoists in the move to sack Katawal and in appreciating the PM's resignation.

SDM: So is was true that from the time of negotiations through Prachanda's recent resignation there was initially a drawing back from an aggressive revolutionary process as before and a new and different way of building the mass base. Would you say those tactics are over now? What are the new tactics, will we see a renewed aggressive revolutionary movement?

CPG: The Prime Minister's resignation was not a big thing for us. Our movement has been working on three fronts and the participation in government was the least important. The experience of being in government was not a failure; it contributed to our revolutionary process in many ways. The issue we raised of civilian supremacy over the army has demonstrated to the people the truth of the situation, the other parties are against supremacy of the people. More important is the Constituent Assembly front where more focus can be on creation of the New Nepal constitution. Our tactics remain the same as to the remaining two fronts, the CA and the streets. We boycotted the selection of the new PM and abandoned the government front for better political benefits from action in the more important and effective fronts. We will use our greater numbers in the CA to create a constitution that will transform Nepal, creating a socialist economy meeting the needs of all the oppressed populations.

SDM: If indeed the goal is to have an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist constitution, especially in regard to land reform, is that really going to be enforceable without a new revolutionary upsurge?

CPG: In our use of the CA the question of anti-feudal and anti-imperialist resistance is the main contradiction. Without at least 2/3 of the vote we cannot write even one clause of the new constitution. We have approximately 40% of the vote and this is not enough. At the same time we are going to be blamed if the writing of the constitution is indefinitely delayed. This is why the most important front is the street. We will do everything possible to convince CA members from the other parties of the necessity and benefits of an anti-imperial and anti-feudal constitution for a New Nepal with a socialist economic orientation. It is likely this will require an "extra-CA" effort to influence the vote within the CA. It will mean the action of our people in the streets.

SDM: You mean the continued direct pressure from the YCL on the cadre of the other parties and the street activism we have seen by the many unions and their collective organization under the All Nepal Federation of Unions – not any activation of the PLA.

CPG: Yes....

SDM: But there still remains the possibility that reactionary forces in Nepal and international interference could cause us to fall short of that 2/3 vote for the constitution with the necessary character. Should this become likely, how does that fit with movement towards integration and rehabilitation of the PLA?

CPG: First it is important to understand this question is integrated with .. it's not isolated from, it's a part of constitution making process. If we have an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist constitution, if we can institute a real peoples' republic, the integration will be the creation of a national army under civilian supremacy and in the service of the socialist orientated economic structure, the transformation to a New Nepal. It's not an isolated issue.

SDM: I take this means it's a matter of timing of the integration [CPG nodding at this point]. I wish to venture a personal opinion. Without garnering that 2/3 vote in the CA, the integration would lead to a situation where the PLA would no longer be able to function as a revolutionary force. Mao said that without a PLA the people have nothing. [I didn't actually get a direct response to this opinion].

GPG: The real situation in Nepal is that many forces are leading the nationalistic struggle. It is a struggle for liberation from feudalism and imperialism. It has been led by communists. No one believed that the Peoples' Revolution would be so successful. It was our decision to enter the democratic process of multi-party participation. No one believed that we could win the largest number of CA seats. We did take the lead in a third way, extending our revolutionary struggle to include a government front. It's not that important for our revolution that we took decision to leave government. If the government is not led by the communists it can be led by others, we are not concerned because we are supported in the streets and have the largest number of seats in the CA. We believe over time and in the future the people are seeing what is in their best interests.

SDM: My final question goes to this issue of communist leadership, to the possibilities for the communist vanguard. I have concluded from my time in Nepal that the bulk of Maobadi support is simply based on the desires of those people to overcome their oppression. There is not a depth of understanding of the communist hypothesis. So what are the real prospects of a communist society in Nepal?

CPG: There is the distinction between theory and practice. In every revolution there are very few who have a real understanding of Marxism, what Lenin and Mao have said. The masses are motivated by attaining something for their basic well-being not by an understanding of theory. But they learn by practice. The real intentions of the reactionaries are revealed to the masses as they are led through the revolutionary process. Of course, even among the masses supporting the revolutionary struggle are the opportunists. We believe that, over time, the people, without theoretical understanding, will in practice understand the necessity of removing the reactionaries and will recognize the opportunists for what they are. In time, in this way, a transformation will happen; there will be a New Nepal.

SDM: So we must put our faith in the people and the truth of the communist hypothesis and its egalitarian maxim. Thank you for giving so much of your time. I am very encouraged to continue to establish an affiliation with the International Relations Department, an organization based here in Kathmandu that may be a benefit to the many communists who support the Maobadi throughout the world [5].

CPG: I am very happy to see someone from the heart of the imperialist world here to work in Nepal and to work towards a greater understanding in the international community about the real intentions of the Maoist revolution. [At this time he gave me a copy of the renewed publication of *The Worker*]. I suggest you read and share the articles here for the most correct understanding our movement.

Notice:

"The Worker" is being published now under C. P. Gajurel 's leadership of the International Department, Central Committee, Unified CPN (Maoist). The website: <http://www.cpnmintl.org>

Notes:

[1] Excerpts from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chandra_Prakash_Gajurel

[2] For an excellent recent background article on international interest in the Maoist revolution see

<http://stefandav.blogspot.com/2009/04/ferment-in-nepal-dynamic-vortex-of.html>

[3] I refer the reader to my extensive bookmark collection of chronological news items during recent years. A review of the last few weeks' developments may be necessary for some readers to understand the context of this interview. See http://delicious.com/stefandav/nepal_maoism

[4] I wrote a series on this debate in November 2008 beginning at

<http://stefandav.blogspot.com/2008/11/maoist-debate-in-nepal-part-1.html>

C. P. Gajurel's part in that debate is covered in Part 3 of that series. A most interesting news item at the time on his views is found at <http://southasiarev.wordpress.com/2008/10/30/gajurel-cpnms-on-multi-party-democracy-armies/>

[5] An immediate objective is to establish a facility in Kathmandu that would provide international communist activists basic infrastructure for staying and working in Kathmandu for periods of time. This infrastructure could be developed in affiliation with the UCPN (M) International Department. In short this may be a clearinghouse for information exchange and project development. Such has been the subject of my discussions with some Maoist affiliated Union activists and one part of the intellectual wing of the International Department - the comrades who provided me this entree to an interview with Comrade Gajurel. There are as yet no specific agreements for this plan, but it is certainly an important goal for the coming weeks and months.

<http://www.zmag.org/blog/view/3228>