

Nepal revolutionaries call on mass support to end monarchy

By David Hoskins

Nepal's communist revolutionaries walked out of that country's interim government in mid-September and announced immediate plans to launch street protests. The walkout followed the government's rejection of a 22-point set of demands by the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) that were meant to ensure free and transparent polls for planned Constituent Assembly elections in November.

Three weeks later, on Oct. 5, the government announced the November elections would be postponed.

The Nepali Congress Party and other reformist parties objected to two key points in particular. These basic points would have declared Nepal a republic before the polls, to ensure that the monarchy does not interfere with elections, and would have established a proportional representation-based election system. Nepal still has a king, despite massive protests against the monarchy last year.

The government's rejection of these demands, say the revolutionaries, risks providing cover to the criminal supporters of King Gyanendra in the army and among underground terrorist units, allowing them to disrupt elections, and has created an unnecessary crisis in election preparations.

Other organizations have voiced support for the CPN-M's electoral demands. Amik Sherchan, chair of the People's Front Nepal, has stated that the 22 prerequisites were legitimate and that "the Maoists were left with no option but to launch a program of strong protests to establish a republic." People's Front Nepal is a semi-underground leftist organization and a member of Nepal's interim government.

The CPN-M remains in Nepal's interim parliament, where it has become the second-largest party since pulling out of the government. Three other groups, including the militant Communist Party of Nepal (

Marxist-Leninist-Maoist), have merged with the CPN-M since it withdrew from the cabinet. The CPN-M has emphasized the need for a single revolutionary communist party to fulfill the aspirations of Nepal's workers and oppressed.

Maoists call street protests; student organizations join

After all four Maoist ministers announced their resignations from the government, the CPN-M called for street agitation to begin on Sept. 25. Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, a leading party official, declared that, "Efforts to declare a republic from the parliament have failed. Now we will declare a republic from the streets." The CPN-M has promised to hold actions in all of Nepal's 4,000 villages and at every district administration office in order to advance their people's agenda.

The actions are being unrolled in carefully crafted phases. The first phase was held from Sept. 19 to 21, when the Maoists held a door-to-door public awareness campaign surrounding their demands. A week of rallies began in the capital on Sept. 22 and was planned to spread geographically. The revolutionaries are preparing to launch an exposure campaign to reveal corrupt government officials and business people.

Students, too, vowed mass participation in the street protests. The All Nepal National Independent Student Union-Revolutionary (ANNISU-R) laid out its own protest agenda. Public hearings in schools and universities began on Sept. 19 and were expected to continue until Oct. 3. Motorcycle rallies across the country began Sept. 29 and torch-lit rallies were to follow.

More than 4,000 soldiers in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had earlier walked out of their cantonments to protest in favor of the 22 demands raised by the revolutionaries. The PLA is the armed wing of the CPN-M and has voluntarily confined itself to a U.N.-monitored cantonment during the peace process

initiated by the revolutionaries. More than 30,000 PLA soldiers are stationed in 28 cantonments around the country.

Revolutionaries champion people's needs

Many of the government's ruling parties fear an embarrassing setback in the polls at the hands of the revolutionaries. The popular program advocated by the Maoists and the revolutionary student and youth organizations has done much to earn the support of Nepal's oppressed workers and peasants.

The revolutionaries have consistently exposed corrupt landlords and held them accountable in People's Courts set up around the country. For many of Nepal's poor, this is the only system of justice available to them.

The revolutionaries have been in the vanguard of the fight to abolish Nepal's brutal feudal monarchy. The CPN-M initiated 10 years of armed struggle which, combined with the street protests it helped coordinate, brought an end to King Gyanendra's absolute rule late last year. He had clung to power with the support of the U.S., Britain and India. The revolutionaries continue to be the most consistent force advocating the total abolition of Nepal's monarchy and the establishment of democratic republicanism with fair elections.

Additional campaigns have established free health care in poor districts and the creation of a Health Team Project coordinated by the PLA's medical department to create units of medical specialists and support staff in rural areas.

In August the Young Communist League (YCL) mobilized 600 cadres over a course of three days to collect tons of garbage from the streets of Kathmandu.

Nepal's poverty cries out for revolutionary change

Nepal is an impoverished country of 29 million people that until recently was ruled by a feudal monarchy dominated by the huge capitalist state of India to

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An evolving impact

Hip Hop and the Cuban Revolution

By Larry Hales



Hip Hop artists perform in Cuba for FIST and other political allies from the US. Photo: FIST.

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Cuban Hip Hop artist after meeting with FIST. In picture (from left): Julius Dykes (Workers World Party), Cuban artist, Miya Campbell (FIST).

During the Golden Age of Hip Hop in the United States, from the 1980s to the early 1990s, the music was stealth. It is not that it flew under the radar. How could it, when it resonated around the country in oppressed communities? However, because of pure racism it was not seen as an art form but as a fleeting expression of the righteous anger of the oppressed.

It was a logical evolution in a time of the decline of the great social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. It was also the beginning of deindustrialization, the reintroduction of the death penalty, the booming growth of the prison-industrial complex and Reaganomics.

Hip Hop was at its most creative, its most enlightening, its most explosive and to the U.S. ruling class, its most dangerous point.

In Cuba, that period was one of great anxiety, but the revolution triumphed in spite of the hardships and Hip Hop has since helped reinvigorate youth on the island.

It was Harry Belafonte who first had a conversation with Fidel Castro and Minister of Culture Abel Prieto about the many Hip Hop artists in which he explained the culture to Commander Fidel.

Belafonte said of the meeting, "I wasn't surprised that there were Cuban rappers, because I don't care where you go in the world ... rappers seem to be everywhere. But I was surprised at how many there were and how uninformed the hierarchy in Cuban cultural circles

was of the whole culture of hip-hop music.

"After meeting with the hip-hop artists in Havana about seven or eight years ago, I met with Abel Prieto at a luncheon that Fidel Castro had, and we got to talking about hip-hop culture. When I went back to Havana a couple of years later, the people in the hip-hop community came to see me and we hung out for a bit. They thanked me profusely and I said, 'Why?' and they said, 'Because, your little conversation with Fidel and the Minister of Culture on hip-hop led to there being a special division within the ministry and we've got our own studio.'"

Since then, Fidel has called rap the "vanguard of the revolution."

Culture is protected in Cuba. In the U.S., Hip Hop, like all things under capitalism, has become a commodity. However, more than just that, both the attacks on Hip Hop and the co-optation of the culture are part of the racism endemic to the system.

Hip Hop is seen as a threat to the U.S. ruling elite and as a threat to white supremacy. The Hip Hop generation of today is a multi-national generation of youth who have seen through the lies of the system and understand much more deeply than their forebears the attempts to divide the multi-national working class, though not in those words.

Hip Hop is like the coded language of the slave in the fields; the blues of an era where the objective reality of U.S. capital is one of crisis and more wars. It is the "CNN of the Ghetto," as Chuck D says. It also is the barometer of the people's willingness to openly struggle, as was evident in the music before the great Los

Angeles rebellion, when the Black masses in South Central L.A., tired of the repressive conditions, rose up.

Cuba, however, sees the now global phenomenon and the power it holds. Like with the early Hip Hop musicians in the U.S., the culture arrived at a time when artists had to improvise. In the U.S. turntables became instruments; beat boxing, making music with one's mouth, drove impromptu ciphers—freestyle circles. In Cuba, early artists used typewriters to bang out beats.

The difference, though, is how this culture flourished in two diametrically opposed social systems, one run by a small exploitative class, the other by a workers' government with the task to provide for all of society and solve the problems of an ever-changing world.

One is an anarchic system, the other is a planned economy. The approach to culture is rooted in each system's approach to humanity. The capitalist system has out-used its usefulness. It came into the world dripping in blood from head to toe, and as is evident in the rise of the U.S. military juggernaut, will go out of this world covered in blood.

While Fidel says, "Within the revolution, everything," the U.S. rulers see little value in a thing that does not produce profit or cannot be used for subterfuge.

In 2002, Cuba opened the Cuban Rap Agency and from the agency came the magazine La Fabri-K and a record label.

Capitalist media outlets such as the New York Times, CNN and a few artists in the U.S.—like Pitbull of the song "Culo" and "independent" film producers—try to use the culture against the Cuban revolution.

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