

Ideology of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

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Abstract: The general meaning of the term ‘ideology’ is that it is a system of ideas concerning a phenomenon, especially the social life. Ideology not only provides the motivating force but also defines the aims and objectives of the movement. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN) (M) is a party guided by Marxist and Leninist theory and Maoist thought operating in Nepal as accusing all other communist parties as revisionists and liquidationists, they claim themselves to be only real followers of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. This paper is an attempt to analyse the ideology adopted by CPN(M) during the Civil War between 1996 to 2006.

Keywords: Ideology, Marxist, Leninist, Maoist, Revisionist.

Introduction

The general meaning of the term ‘ideology’ is that it is a system of ideas concerning a phenomenon, especially the social life. Ideology not only provides the motivating force but also defines the aims and objectives of the movement. The CPN (M) is a party guided by Marxist and Leninist theory and Maoist thought operating in Nepal as accusing all other communist parties as revisionists and liquidationists, they claim themselves to be only real followers of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Marxism is a philosophy of struggle. The law of development according to Marxist dialectics is that each process of development in nature, society and human thought takes place through the struggle of opposites and its obvious result will take the form of a leap. Any thought that sees any kind of development process as an ordinary addition – subtraction scheme and as gradual evolution should be exposed as bourgeois evolutionism by the Marxists. It is clear that transformation from one process to another process does not take place gradually, but through leaps, through qualitative change, through revolution.

In this regard Lenin says development is the struggle of opposites; there are basically two outlooks regarding development, the development in the form of increase and decrease and the development as a unity of opposites. Mao has given the name of vulgar evolutionism to the thought that looks at development as increase and decrease or as repetition, and said instead that the inevitable result of the unity and struggle of opposites is a qualitative change – or leap. This he formulated as unity-struggle-transformation.

In regards to the theory of knowledge, Mao developed the theory of two leaps, i.e. from perceptual knowledge to rational knowledge, and from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. Among these Mao has termed the phenomenon of leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice “extremely important”. On this Mao says, “Only this leap – the first leap of acquiring knowledge, or the thoughts, theories, policies, plans and means crystallized as a reflection of the objective external world, verifies the right from the wrong. Not only this – the only intention of the proletariat to know the world is to change it.”¹ Thus Mao has emphasized on the need and importance of the leap in the process of transformation of thoughts into practices. Leap, qualitative change and revolution is not gradual evolution but a state of rupture, or a state of transformation of the opposites into each other as Mao, while talking of evolution as not being polite, restrained, etc. had mentioned about qualitative change, its process, etc.²

The Maoists of Nepal quote Mao and say, “Mao enriched qualitatively the theoretical treasure of Marxism-Leninism by successfully fulfilling the necessity of class struggle in the imperialist era.” For CPN (M), contribution of Mao in relation to People’s War should be understood in the context of the necessity of developing class struggle in the history.³

The Maoists take the position of Marx and Engels that the violent revolution has a universal character in the class society. They believe in Lenin’s clarity on systematically developed theoretical concepts regarding necessity of armed struggle in the course of implementing it in the Russian revolution. Based on the theoretical assertions of Marxism-Leninism on violent revolution and the experience acquired from their practical applications, Mao developed the comprehensive theory of ‘people’s war’ in the course of accomplishing new democratic revolution in China. They claim that the theory of ‘people’s war’ developed by Mao represents the apex of Marxism-Leninism military science and will be applied universally in all kinds of countries according to the situation.⁴

Ideologically, CPN (M) believe that the revolt is the only path for changing the society. They advocate that the ‘people’s war’ will end all kind of other war.⁵ Therefore, they tried to revolt against the Panchayat regime in 1990 when strong alliance of Nepali Congress and ULF were trying to defeat the Panchayat through peaceful movement. Those, who believe in peaceful means to change the society, are according to the Maoists, foolish and irrational.

The CPN-M claims that they have been ideologically following Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and their ultimate aim is to apply Mao’s thought in Nepal. The CPN (M) in the application of Maoist understanding which emphasized on the “masses as a creators of history”, started to mobilize the people for a protracted people’s war against the state. It took to arms following this Maoist thought. To Mao, ‘people with no army have nothing to its own’. Following this saying of Mao, Prachanda, describes the relationship of civil-military-weapon. Prachanda says, ‘in whatever way they are equipped with weapons, trained and powerful in the beginning their fall is inevitable when they stand against the interest of the masses. Final victory is their’s that fight for defending the interest of broad masses however weak they seem militarily in the beginning.’⁶

Apart from this belief in people’s army and war, Mao had also shown his belief in people’s power rather than the weapons. He used to say, “weapons are an important factor in war, but not decisive factor; it is people, not things, that are decisive’.⁷

Maoists in Nepal followed the double criterion laid down by Mao on people and army, and tried to attract general people by raising 'situational local issues related slogans'. They tried to bring these issues to the forefront. These issues not only touched native and suppressed people but also the migrants, labourers, peasants, women, dalits etc.⁸ They even tried to win support of the people by creating hostility among the different groups in the society, the cadres of the Maoists used to claim that after their rule prevails in the society, the absentee migrant landlords will have to give up the lands they occupied. The Maoists sells such agenda to the native people most of whom belong to the marginalized section of the society. According to CPN-M, harmony is needed for achieving its ultimate goal of 'communism through socialism'.

Strategy

CPN-M believes that in the present era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the enemy class is practicing various forms of conspirational strategies to stop revolution in countries like Nepal. Because of it, they cannot arrive at a correct strategy without understanding the strategy of the enemy. In this light it is necessary to determine the strategy and tactics of the Nepalese armed struggle by focusing on the overall state of the enemies together with the basic specificities of Nepal and Nepalese society.

Nature of State

Nepal is a landlocked country which is surrounded on three sides by India and in the North by China. Although it is small in area, however except for 17% of the Terai plan lands, the rest of the country is geographically replete with remote hills and Himalayan mountains with different climates, ethnic groups, cultures and languages. In Nepal for a long period, a centralized reactionary state equipped with a modern and powerful permanent army and bureaucracy has been in existence. This is especially centralized in the cities. CPN-M believes that the enemies of the Nepalese people are not only within the country but also present outside of it in the form of imperialists, especially the Indian expansionists.⁹

The economic and political development of Nepal has been uneven. Nepal is predominantly rural and the exploited peasants who represent 90% of the total people are spread throughout the villages. The process of urbanization is on the rise; however, it is still small. The Nepalese peasants and other sections of the masses have passed through a process of different forms of struggle both local and countrywide for a longtime. There is a widespread attraction towards communism among the people. However, here the influence of reformism and right revisionism is also strong. In Nepal there has been virtually no direct experience of armed struggle under the leadership of the communist party. The reactionary ruling class of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial Nepal, where the Medieval Monarchy system exists, is undergoing intense crises and this crisis has started manifesting politically as well as in a serious manner.¹⁰

A big section of the Nepalese people is spread in different countries for employment, mainly in India for the army and other kind of work. From the above mentioned nature of Nepalese state the strategy and tactics of the Nepalese armed struggle can be discerned.

CPN-M, believes that the party 'people's army' and United Front are the three weapons for a people's revolution. Their single objective is to capture power through 'people's war'. To attain that the party mobilized the people in big way by raising situational and local struggles to prepare them for the protracted people's struggles. In the process, it laid to rest the myth that Nepal is a peaceful country whose citizens are naturally averse to violence. The Maoists have consistently maintained that violence has been at the heart of the state power throughout Nepal's history.¹¹ Prachanda argued against the popular notion of Nepalese being peace-loving and non-violent people. Such idea according to him is against the historical fact. To Prachanda, such 'historical fact' is a conspiracy to mentally disarm the people, and to protect their rule for their reactionary violence.¹²

The strategy on armed struggle adopted by the CPN (M) in its third plenum in March 1995 made it even more explained. "The reactionary propaganda that the Nepalese people are peace-loving and that they do not like violence is absolutely false. It is an incontrovertible fact that the Nepalese people have been waging violent struggle for their rights since historical times. Till today whatever general reforms have been achieved by the Nepalese people, behind them there was the force of violent and illegal struggle of the people."¹³

This point was reinforced by Prachanda in a separate essay wrote, "People have not obtained even the least of gains without waging violent struggles. Today, the Nepalese society has arrived at such a point of under the existing political system that there is no alternative on the part of the people other than to smash it."¹⁴ According to CPN-M, to become a genuine Marxist-Leninist revolutionary, one has to support the theory of 'people's war'. Elaborating the three stages of strategy he says, "For the success of revolution in the country like ours that lies in the semi-feudal and semi-colonial condition it is essential to pass through the three stages of the strategic defense, equilibrium and strategic offensive with the strategy of seizing towns from the rural areas."¹⁵

Initially CPN-M adopted Guerrilla war because it had a key role in the first stage. The Maoist itself compared the Guerrilla war to Shah Dynasty's state expansion campaign.¹⁶ It was even compared to the world history and said, "the guerrilla warfare has been effective when pro-people forces carry on war against anti-people army with relatively more equipped with training and arms."¹⁷

CPN-M has mentioned five key conditions for the success of Guerrilla War in Nepal. These are:

- (i) A correct ideological and political line (Marxism-Leninism-Maoism) of the leadership.
- (ii) To be conducted for the masses and by the masses.
- (iii) Need for a continuous process of awakening and organizing more people through faster and better methods.
- (iv) Basic tactics must be followed. Under the tactic of 'hit' and 'run', Prachanda referred some sub-tactics. These are: when enemy advances, we retreat, centralizing our forces to fight the enemy, decentralizing it to arouse the masses, finding out the weakest points of the enemy with adequate preparation and to attack by ensuring victory, carrying out dependable geographical and other surveys, always trying to keep enemy in surprise, maintaining regular alertness, mobility and secrecy etc.

- (v) Building base area for mobilizing and regularizing the war.¹⁸

Ruling Classes and the Class Character in Nepalese Society

CPN-M believes that because of its monopolistic hold over the communication over the whole world at this time, the enemy is launching a disinformation campaign with the deliberate propaganda of “terrorism”, “fall of socialism” and the “superiority and success” of capitalism and attempting to lower the morale of people through the strategy of psychological warfare.¹⁹ It is unleashing a vicious cultural war through the flooding of vulgar culture and literature in order to distort the minds and souls of the people. They believe that all the imperialist forces and the reactionary ruling classes of each country are campaigning strategically by spreading the network of well trained and technically equipped spies and attempting to infiltrate into the revolutionary party in order to collect information, to create illusions inside the party, to do destructive activities and to arrest or kill the genuine revolutionary leaders or activists of the party. They are inventing new forms of reforms and democracy in order to confuse the people politically.²⁰

Under the strategy of preventing revolution in a country like Nepal the network of Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) have been spread in order to engage some educated middle class people, to prevent them from falling below the middle class and to entrap the people in a petty reformist mirage. The enemies are encouraging unemployed youth to get scattered all over the world and to wander into India in the name of employment. The youth are being used as mercenary soldiers in foreign armies.

The imperialists are polluting the minds of the people through the propagation of religion and other means after entering into rural areas with attractive slogans. If despite all these and other innumerable traps the revolutionary movement rises up then they start a campaign of heinous genocide through their powerful permanent army. In short, in the present era, the strategy of the enemy of the people is that of total war.²¹

In such a situation the strategy of a revolutionary party that wants to go ahead with armed struggle to make a revolution should also be clearly based on total war. It is necessary for revolutionary party to adopt the strategy and tactics of ‘tit for tat’ against the imperialist and reactionary forces by uniting with the people in all spheres of national and international life. CPN-M believes that it is impossible for the armed struggle in Nepal to make a quick leap into an insurrection and defeat the enemy. However, it is fully possible to finally crush the enemy through systematic development of the Nepalese armed struggle. It can be derived clearly from this that the Nepalese armed struggle must necessarily adopt a protracted people's war strategy of surrounding the city from the countryside.²² The successful development of the Nepalese People's war will be determined by decentralizing actions based on central policy, by launching actions at different isolated spots of the enemy and by applying a large force against small forces in order to get quick victory, by adopting hit and run tactics, by going ahead with guerrilla actions under the centralized plan from different parts of the country but also by giving special attention to specific strategic areas, and as Mao has said, by organizing and mobilizing as many people as possible and as fast as possible and as good as possible by placing the question of capturing political power at the centre.

Prachanda has mentioned six strategies and tactics of people's war waged by CPN-M. They are: (i) tactics of surprise attacks, (ii) to attack weak enemy at first and strong the later, (iii) to take advantage of contradictions among the enemies, (iv) to adopt a policy of intrigue, conspiracy and deception, (v) to apply the method of embargo against enemy, and (vi) to adopt the technique of protracted war. According to the Maoists, these are developed from the experiences of the past wars like Gorkhalese War.²³

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