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# Party Structure and People's War

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Party Structure and People's War

by

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A Thesis

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in Candidacy for the Degree of

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## **Abstract**

This thesis assesses the necessity of the Leninist vanguard party in leading revolutionary struggle. Three Maoist rebel groups, Peru's Shining Path, Nepal's Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and India's Communist Party of India (Maoist), all claiming to adhere to a centralized political power structure, will be analyzed in terms of their "success" in recruiting women into the party and in capturing territory. Although all three movements appear to follow a similar vanguard party model, the leadership structures of the first two groups, the Shining Path and the CPN (M), have a centralized leadership, with a central committee lead by one or two major figures, deciding policy and promoting action. The latter group, the CPI (M), appears to deviate from this model, as regional leaders seem to have a great degree of power and influence within the party. It is initially proposed that a centralized, or vanguard party structure would be more efficacious in bringing women into the movement as well as carrying out highly coordinated military campaigns in order to gain territory for the creation of base areas. However, it is concluded that in the ongoing war with the Indian state, the CPI (M) has been able to achieve levels of success similar to the two former groups with a far less centralized party apparatus in place.

## Introduction

This struggle must be organized, according to “all the rules of the art”, by people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity. The fact that the masses are spontaneously being drawn into the movement does not make the organisation of this struggle less necessary. On the contrary, it makes it more necessary.<sup>1</sup>

–V.I. Lenin

Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealize their love for the people, for the most hallowed causes, and make it one and indivisible ... revolutionary leaders must have a large dose of humanity, a large dose of a sense of justice and truth to avoid falling into dogmatic extremes, into cold scholasticism, into isolation from the masses.<sup>2</sup>

-Ernesto “Che” Guevara

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1917, the former Tsar’s Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, Russia, was captured by Red Guard forces under the leadership of Bolshevik commanders, successfully ending the brief period of rule by the largely ineffectual Provincial Government and ushering in the creation of the world’s first socialist state. Almost 32 years later, after the cessation of the Chinese Civil War, Mao Tse-tung proclaimed the People’s Republic of China. These two examples differ in that the Chinese were embroiled in a civil war which lasted over 20 years before achieving state power, however, both the Bolsheviks and the Chinese communists were lead by centralized, or vanguard, parties, a concept developed by the brilliant intellectual and revolutionary, V.I. Lenin. Many subsequent revolutions, successful and otherwise, were guided by a vanguard party, including the Vietnamese (under Ho Chi Minh) and the Cambodian revolutions (lead, most prominently, by Pol Pot). Some Marxist theorists like Rosa Luxemburg, Anton Pannekoek and Paul Mattick have argued that this sort of political

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin, V.I. “The Primitiveness of the Economists and the Organization of the Revolutionaries.” *Essential Works of Lenin*.

<sup>2</sup> Guevara, Ernesto. “Man and Socialism in Cuba.”

apparatus is not necessary for bringing about revolution, or is, in fact, authoritarian and anti-Marxist.<sup>3 4</sup> The Cuban revolution of 1959 became the first socialist revolution to succeed without a Leninist party in the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle.<sup>5</sup> However, in the case of the several “Marxist” or “Maoist” insurrections and guerilla wars still being waged in Latin America and several parts of Asia, in particular, the vanguard party has been promoted by all and successfully implemented by most. For a vanguard party, and a revolution in general, to be successful, a strong leader or leadership core must be present, and ideally, there must be a high level of coordination between the central committee and the regional bodies/leaders in order to successfully understand the desires of the masses and lead their struggle. This is important, since, as Lenin wrote, “Every new form of struggle which brings new perils and sacrifices inevitably “disorganizes” an organization ill-prepared for the new form of struggle.”<sup>6</sup> Centralized leadership is characterized as leadership based upon, or concentrated in one individual or several people who preside over a central committee or politburo which practices democratic centralism. Practical decisions, discussed and agreed upon by the central committee, become binding on all members of the party, from the highest officials to the members of the army. Without these characteristics, Stalin felt that, “the Party cannot be a single organized whole capable of exercising systematic and organized leadership in the struggle of the working class.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Mattick, Paul. “Introduction to Anti-Bolshevik Communism.”

<sup>4</sup> Luxemburg, Rosa. *The Russian Revolution*. See also Pannekoek, Anton. *Lenin As Philosopher*. Marquette University Press, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> LeoGrande, William M. “Party Development in Revolutionary Cuba.” 458.

<sup>6</sup> Lenin, V.I., quoted in György Lukács. “Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought.”

<sup>7</sup> Stalin, J. V. *Foundations of Leninism*. 113.

Here it will be necessary to make some distinctions between Leninism, Maoism, and to a lesser extent, Stalinism. In one of Lenin's better known works, *What is to be Done?*, he outlined in rigorous detail the blueprints of for the vanguard party. The party's main task would be to assume the role of leading all exploited classes in the democratic revolution, and the party would be "professional" in two ways: revolutionaries would devote themselves completely to party work and would be fully trained. In 1935, when Mao and the remnants of the Chinese Communist Party arrived in Yan'an, the location became conducive for the socially transformative practices of and ideological rationale for Marxist revolution in China to be "articulated, implemented, and honed."<sup>8</sup> It was here that Mao, while residing in a cave, deepened his knowledge of Marxist dialectics and historical materialism while voraciously studying the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. The latter, for Mao, seemed to possess a mechanical interpretation of the relationship between history and ideology and appeared to have a callous stance towards the peasantry and their revolutionary potential (it is interesting that Trotsky shared a similar view).<sup>9</sup> Mao Tse-tung Thought rejects some of the more rigid aspects of Stalin and Lenin's political philosophies and had a foundation firmly entrenched within Chinese history. The dialectics in Mao's thought stem from his belief that dialectical materialism "emphasizes the dependence of theory on practice and in turn serves practice. The truth of any knowledge or theory is determined not by subjective feelings but by the objective result in social practice."<sup>10</sup> For Mao, knowledge stemmed from practice, and because the peasantry was the largest demographic in China, their knowledge could be utilized for revolutionary purposes. Lenin and Mao were quite similar in that they both advocated

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<sup>8</sup> Karl, Rebecca E. *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History*. 51.

<sup>9</sup> McLellan, David. *Marxism After Marx*. 203.

<sup>10</sup> Mao Tse-tung. "On Practice". *Selected Works*, Vol. I. 297.

for the alliance of peasantry and proletariat as a requisite for a successful revolution, although Lenin placed a much greater emphasis on the role of the proletariat.<sup>11</sup> In both Russia and China, the revolution was led by “professional revolutionaries,” yet in Russia it was the urban workers rather than the peasantry that lent decisive support to the Bolsheviks revolutionary aims. One of Mao’s other major theoretical contributions was the idea of the “mass line” which was meant to combat political stagnation within the party and counter government bureaucracy, a feature prominent in Stalin’s Soviet Union. The slogan became, “To the masses, from the masses, to the masses”<sup>12</sup>, and the mass line became a new method of leadership in which the cadre were expected to learn from the peasants. Cadre within the Chinese Communist Party were supposed to thoroughly investigate the conditions of the peasants, thus allowing the party to learn about and subsequently participate in peasant struggles. Instead of creating policy that was divorced from the masses, party cadre would gather ideas from them, leading to the creation of a strategy or plan of action based on the specific ideas and concerns of the masses which originated from concrete conditions. However, the “mass line” was not a technique necessarily employed within the context of waging “People’s War”, and further, in theory, it suggests a certain level of decentralization of authority. However, in China, without widespread peasant support, it would have been unlikely that the Chinese Communist Party could have defeated the Japanese and Nationalist forces and eventually seized power. Because Peru, Nepal and India contain vast populations of rural, semi-literate or illiterate peasants living in a state of abjection, the political thought of Mao

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<sup>11</sup> For a deeper analysis on the distinct differences and nuances between the political thought of Mao, Lenin and Stalin, see Schram, Stuart R. *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977.

<sup>12</sup> Karl, Rebecca E. *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History*. 59.

Tse-tung was especially charming to up-and-coming revolutionaries and radical intellectuals in each of those countries. Each of the groups analyzed within this thesis self-identify themselves as “Maoist”; while they may not necessarily know the subtle differences between Leninism and Maoism, that fact is not particularly important to this study.

The focus of this thesis is on three revolutionary groups that adhered to the political philosophy espoused by Mao Tse-tung: the Communist Party of Peru-Sendero Luminoso (referred to also as “The Shining Path”), the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), and the Communist Party of India (Maoist). Although all three movements appear to follow a similar vanguard party model, the leadership structures of the first two groups, the Shining Path and the CPN (M), have a centralized leadership, with a central committee lead by one or two major figures, deciding policy and promoting action. The latter group, the CPI (M), appears to deviate from this model, as regional leaders seem to have a great degree of power and influence within the party.<sup>13</sup> Each group carried out their respective revolutionary wars for a different length of time, meaning that an arbitrary period of time, for example, 20 years, cannot be used as a frame of reference in analyzing each of the three groups. The Shining Path did exist prior to 1980, however, it had a limited presence in the rural areas and subsisted mainly within college campuses in Ayacucho, Huancayo, and Lima.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, it will be examined from 1980, the year of its first “act of war”, until 1992, when its main leader was arrested, causing the movement to rapidly deteriorate. Likewise, the CPN (M) existed prior to its launching of a people’s war in 1996, but it existed as a faction of another

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<sup>13</sup> Ranjan Kamath, interviewed by the author.

<sup>14</sup> Palmer, David Scott, ed. *Shining Path of Peru*. 20.

party, and did not begin meaningful work in the countryside until 1995.<sup>15</sup> For this thesis, the CPN (M) will be analyzed from beginning of the “Nepalese People’s War” in 1996 until their agreement to lay down arms and participate in the electoral process in 2006. The CPI (M) is an amalgamation of nearly forty years of revolutionary activity and countless factions which emerged after the failed Naxalbari rebellion of 1967. However, the CPI (M) and its actions will be appraised starting from 2004 with the merger of two of the largest Maoist factions to form today’s party and continuing to the present day.

The three movements will be analyzed based upon their “success” which is defined as the completion of certain stated aims and goals of the party. Initially, this may seem problematic, as few revolutionary groups actually accomplish their overall goals. Kishenji, a prominent Indian Maoist leader, when asked about what the goals of the movement were, responded, “Political power...without political power we cannot achieve anything.”<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Manwaring, in discussing the Shining Path’s leader Abimael Guzmán, writes, “He further identified the primary objective of the insurgency as power. Power is generated by an intelligent, well-motivated, and highly disciplined organization with a vision and purposeful long-term program for gaining control of a state or a society.”<sup>17</sup> However, it is not necessarily critical to measure how successful a revolutionary group is by its ability to seize power, especially since neither the Shining Path nor the CPN (M) captured power following a successful people’s war in the same manner as China or Cambodia. Yet, the percentage of the country in which the group was able to operate in or control at its peak can be looked at and can be used to determine the success of the movements, in comparison to one another. Besides the overall seizure

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<sup>15</sup> Onesto, Li. *Dispatches from the People’s War in Nepal*. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Mittal, Tusha. “I am the Real Desh Bhakt.”

<sup>17</sup> Manwaring, Max G. “Peru’s Sendero Luminoso: The Shining Path Beckons.” 158.

of state power, Mao Tse-tung believed revolutions could be successful in smaller, yet equally meaningful ways, and wrote, “Wherever our comrades go, they must build good relations with the masses, be concerned for them and help them overcome their difficulties. We must unite with the masses; the more of the masses we unite with, the better.”<sup>18</sup> In order to build good, enduring relationships with the masses, it was necessary for the guerillas to address and combat the issues that were most relevant to the rural populations, with gender inequality being a primary concern.

For the duration of this thesis, success will be measured by the percentage of women within the party as well as the percentage of the country infiltrated or controlled by the rebel group. As Lenin stated, “The experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of a revolution depends on how much the women take part in it,” and talking about his own experience in establishing the Soviet Union, he said, “No other republic has so far been able to emancipate woman.”<sup>19</sup> The question becomes, “Will a movement with a centralized party contain a larger percentage of women?” In much of the developing world, women hold disproportionate amounts of influence within the political spectrum, yet if a centralized leadership expresses the desire to liquidate gender inequality, such as Lenin and the Bolsheviks did in the period prior to the October Revolution, women’s issues will be afforded a fair amount of attention and action. Therefore, if a centralized party exists, it should witness a larger percentage of its membership consisting of women in comparison to non-centralized parties operating in the same areas. Woman may also be drawn to the party because of its promises of radical “social justice”, especially in combating domestic abuse and sexual violence, as well as

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<sup>18</sup> Mao Tse-tung. “On the Chungking Negotiations.” *Selected Works*, Vol. IV. 59.

<sup>19</sup> Lenin, V.I. “Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women.” *Lenin’s Collected Works*. 181.

the opportunity to have a meaningful position. The next question to be examined is, “Will a centralized party be able to, through military actions, be able to control a larger percentage of a country?” If a party is centralized, meaning that the top of the hierarchy also controls the military, it should be able to carry out a highly coordinated military campaign in order to control territory and create base areas. Disunity in military strategy and implementation should theoretically not exist, since there is only one line that is to be followed, passed down from the leaders in the party hierarchy. In the case of a non-centralized party, military decisions may differ between the various leaders, some of whom may be content in controlling the territory already under their influence while others seek to expand into new areas.<sup>20</sup>

Success in combating issues like inequality will be reflected in a mechanism (i.e., the percentage of women within the party) which indicates coordination, since a centralized party espousing egalitarian principles should conceivably make a concerted, coordinated effort to actually implement its strategies. If women are being recruited or are joining the party at a substantial rate, this would suggest coordination between the areas of recruitment (particularly in the rural base areas) and the leadership of the party. The role of women within the three movements will be discussed first. After briefly discussing recruitment methods and the appeal of the party to women, the percentage of women making up the party will be analyzed and compared with several prominent political parties in that country as well as the other two Maoist groups. Since each of the groups has been explicit in its condemnation of the baneful treatment of women, both by the state and by men in rural society who carry out a historical, hierarchical role, they could be deemed successful if they attract large numbers of women and recruit them for

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<sup>20</sup> Ranjan Kamath, interviewed by the author.

various positions within the party and guerilla army. Thus, a successful party is one that recognizes the plight of women and goes beyond simply censuring inequality which strongly pervades rural societies. As Lenin stated, “The rights and social measures we demand of bourgeois society for women are proof that we understand the position and interests of women and that we will take note of them under the proletarian dictatorship.”<sup>21</sup> Yet, if women feel they are isolated or mistreated by the party, it could suggest a lack of unity between the base area and the leadership, and, more importantly, a lack of success in achieving stated goals.

Success, within the scope of this paper, will also be measured by the amount of territory controlled by the particular rebel groups. A centralized party should, theoretically, be active in more regions of a country because of its superior ability to coordinate military efforts, based on a hierarchical chain of command in which the top expects obedience from the bottom.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the top party organizations are expected to make a conscientious and pertinacious effort in becoming familiar with the situation in the rural base areas and with the life of the masses in order to possess an objective basis for proper guidance.<sup>23</sup> Armies from several base areas can join together in a harmonious effort to repel a government attack or establish a new base area along with a new authority structure. In a non-centralized party, various leaders may not want to merge forces or may see it as beneficial to use their armies to protect the areas that are already under their jurisdiction.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Zetkin, Clara. “An Interview on the Women Question.” *My Recollections of Lenin*.

<sup>22</sup> Wood, Elisabeth Jean. “Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When is Wartime Rape Rare?” 137.

<sup>23</sup> Mao Tse-tung. “On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party.” *Selected Works*, Vol. I. 109.

<sup>24</sup> Ranjan Kamath, interviewed by the author.

After the role of women and the control of territory, in relation to the three parties, are discussed at length, conclusions will be drawn on the effectiveness of the centralized party and its ability to affect coordination as well as whether the decentralized form of authority being practiced in India can be successful (in terms of assuaging inequality, controlling and expanding its power base, etc) in waging revolution. Based upon the findings, the Nepalese movement has been the most successful, followed by the Shining Path, while the Indian movement is uncertain since it has yet to reach its logical conclusion. Until the Indian example can be discussed in more certain, concrete terms, with a specific focus on the dynamics of its party structure, Lukács' statement, "The party, as the strictly centralized organization of the proletariat's most conscious elements – and only as such – *is conceived as an instrument of class struggle in a revolutionary period,*"<sup>25</sup> cannot yet be negated.

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<sup>25</sup> Lukács, György. "Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought."

## A Biography of the Groups and Their Leaders

Every act of rebellion expresses a nostalgia for innocence and an appeal to the essence of being.<sup>26</sup>

-Albert Camus

No political party can possibly lead a great revolutionary movement to victory unless it possesses revolutionary theory and a knowledge of history and has a profound grasp of the practical movement.<sup>27</sup>

-Mao Tse-tung

### *The Communist Party of Peru-Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path)*

Peru, a country of roughly 29 million people, is a diverse mix of Amerindians, Europeans, Africans and Asians. Throughout Peru's history, the former group has tended to be the most severely oppressed, first by the Spanish conquerors, and later, in the form of underdevelopment and political marginalization, by the post-independence Peruvian regimes, despite it making up over 40% of the population.<sup>28</sup> Between 1920 and 1960, Quechua, the language spoken by most of the indigenous people, was not officially recognized or taught in schools, leaving a large percentage of the rural population illiterate. Education was sparse in areas like Ayacucho, Apurímac, and Huancavelica, and in the whole of the country, a mere three percent of the population owned eighty percent of the arable land.<sup>29</sup> Due to the lack of farmland, the indigenous people migrated to the cities and coast, only to find themselves culturally isolated and politically, as well as economically, powerless.<sup>30</sup> The peasants who stayed in the rural areas hardly fared better, since Peru's highland, in 1980, was a region as impecunious as some of the poorest countries in the world, and because of a severe paucity of physicians, life

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<sup>26</sup> Camus, Albert. *The Rebel*.

<sup>27</sup> Mao Tse-tung. "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War." *Selected Works*, Vol. II. 208.

<sup>28</sup> Starn, Orin. "Maoism in the Andes: The Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path and the Refusal of History." 401-402.

<sup>29</sup> Eckstein, Susan, ed. *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*. 67.

<sup>30</sup> Strong, Simon. *Shining Path: Terror and Revolution in Peru*. 47.

expectancy rates were oftentimes as low as in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>31</sup> Revolutionary intellectuals, inspired by the successful Cuban revolution in 1959, began forming contacts with these disillusioned peasants, some of whom went on to stage rebellions, all of which ended in utter failure.<sup>32</sup> It was this revolutionary climate from which the Shining Path was able to manifest, under the tutelage of a former professor of philosophy.

Peru's first major Marxist theorist was José María Mariátegui, the founder of the Communist Party of Peru. His writings, which stressed Peru's fascist, semifeudal and semicolonial nature, became building blocks for the nascent Shining Path movement, and an early source of inspiration for the movement's leader, Abimael Guzmán.<sup>33</sup> However, it was to be Maoism that captivated and ultimately defined the movement. Maoist thought had a strong grip on the Peruvian Communist intellectuals since the aftermath of the Chinese civil war in 1949, particularly since it emphasized a reliance on the peasantry, a group that Stalin was famously ambivalent towards, and thus was mentioned very little in the Soviet literature.<sup>34</sup> Similarly to Mao, who encountered Marxist philosophy while a student at Beijing University, Guzmán was introduced, in the early 1960s, to the ideology that would energize the Shining Path while working on his dissertations at the San Agustín National University in Arequipa. As an intellectual, was also well skilled in the subtleties of Western culture, analogously to another famous rebel leader, Pol Pot. Just as the latter was known for his veneration of French writers like Mallarmé and Rimbaud while a professor at a French lycee in Phnom Penh, Guzmán exhibited a particular fondness for Hegel and Heidegger, and wrote his doctoral thesis on

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<sup>31</sup> Eckstein, Susan, ed. *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*. 67.

<sup>32</sup> Strong, Simon. *Shining Path: Terror and Revolution in Peru*. 16-18.

<sup>33</sup> Rosenau, William. "Is the Shining Path the 'New Khmer Rouge'?" 311.

<sup>34</sup> Strong, Simon. *Shining Path: Terror and Revolution in Peru*. 71.

Kant's theory of space.<sup>35</sup> Encouraged by several of his more radical professors, Guzmán studied Quechua, the language spoken by Peru's indigenous population, and later became increasingly active in left-wing political circles. He began to attract many like-minded young academics committed to bringing about revolution in Peru, and soon, he was able to exert his influence within the Communist Party of Peru. After a trip to China during the height of the Cultural Revolution, which Guzmán viewed as "mankind's most glorious achievement", he began advocating a "scientific truth" based on the Marxist classics and a new synthesis of Peruvian economic and social factors, which resonated strongly with the newly educated youth, as well as countless teachers and professors in the southern highlands of Peru, although it was initially esoteric to Peru's indigenous populations.<sup>36</sup>

In the 1960s, after the split of the Peruvian Communist Party, Guzmán emerged as the leader of the pro-Chinese faction which became known as the Sendero Luminoso (named because of a quote in which Mariátegui termed Marxism–Leninism as "sendero luminoso al futuro").<sup>37</sup> In Peru, Guzmán became somewhat of an enigmatic and mystical figure, with the news media reporting stories on his death or supposed "sightings" without any hard evidence due to his "supernatural" ability to evade the authorities during both the years of Francisco Morales Bermúdez's presidency as well as the height of the Shining Path campaign.<sup>38</sup> Within the Party, however, he was the premier theoretical and tactical authority and his influence was ubiquitous. According to Poole and Rénique, "The high degree of discipline and centralism which unites its militants

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<sup>35</sup> Žižek, Slavoj. "The Violence of Liberal Democracy." 93.

<sup>36</sup> Arnson, Cynthia J. and I. William Zartman, eds. *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed*. 57-59.

<sup>37</sup> Rosenau, William. "Is the Shining Path the 'New Khmer Rouge'?" 311.

<sup>38</sup> Stavans, Ilan. "Two Peruvians." 27.

around the armed struggle is directly related to the extraordinary personality cult which grew up around Guzmán. For Senderistas, every command and action has been an expression of the will of Guzmán, known to the party members as ‘Presidente Gonzalo’.”<sup>39</sup> In order to fully illustrate Guzmán’s ascendancy over the Party and its proceedings, a pamphlet was published, entitled *Bases for Discussion*, which read:

It is the obligation of all militants to struggle permanently to defend and preserve the Party leadership, especially the leadership of Chairman Gonzalo, our chief, against any attack from within or outside the party, and to subject ourselves to his leadership and personal command raising the slogans ‘Learn from Chairman Gonzalo’ and ‘Incarnate Gonzalo’s Thought’...who knows revolutionary theory, has knowledge of history, and a profound understanding of practice; who...has overthrown revisionism, right- and left-wing liquidationism, right-wing opportunism and right-wingism; who has reconstituted the Party, leads in the people’s war and has become the greatest living Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, great political and military strategist, philosopher, master of communists, center of party unification.<sup>40</sup>

In order to seize power in Peru, Guzmán adhered to, and fiercely promoted Mao’s idea of “people’s war” as well as a Sorel-inspired adulation of revolutionary violence.

According to the French philosopher Georges Sorel, violence within the framework of a Marxist class war is necessary and heroic and should be viewed as in the service of the “immemorial interest of civilization.”<sup>41</sup> In one of the few interviews ever granted by Guzmán, he stated, “...the need for revolutionary violence, is a universal law with no exception. Revolutionary violence is what allows us to resolve fundamental contradictions by means of an army, through people's war... Mariátegui said that only by destroying, demolishing the old order could a new social order be brought into being. In the final analysis, we judge these problems in light of the basic principle of war

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<sup>39</sup> Poole, Deborah and Gerardo Rénique. *Peru: Time of Fear*. 44.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>41</sup> Sorel, Georges. *Reflections on Violence*. xvi.

established by Chairman Mao: the principle of annihilating the enemy's forces and preserving one's own forces."<sup>42</sup> The use of violence, especially in retribution for misconduct against women or other criminal acts, as judged by a people's court, seemed to have a particular attraction among the rural population. For instance, in Chuschi, a town controlled by the Shining Path within Ayacucho, the first enemies to be executed were cattle thieves from a neighboring village which also happened to be Chuschi's traditional enemy.<sup>43</sup> During the buildup phase, prior to the launching of the people's war, Abimael Guzmán focused on doctrine and leadership development and on expanding his organization's "relationships with relatively isolated peasant communities in the outlying districts in the highlands around the city of Ayacucho."<sup>44</sup> The preparatory activities to achieve Guzmán's vision were to establish a dedicated cadre and a revolutionary party, a guerilla army, and a support mechanism for the entire organization, a process that was estimated to take 15 to 20 years.<sup>45</sup> It was not until 1980, however, that the Shining Path became fully known to the authorities, despite existing in the countryside for fifteen years prior. During the period of 1980-1992, Guzmán was a giant, god-like figure within the movement, a movement which could not operate unless he allowed it to, and everyone within the party and the base areas contributed to the metastasization of his personality cult. In discussing the structure of the party, Huston writes, "Sendero is organized into a many leveled body with a tightly controlled cellular structure which makes it easy for the few people at the top to control and virtually impossible to penetrate...The Sendero leadership is structured around a

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<sup>42</sup> "Interview with Chairman Gonzalo." *El Diario*. 1988.

<sup>43</sup> Palmer, David Scott, ed. *Shining Path of Peru*. 79.

<sup>44</sup> Manwaring, Max G. "Peru's Sendero Luminoso: The Shining Path Beckons." 161.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 159.

national conference of constituent members. All decisions are made by a Central Committee which comprises leaders from five strategic regions.”<sup>46</sup> His capture, unceremoniously in a small apartment above a ballet studio in Lima in 1992, nearly brought the movement to a screeching halt, a phenomenon that may support arguments for decentralized leadership within social movements or rebel groups.

*The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)*

In 1996, a people’s war broke out in the seemingly peaceful, mountainous republic of Nepal. Under the leadership of the CPN (M), the armed struggle, modeled upon the Shining Path movement in Peru, flared up in the Mid-west and far-west regions of the country. After witnessing bank robberies, attacks on police stations and army barracks, and the burning of loan papers to indebted farmers, King Birenda and the Parliamentary leadership of Nepal perhaps wished that they had taken the CPN (M)’s declaration of people’s war more seriously.<sup>47</sup> Nepal has a similar history to countries like Thailand, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and even Iran in that it was never colonized and that it experienced, for much of its history, a monarchical, feudal style of rule. This type of system was responsible for explosive socio-political tensions between the King and other rising elites as well as between the dominant and exploited classes, yet Nepal was the lone country to experience a classical peasant-based revolutionary upsurge which lead to the eventual overthrow of the monarchy.<sup>48</sup> The CPN (M) was not immediately palpable, but was a product of the legacy of failed leftist movements which were always deeply ingratiated within the larger struggle of the peasantry.<sup>49</sup> This movement differed

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<sup>46</sup> Huston, Major James V. “Insurgency in Peru: The Shining Path.”

<sup>47</sup> Vanaik, Achin. “The New Himalayan Republic.” 61.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 51.

<sup>49</sup> Onesto, Li. *Dispatches form the People’s War in Nepal*. 9.

from its predecessors, however, due to its adherence to Maoism, an ideology that became increasingly important within Nepal during China's Cultural Revolution.<sup>50</sup>

The two major theorists within the party, Pushpa Kamal Dahal (better known by his *nom de guerre*, Prachanda) and Baburam Bhattarai, differed from many famous communist leaders in that they had poor or middle peasant backgrounds, meaning that the poverty and hunger experienced by the peasants was an intimate issue, even at a young age. Yet the two men had very differing paths which eventually lead them to the creation of the CPN (M), and while Prachanda was employed by a rural development project and working within the Communist Party of Nepal (Mashal) in 1986, Bhattarai was completing his doctoral thesis entitled *The Nature of Underdevelopment and Regional Structure of Nepal*, a Marxist analysis which viewed development as a process triggered by contradictions between the forces and relations of production.<sup>51</sup> Despite the somewhat disparate approaches, both men were able to come to the conclusion that the rural population of Nepal was frustrated, in part, by “failed” or “incomplete” development, and in 1995, a year after they founded the CPN (M), they deduced that the conditions in Nepal, “were ripe for launching, building, and sustaining an armed struggle and that such a struggle could unite and mobilize Nepal’s peasantry.”<sup>52</sup> The conditions they viewed as potential catalysts for a people’s war included a corrupt, semi-feudal state system with little influence outside several of the major cities, large populations of people in rural areas lacking any sort of infrastructure or health and education facilities, and endemic poverty. Specifically, in 1996, the literacy rate in

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<sup>50</sup> Onesto, Li. “Inside the Revolution in Nepal: Interview with Comrade Prachanda.”

<sup>51</sup> Bhattarai, Baburam. *The Nature of Underdevelopment and Regional Structure in Nepal, a Marxist Analysis*.

<sup>52</sup> Onesto, Li. *Dispatches from the People’s War in Nepal*. 7.

Nepal was below 35 %, and over 68% of the population was living under \$1 a day.<sup>53</sup>

Before the launching of the people's war in 1996, the incipient party embarked on a year-long campaign to build support among the peasants in Rolpa, Rukum and Jajarkot districts, and villagers were mobilized to challenge the existing local authority structures as well as construct bridges, roads, and latrines.<sup>54</sup> The decision making of the party was handled by a standing committee of seven members (including Prachanda and Bhattarai). Underneath the standing committee, the central committee contained forty to fifty members and oversaw five regional bureaus, each of which supervised three sub-regions.<sup>55</sup>

After the second conference of the CPN (M), Prachanda was elevated from general secretary to chairman, and the party adopted an ideology known as "Prachanda Path". In discussing this policy shift, senior Maoist leader Mohan Vaidya (Kiran) stated, "Just as Marxism was born in Germany, Leninism in Russian and Maoism in China, Prachanda Path is Nepal's identity of revolution. Just as Marxism has three facets- philosophy, political economy, and scientific socialism, Prachanda Path is a combination of all three totally in Nepal's political context."<sup>56</sup> Prachanda no doubt was taking a page out of Abimael Guzmán's book, who stated, in a rare interview, "In sum, Gonzalo Thought is none other than the application of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to our (Peru's) concrete reality."<sup>57</sup> Prachanda may have been similar to the former leader of the Shining Path in that he reframed Maoism to fit Nepal's "concrete reality" and declared himself "chairman" of the party, but differed from Guzmán in another major

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<sup>53</sup> "Annual Data." *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific*.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 7.

<sup>55</sup> Vanaik, Achin. "The New Himalayan Republic." 62.

<sup>56</sup> Kiran. "The Mandate Expressed in People's War."

<sup>57</sup> "Interview with Chairman Gonzalo." *El Diario*.

aspect. According to Gellner, “On the same day (February 13, 2006), marking the tenth anniversary of the start of the Maoist insurgency, the BBC broadcast an interview with Prachanda...it caused a sensation in Nepal because, until then, only two photos of the Maoist leader were ever seen, and he had been shrouded in mystery.”<sup>58</sup> In this regard, Prachanda was more like Pol Pot, the somewhat recondite leader of the Khmer Rouge who also shied away from massive amounts of exposure and personality cults. For Prachanda, the comparison to Pol Pot did not end there, as the former United States Ambassador to Nepal, James Moriarty, began a media campaign to warn of the similarities between Nepal’s Maoists and Pol Pot’s movement in Cambodia.<sup>59</sup> Despite military support for the monarchy coming from the United States, India, and China, the CPN (M) was able to operate to a varying degree in sixty-eight of the seventy-five districts that comprise Nepal, and their presence was the strongest in the districts of Rolpa, Rukum, Jajarkot, Salyan, Pyuthan and Kalikot.<sup>60</sup> Emboldened by their successes, the CPN (M) helped to establish the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA), a group composed of ten parties from Bangladesh, India, Bhutan and Sri Lanka with the purpose of unifying and coordinating the activities of the Maoist parties and organizations in South Asia to spread protracted people’s war in the region.<sup>61</sup>

Both Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai, along with Mohan Vaidya Pokharel (Kiran), still operate as the leaders of the party, which has operated as a legal political party since the ceasefire in 2006 that effectively ended the civil war in Nepal.

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<sup>58</sup> Gellner, David N. “Nepal and Bhutan in 2006: A Year of Revolution.” 82.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 82.

<sup>60</sup> Vanaik, Achin. “The New Himalayan Republic.” 62.

<sup>61</sup> Onesto, Li. *Dispatches from the People’s War in Nepal*. 232.

Throughout the course of the people's war, the Prachanda and Bhattarai had their share of differences, yet they seemed to be personal rather than theoretical.<sup>62</sup> However, after the fighting ended and the CPN (M) had to make the transition to parliamentary politics, the theoretical differences between Prachanda, Bhattarai, and Kiran started to become far more acute.<sup>63</sup> Most recently, in 2011, Bhattarai made the news for walking out of a party meeting when he was not allowed to put forth his political line, which stressed peace and the implementation of the constitution as well as the importance of not antagonizing India. However, the official party line, backed by Prachanda and Kiran, maintained that the people's principal contradiction is with "Indian expansionism and domestic reactionaries" and "people's revolt" is the roadmap if a people's federal democratic republican constitution was not promulgated.<sup>64</sup> Even though the people's war came to an end in 2006, it appears that Prachanda and Kiran are advocating for a return to revolution if Nepal is not established along a certain political path, whereas Bhattarai appears to be increasingly marginalized.

*The Communist Party of India (Maoist)*

India, in comparison to the other two countries, has the longest history of Maoist rebellion, starting in the mid 1960s with the formation of a leftist faction within the Communist Party of India (Marxist) led by Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal. Economist Amartya Sen described in a sobering manner the affect of Jawaharlal Nehru's economic policies, which were being implemented at this time:

[India] had, in terms of morbidity, mortality and longevity, suffered an excess in mortality over China of close to 4 [million] a year during the same period [1958-1961]... Thus, in this one geographical area alone, more deaths resulted from

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<sup>62</sup> Thapa, Manish. "Understanding Maoist Insurgency of Nepal: Context, Cost & Consequences."

<sup>63</sup> "Interview with Kiran: Maoism is our Identity, not a Tail."

<sup>64</sup> Jha, Prashant. "Factionalism deepens within Nepali Maoists."

‘this failed capitalist experiment’ (more than 100 million by 1980) than can be attributed to the ‘failed communist experiment’ all over the world since 1917.<sup>65</sup>

Inspired by Majumdar’s “Historic Eight Documents” which argued for an armed revolution based upon the example of the Chinese Revolution, a militant peasant uprising took place in Naxalbari in 1967.<sup>66</sup> Initially, the Naxalbari uprising was expected to ignite a widespread peasant insurrection, however, the peasant fighters, brandishing knives, sickles, and the occasional archaic firearm, were soundly defeated by well-armed government forces.<sup>67</sup> That same year, Majumdar and Sanyal formed a new group, the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries which eventually morphed into the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). Despite the death of General Secretary Majumdar at the hands of the police in 1972, intermittent fighting continued in the countryside, although it was often lead by one of numerous permutations of the old party.<sup>68</sup> After years of security operations against the rebels, turf wars between the various factions, and proscription against communist parties imposed at various times by the central government and affected states, several of the major leaders, including Muppala Lakshmana Rao (Ganapathi) and Mallojula Koteswara Rao (Kishenji) realized that strength lies in unity. Thus, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) was the amalgamation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) People’s War and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCC), a merger that took place in 2004.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Amartya Sen, quoted in Mobo Gao. *The Battle for China’s Past: Mao & the Cultural Revolution*. 20.

<sup>66</sup> Motlagh, Jason. “The Maoists in the Forest: Tracking India’s Separatist Rebels.” 113.

<sup>67</sup> Ram, Mohan. *Maoism in India*. 66.

<sup>68</sup> Dasgupta, Biplab. “Naxalite Armed Struggles and the Annihilation Campaign in Rural Areas.” *Economic and Political Weekly*. 185.

<sup>69</sup> Ramana, P.V. “India’s Maoist Insurgency: Evolution, Current Trends, and Responses.” *India’s Contemporary Security Challenges*. 32-33.

The current manifestation of the party includes Ganapathi as general secretary. He presides over the decision making body, known as the Politburo, consisting of fourteen members (six of whom were killed or arrested between 2007 and 2010, the two most prominent being Azad and Kohad Ghandy). Kishenji is a Politburo member as well, yet he also functions as the head of the Eastern Regional Bureau, with most of his activity focusing on the Lalgarh area of West Bengal, and he appears to possess a sizable amount of leverage within the party.<sup>70</sup> Underneath the Politburo is the Central Committee, which then acts to disseminate information to Regional Bureaus, State Committees, Zonal Committees, District Committees, and armed squads.<sup>71</sup> Directions are then passed on to the main fighting force, the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army, with an estimated 10,000-20,000 fighters. Arundhati Roy, a journalist who has spent time traveling within Maoist-held base areas, describes some of the people who constitute the ranks of the Maoist guerrilla organization in a very vivid and somewhat benign manner:

...the Maoists' guerrilla army is made up almost entirely of desperately poor tribal people living in conditions of such chronic hunger that it verges on famine of the kind we only associate with sub-Saharan Africa. They are people who, even after 60 years of India's so-called Independence, have not had access to education, healthcare or legal redress. They are people who have been mercilessly exploited for decades, consistently cheated by small businessmen and moneylenders, the women raped as a matter of right by police and forest department personnel. Their journey back to a semblance of dignity is due in large part to the Maoist cadre who have lived and worked and fought by their side for decades. If the tribals have taken up arms, they have done so because a government which has given them nothing but violence and neglect now wants to snatch away the last thing they have—their land. Clearly, they do not believe the government when it says it only wants to “develop” their region. Clearly, they do not believe that the roads as wide and flat as aircraft runways that are being built through their forests in Dantewada by the National Mineral

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<sup>70</sup> Flood, Derek Henry. “Kisenji: A Profile of the Leader of the Indian Maoist Insurgency.” 10.

<sup>71</sup> Mohan, Vishwa. “A band of eight that calls the shots.”

Development Corporation are being built for them to walk their children to school on. They believe that if they do not fight for their land, they will be annihilated. That is why they have taken up arms.<sup>72</sup>

Besides functioning within the rural areas, the CPI (M) has increased its efforts within many towns and cities across India, including Delhi, Bhopal, Jabalpur, Indore, Rourkela, Kolkata, Ranchi, Patna, Gorakhpur, Allahabad, and Lucknow, to name just a few.<sup>73</sup>

Despite the obvious setbacks the movement has faced, including the death or imprisonment of several of its leaders and the initiation of the government's "Operation Green Hunt", it continues to increase its actions against the Indian state, drawing on the examples of the Nepalese Maoists and the Shining Path, as well as the 1967 Naxalbari uprising.

Since the CPI (M) has lost several of its important Politburo members, it appears to be pursuing a more decentralized approach, with party members like Kishenji operating in particular regions holding considerable influence in determining strategy and tactics. This may help the CPI (M) strengthen its footing in the various regions it operates in, since each regional leader would theoretically be more knowledgeable of his area of operation. However, this may also lead to a disconnect in pursued strategy by the party as a whole, illustrated by the confusion over the issuing of a bandh (general strike), where Kishenji promoted a different point of view from Politburo member Anand and Dandakaranya special zonal committee chief Gudsa Usendi.<sup>74</sup> Azad also alluded to, in an interview before his death, about the divergence between Kishenji and the central committee of the party. When asked whether certain statements made by

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<sup>72</sup> Arundhati Roy, quoted in Žižek, Slavoj. *Living in the End Times*. 394-395.

<sup>73</sup> Ramana, P.V. "India's Maoist Insurgency: Evolution, Current Trends, and Responses." 35.

<sup>74</sup> Bhattacharya, Snigdendu. "Confusion in Maoist ranks over bandh date." *Hindustan Times* 2010.

Kishenji concerning a dialogue with the government could be viewed as authoritative,

Azad responded:

As regards Kishenji's statements, they should be seen with a positive attitude, not with cynicism. Though our central committee has not discussed our specific strategy with regard to talks with the government at the current juncture, as a Polit Bureau member, comrade Kishenji had taken initiative and made a concrete proposal for a ceasefire. Whether comrade Kishenji's statements are the official pronouncements of our Central Committee is not the point of debate here.<sup>75</sup>

Even though it seemed like Azad was trying to deflect the question in a manner as to not implicate or criticize Kishenji, it did seem as if there was some surprise about the statements. The party also exhibited some disagreements towards the developments of the CPN (M). Azad spoke in a definitive manner on the CPN (M)'s foray into parliamentary politics, saying, "Our Party looks at the election results in Nepal as a positive development with enormous significance for the people of entire South Asia."<sup>76</sup>

It is not entirely surprising that Kisenji, when asked about Nepal, stated rather bluntly, "What the Maoists in Nepal are doing is wrong."<sup>77</sup>

The CPN (M) and the Shining Path were both considered more unified than the Indian Maoists, especially since the latter party's current manifestation only took shape in 2004, and prior to that, numerous Maoist and communist factions existed, many of which carried out sporadic guerilla operations.<sup>78</sup> These differences have also been reflected in the extent of the war in each country. Nepal and Peru both experienced a countrywide Maoist insurgency, whereas India has seen pockets of insurgency. Because

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<sup>75</sup> "Edited text of 12,262-word response by Azad, Spokesperson, Central Committee, CPI (Maoist)."

<sup>76</sup> "Interview with comrade Azad, spokesperson of the CC, CPI (Maoist) on the present developments in Nepal."

<sup>77</sup> Mittal, Tusha. "I am the Real Desh Bhakt."

<sup>78</sup> Shah, Alpa, and Judith Pettigrew. "Windows into a revolution: ethnographies of Maoism in South Asia." 226.

Nepal and Peru contained viable, unified insurgent groups that operated throughout a large percentage of the country, each of the two countries militarized to an extent not experienced in India. For example, in Peru in 1992, the President Alberto Fujimori carried out, with the support of the military, a “self-coup”, in which congress was shut down and the constitution suspended, allowing him to declare martial law and concentrate his efforts in combating the Shining Path and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement.<sup>79</sup> In Nepal, after the bizarre 2001 regicide in which the king and queen were murdered by their son, Prince Dipendra, the new king, Gyanendra, wasted little time in imposing emergency rule, and, in order to combat the Maoist threat, the King accrued millions of dollars in weaponry as well as military training from both the United States and India.<sup>80</sup> Before India initiated “Operation Green Hunt” in November 2009 in the Gadchiroli district, combating the Maoists was generally the responsibility of the individual state governments, and coordination between the police and intelligence agencies of various affected states was far from satisfactory.<sup>81</sup> In the case of the Indian Maoists, further actions, particularly military, would have to be coordinated in order to combat a concerted government military expedition.<sup>82</sup> The purpose of this paper will be to distinguish whether a strongly centralized authority structure, like that found within the Shining Path or CPN (M) movements, or a relatively decentralized model, becoming more apparent within the CPI (M), exhibits a consistent coordination of efforts and policy.

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<sup>79</sup> Stern, Steve J., ed. *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*. 397.

<sup>80</sup> Vanaik, Achin. “The New Himalayan Republic.” 61-61.

<sup>81</sup> Ramana, P.V. “India’s Maoist Insurgency: Evolution, Current Trends, and Responses.” 43.

<sup>82</sup> Shah, Alpa, and Judith Pettigrew. “Windows into a revolution: ethnographies of Maoism in South Asia.” 227.

## Women and the Party

There can be no liberation for the working class unless women are completely liberated.<sup>83</sup>

-V.I. Lenin

The doors of the Communist Party stood open to women of the working class, and...gave them every opportunity to participate in the work of the Soviets to reshape their way of life and thus improve their own living conditions.<sup>84</sup>

-Alexandra Kollontai, "The Woman Worker and Peasant in Soviet Russia."

According to Guzmán, in an interview he afforded *El Diario* in 1988, the key to ending the years of suffering of the Peruvian people, and in particular, those living in rural areas, was, "To place Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in command. And with Maoism principally, take up people's war, which is universally applicable, taking into account the character of each revolution and the specific conditions of each country."<sup>85</sup> In that interview, he defines problems and solutions in terms of class, and barely mentions the problems of women or their role in the revolution. However, in a private conversation, Guzmán reportedly stated:

We must see that we sidestepped the popular feminine movement, women being the half that holds up the sky; to fight the enemy that is transitorily strong with one arm tied behind one's back is foolish. The struggle for the emancipation of the woman is part of the liberation of the proletariat- this is the Communist way of understanding the problem- from which derives equality before the law and equality in life.<sup>86</sup>

Shining Path members, while engaged in fighting and setting up base areas, also adhered to Mao's "The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention",

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<sup>83</sup> Lenin, V.I. "To the Working Women".

<sup>84</sup> Kollontai, Alexandra. *Alexandra Kollontai: Selected Articles and Speeches*.

<sup>85</sup> "Interview with Chairman Gonzalo." *El Diario*.

<sup>86</sup> Stern, Steve J., ed. *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*. 352.

specifically the point, “do not take liberties with women.”<sup>87</sup> During the duration of the movement, women played an instrumental role in legitimizing the ideology of the Shining Path, as teachers, members, martyrs and heroic images used for propaganda. Edith Lagos was one of the first female Shining Path leaders and her death in 1982, while in police custody, symbolized the female plight and intensified the importance of women within the movement. In Ayacucho, a town of 70,000 people, nearly 20,000 people attended her funeral.<sup>88</sup> By 1981, half of the teachers (most of whom were women) in Ayacucho Region had received their degrees from the Shining Path-controlled UNSCH Education Department.<sup>89</sup> By 1990, women made up approximately one-third of the revolutionary group’s membership, and many women rose to prominent leadership roles.<sup>90</sup> The Shining Path claimed that 40 percent of its guerilla army consisted of women.<sup>91</sup> According to Gonzalez-Perez, “throughout the 1980s, a large number of women were involved at all levels of the organization, right up to the top positions in both the regional commands and the National Central Committee”, and that in 1993, after the arrest of Guzmán, the group was controlled by women such as Laura Zambrano and Elena Iparraguirre.<sup>92</sup> These two women, along with six others, occupied a position within the Central Committee (out of 19 total spots).<sup>93</sup> Women still existed as a minority in the

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<sup>87</sup> Mao Tse-tung. “On the Reissue of the Three Main Rules of Discipline...” *Selected Military Writings*. 343.

<sup>88</sup> Arnson, Cynthia J., and I. William Zartman, eds. *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed*. 55.

<sup>89</sup> Kirk, Robin. *The Monkey’s Paw: New Chronicles from Peru*. 79.

<sup>90</sup> Starn, Orin. “Maoism in the Andes: The Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path and the Refusal of History.” 416.

<sup>91</sup> Nash, Nathaniel C. “Lima Journal; Shining Path Women: So Many and So Ferocious.”

<sup>92</sup> Gonzalez-Perez, Margaret. “Guerrilleras in Latin America: Domestic and International Roles.” 320-321.

<sup>93</sup> Starn, Orin. “Maoism in the Andes: The Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path and the Refusal of History.” 416.

movement, even during the high points of Shining Path expansion; however, women achieved a visibility never before seen in any political party in Peruvian history.<sup>94</sup>

In 1990, greater space was offered to women for political action in collaboration with the state, brought on by policies of decentralization and regionalization initiated by the Alan García regime.<sup>95</sup> Within Peru's parliament, the APRA party and CAMBIO '90 had five female representatives, while the FREDEMO had four.<sup>96</sup> However, in areas dominated by the Shining Path, generally the state's reach was tenuous, political parties were nascent or altogether absent and civil society was weak.<sup>97</sup> Historically, in the rural areas, public space and political activity were generally off limits to poor women, and most local political representation and decision making was reserved for men. Most of the political parties in Peru, even into the 1980s, focused most of their attention on organized associations of workers, students, professionals, etc, that were dominated by men, and if women did participate to any large degree in politics, they tended to be relatively affluent, urban dwellers.<sup>98</sup> Oftentimes, party officials that were elected in the rural regions, especially candidates from the United Left or the APRA party, were targeted by the Shining Path for assassination, despite overwhelming support for the official.<sup>99</sup> In response to these and other actions carried out by the Shining Path, the government helped numerous villages establish rondas (communal defense forces). Even within this type of organization, women demonstrate little authority, evidenced by the fact that not a single woman was elected as commando or civil defense committee

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<sup>94</sup> Stern, Steve J., ed. *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*. 351.

<sup>95</sup> Nelson, Barbara J. and Najma Chowdhury, eds. *Women and Politics Worldwide*. 589.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 589.

<sup>97</sup> Stern, Steve J., ed. *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*. 267.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 347-348.

<sup>99</sup> Eckstein, Susan, ed. *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*. 94.

president.<sup>100</sup> Thus, government-backed institutions like the rondas perpetuated the second-class status of women in Peru.

The type of revolutionary justice offered by the Shining Path appealed to many women within Andean communities. Wife-beaters, adulterers, and rapists were put on trial, and severe punishments were exacted.<sup>101</sup> Later publications of Shining Path propaganda recount the role of the party in changing gender roles and combating inequality of the sexes, “Peru’s traditional Andean peasant culture is quite a lot more rigid than what is prevailing in the urban areas. Peasant women who would stray from their husbands are severely punished but sexual harassment and adultery on the part of men is rather prevalent. On the other hand, where the Party established its influence, divorce is introduced and sexual harassment is not tolerated.”<sup>102</sup> The Shining Path did advocate for the use of violence, with Guzmán stating in his interview, “we start from the principle established by Chairman Mao Tse-tung: violence, that is the need for revolutionary violence, is a universal law with no exception. Revolutionary violence is what allows us to resolve fundamental contradictions by means of an army, through people’s war.”<sup>103</sup> Some of this “revolutionary violence”, especially the use of systematic assassinations, was guided towards women, especially leaders of Peruvian women’s groups. In a February 1992 issue of the party’s newspaper, *El Diario*, women’s organizations were the target of numerous vituperations, one of which branded the organizations as “an instrument of oppression and retardation of the woman with the goal of removing them from the path which the proletariat and the people have chosen with

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<sup>100</sup> Stern, Steve J., ed. *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*. 241.

<sup>101</sup> Rosenau, William. “Is the Shining Path the ‘New Khmer Rouge’?” 317.

<sup>102</sup> Committee to Support the Revolution in Peru. “The Other Half of the Sky.” 5-6.

<sup>103</sup> “Interview with Chairman Gonzalo.” *El Diario*.

popular war.”<sup>104</sup> One of several prominent women’s leaders to be assassinated by the Shining Path, María Elena Moyano, described the battle between her organization and the Maoists: “While they are arousing a revolution, we are extinguishing it.”<sup>105</sup>

Over the course of the people’s war in Peru, women were able to broaden their space of participation within the Shining Path. Under the conditions that manifested because of the war between the Shining Path and the Peruvian state, women were able to act in ways both maternal and political, illustrated by their roles as revolutionaries, soldiers, community organizers, nurses, and propagandists.<sup>106</sup> Additionally, they participated in intelligence and military activities, commanded columns and operatives, and came to attain leadership positions in all areas of the organization.<sup>107</sup> The group may have been somewhat selective in the type of women that could join the party, evidenced by a quote from a regional Shining Path leader who stated, “Not just any woman can be involved in the revolution. They have to be young, because as long as women remain unmarried and have no children, they are much more insensitive and colder than men and are thus willing to do anything.”<sup>108</sup> Yet, the Shining Path was able to provide a tangible example of a “success” in that it was able to combat inequality, especially in a historically male-dominated rural society. The Shining Path was, during the latter years of its existence, guilty of perpetrating attacks against women’s organizations, including the Metropolitan Organization of ‘Glass of Milk’ Committees and Soup Kitchens, established by a broad-based women’s movement in poor neighborhoods. The struggle against “revisionism” by the party oftentimes warranted little more than senseless and

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<sup>104</sup> Quoted in “Peru Under Fire.” 24.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>106</sup> Freed, Feather Crawford. “More than Half the Sky: The Power of Women in Peru.”

<sup>107</sup> Stern, Steve J., ed. *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*. 352.

<sup>108</sup> Huston, Major James V. “Insurgency in Peru: The Shining Path.”

macabre murders of left-leaning political activists and women organizers including Maria Elena Moyano and others who were engaged in the establishment of “people’s organizations.”<sup>109</sup> Disillusionment also manifested among the party’s base as well as throughout Peru as a result of patriarchal relations that were sometimes exploited by the party in order to get many of the female recruits to renounce work and study responsibilities as well as familial ties.<sup>110</sup> Since the party had a very rigid definition of what constituted “revisionism”, thus allowing for the justification of attacks on non- or anti-Shining Path groups actively trying to combat gender inequality, poverty, etc, outside the framework of the Peruvian government (i.e. grass-roots movements), its overall efforts in the struggle against gender equality cannot be seen as “highly successful”.

Both the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Communist Party of India (Maoist) were influenced by, to varying degrees, the Shining Path’s example of people’s war, with the former viewing the final failure of the Peruvian group as “left deviationism”.<sup>111</sup> Prachanda was, since 1996, viewed as the head of both the military and political wing of the CPN (M), similar to Guzmán (also similar to Guzmán, Prachanda has been known to quarrel with the number two in the organization, in this case Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, who felt unhappy about the power being consolidated under Prachanda).<sup>112 113</sup> Another similarity that existed between the CPN (M) and the Shining Path was the policy towards women. Li Onesto, a journalist who had access to territory controlled by the CPN (M) wrote about an interview she had with a women soldier:

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<sup>109</sup> Poole, Deborah and Gerardo Rénique. *Peru: Time of Fear*. 92.

<sup>110</sup> Stern, Steve J., ed. *Shining and Other Paths: War and Society in Peru, 1980-1995*. 349.

<sup>111</sup> Vanaik, Achin. “The New Himalayan Republic.” 63.

<sup>112</sup> Thapa, Manish. “Understanding Maoist Insurgency of Nepal: Context, Cost & Consequences.”

<sup>113</sup> Vanaik, Achin. “The New Himalayan Republic.” 64.

“Now all the members of my family are clear on the politics of the People’s War. All of them are in mass organizations and my younger...sister is going to school. She has passed class six and is teaching other people to read. When I was taking the adult education class I never had time to study. But in the People’s Army I have time to study reading and writing, and the other comrades help me. I can read newspapers and write letters now.”<sup>114</sup> Women gradually became more involved in the movement, both in the People’s Army, and in leadership positions as well. According to Onesto:

As of 2003, there are several women in the Central Committee of the Party, dozens of women at the regional level, hundreds in the district level, and several thousands in the area and cell levels in the party...In the western region of Nepal alone, there are 1,500 women’s units. The total membership in the women’s mass organization is 600,000. In the military field, there are 10 women section commanders in the main force, two women platoon commanders in the secondary force and several militia commanders in the basic force. And the team commander of the health section of a battalion force is a woman.<sup>115</sup>

Women were not simply casual members of the party; they were present within every level of leadership, from the top down to the rural committee level and in some cases, served as military commanders.

Women were able to play a myriad of roles within the party and the people’s army, yet this was not an instantaneous occurrence, rather, a protracted process. Prachanda admitted as much, stating, “Before initiation (of the people’s war), the women question was not so seriously debated in our party. That was our weakness.”<sup>116</sup> That initial disregard of the “woman question” was brought to the forefront after the publishing of “The Question of Women’s Leadership in the People’s War in Nepal” in 1999 by Hisila Yami (Parvati), a member of the CPN (M) Central Committee, a pamphlet

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<sup>114</sup> Onesto, Li. “Taking it Higher: Women’s Liberation in Nepal.”

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Onesto, Li. *Dispatches from the People’s War in Nepal*. 179.

which basically stated that despite women supporting the people's war in large numbers, showing similar sacrifice and devotion as male members of the people's army, few women had been elevated into leadership roles. However, in a 2006 interview, Parvati was more optimistic, stating that women were the driving force behind the movement, which, according to estimates, was 30-50 percent female.<sup>117</sup> In comparison, the Nepali Congress, one of the largest political parties in Nepal, had, in 2005, an estimated female contingent of 15 percent (a number which had only risen 2 percent by August 2010). Also, in 2010, it afforded just seven women a leadership position in the party's 71-member Central Working Committee, resulting in charges that the Nepali Congress provides little space for women at the decision-making level.<sup>118</sup> The Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) also has demonstrated a low level of female involvement and has never had more than three to five female members within its central committee.<sup>119</sup> Public leaders in both the CPN (UML) and the NC have been accused of focusing on narrow self-interest and not the issues of the public as well as being in collusion with the business sector, meaning that support from women has either decreased or risen at a very slow rate.<sup>120</sup> Oftentimes, women were nominated for positions of leadership because of mandates included within the Nepalese constitution. Promulgated in 1990, the constitution provided women with equal political rights including the right to vote, compete in local and national elections, and become involved in political parties. Constitutional provisions were then introduced that made it compulsory for political parties to nominate at least five per cent of women candidates

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<sup>117</sup> Xaykaothao, Doualy. "Nepal Maoist Leader: Women Driving Movement."

<sup>118</sup> Koirala, Kosh Raj. "Over 51,000 women NC active members."

<sup>119</sup> Kiran. "Status of Women in Nepal."

<sup>120</sup> Andrews, Julio A. "Strengthening Democracy Through Women's Political Participation- Nepal." 3.

for the House of Representatives, and to provide for seven seats for women in the National Assembly.<sup>121</sup>

Besides leadership positions, women featured prominently as combatants, propagandists, farmers, organizers, cultural activists, nurses and spies.<sup>122</sup> Maoist women's organizations were formed both in the cities and the countryside, and in Rolpa and Rukum, a majority of the women belonged to one of these organizations.<sup>123</sup> When asked about the role of the women's organizations, a female organizer from Rukum stated:

In the early days, we started by raising the consciousness of women, like talking about the struggle for equal rights. And we opposed the conservative traditions that oppress women, like the practice where if a women is married to a man in the countryside, the man's family has to pay a dowry...So we say that this amounts to the selling of women. So we oppose this kind of practice. Also, in some areas, we have been able to stop men drinking alcohol and as a result, a lot of wife-beating has stopped. So, in a practical way, many women are attracted to the revolutionary women's organization because of these kinds of things. We also opposed child marriages and polygamy and we've organized mass actions against polygamy.<sup>124</sup>

The women's organizations also set up political workshops and literacy classes.<sup>125</sup>

Within the context of civil war, both the state forces and the CPN (M) forces committed violence against women, but the former targeted women more frequently and in many cases, sexual violence was part of the repertoire.<sup>126</sup> This may be because any sort of law against domestic violence in Nepal is virtually absent and because there is no accountability meaning that the security personnel are not appropriately punished for

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<sup>121</sup> Vanaik, Achin. "The New Himalayan Republic." 59.

<sup>122</sup> Onesto, Li. *Dispatches from the People's War in Nepal*. 171.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 177

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-77.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>126</sup> Pettigrew, Judith, and Kamal Adhikari. "Fear and everyday life in rural Nepal." 409.

committing heinous crimes like rape and murder.<sup>127</sup> The CPN (M) had a law in place making it a crime for women to have relatives in the state security forces, and in several districts (Dhangadhi and Morang) women were targeted and killed if they were married to a security forces member.<sup>128</sup> As in Peru, however, the use of people's courts appears to have been ubiquitous, and punishments were frequently meted out against rapists and husbands who beat their wives.<sup>129</sup> The utilization of revolutionary violence, which included the annihilation of enemies, was a blend of Maoism with the thought of Charu Majumdar (the Indian revolutionary who advocated for a "battle of annihilation")<sup>130</sup>, and it seems that violence against women, if it did occur, happened within this context primarily (the women were viewed as enemies or targeted for reasons other than being "a woman"). Yet, many women in Nepal blamed the government for their suffering rather than the rebels who began the war and expressed clear support for the Maoist values and goals.<sup>131</sup> The CPN (M) suggested its desire to distinguish itself from the Shining Path in that it did not target female organizers and was able to more effectively deal with the issues of patriarchy and female leadership within the party. Combined with the pervasiveness of Maoist women's organizations and the vast numbers of women serving as either guerillas or within a non-combat role in the base areas, it can be said that, in a struggle against women's inequality in Nepal, the CPN (M) has been "highly successful". This does not mean, however, that mistakes did not occur or that there is not room for improvement. Providing meaningful opportunities for women within the party was a gradual process, which, according to Prachanda, was not seen as an immediate concern.

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<sup>127</sup> "Nepal: One Year of Royal Anarchy." *Asian Centre for Human Rights*. 43.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>129</sup> Onesto, Li. *Dispatches from the People's War in Nepal*. 175.

<sup>130</sup> Ram, Mohan. *Maoism in India*. 129.

<sup>131</sup> Leve, Lauren. "Women's empowerment and rural revolution: rethinking 'failed development'." 355.

Yet, in an interview with Baburam Bhattarai, he stated that in 2003, fifty percent of cadres at the lower level, thirty percent of soldiers and ten percent of members of central committee of the outfit were women, illustrating tremendous maturity in party policy concerning women.<sup>132</sup> Women were the victims of violence at the hands of the CPN (M), however, the party never devolved into the extremes of their Peruvian counterparts.

Since the outbreak of the Naxalbari uprisings in 1967, women have served in the Maoist people's armies in India. The CPI (M) has published a book entitled, *Women Martyrs of the Indian Revolution (Naxalbari to 2010)*, which tells the stories of more than 500 women killed in the movement, most of them victims of sexual violence at the hands of the government-backed troops and militias, such as the Salwa Judum, which operated in Chhattisgarh, India. The party has stated that the book was released in order to stimulate female recruitment, using glorified stories of daring exploits and martyrdom of female cadre, a group that makes up roughly 30 percent of the party.<sup>133</sup> Groups like the Salwa Judum appear to have been abandoned, with Chief Minister Raman Singh describing the movement as over because it was counterproductive and "innocent people were being killed",<sup>134</sup> yet the problems faced by women remain fundamentally unchanged throughout India. Within the party, issues of gender relation and discrimination have been addressed, starting, most significantly, with a rectification program carried out by the People's War Group in 1995 meant to assuage the tension that existed between the sexes. The larger purpose of this program was to bring about awareness on issues of patriarchy and to eliminate it, and because of initiatives like this one, the number of women coming into the party today is higher than the number of

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<sup>132</sup> "Interview with Baburam Bhattarai: Transition to New Democratic Republic in Nepal."

<sup>133</sup> "Tapasi is now a Maoist martyr."

<sup>134</sup> Jordan, Sandra. "India's Hidden War."

men.<sup>135</sup> The CPI (M) employs revolutionary violence, and women have been abducted or killed generally because they have been labeled “police informers.”<sup>136</sup> Sexual violence on the part of the CPI (M) appears rare, and the party has been particularly trenchant in its criticism of the “ruling classes and their armed forces using violence against women as one of their weapons.”<sup>137</sup> In a 9th Congress Party document entitled, “Resolution on State Violence Against Women”, the party proclaims a call-to-arms, declaring, “The Unity Congress’ 9th Congress calls upon all sections of women and democrats to oppose the violence being perpetrated by the state forces and vigilante forces on women. It also calls upon them to oppose the violence in the name of Salwa Judum, the cold-blooded killings in the name of encounters and the arrest of politically active women...This Congress calls upon all oppressed, exploited women to rise up against oppression and join the revolutionary movement for liberation.”<sup>138</sup>

In India, in order to increase the number of women participating in politics, the Panchayat Raj, a system of decentralized, regional authority, was implemented. As a result, over a million women have actively entered political life in India.<sup>139</sup> The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts specifically call for all local elected bodies to reserve one-third of their seats for women.<sup>140</sup> Although the percentages of women in various levels of political activity have risen considerably, women are still under-represented in governance and decision-making positions. For instance, the number of women in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha (the two houses of Parliament) is

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<sup>135</sup> Kannabiran, Vasanth, and Kalpana Kannabiran. “Women’s Rights and Naxalite Groups.” 4876.

<sup>136</sup> “Torture in India 2010.” *Asian Centre for Human Rights*. 41-42.

<sup>137</sup> “Interview with Ganapathi, Leader of India’s Growing Maoist Revolution.”

<sup>138</sup> “Naxal Conflict in 2006.” *Asian Centre for Human Rights*. 16.

<sup>139</sup> Coonrod, Carol S. “Chronic Hunger and the Status of Women in India.”

<sup>140</sup> Shantha, Mohan. “Women and Political Participation in India.” 1-2.

abysmally low (8.8 percent and 8.2 percent, respectively).<sup>141</sup> In two of the states heavily affected by the Maoists, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, women make up 9.5 and 5.8 percent, respectively, of the state assemblies.<sup>142</sup> The Bharatiya Janata Party, out of all of the major Indian political parties, seemed to have the most female members in leadership positions, however, they only accounted for 12.5 percent, meaning that very few of the parties actually place women in key leadership roles.<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, the Maoists have established regional authority which appears to be more egalitarian in practice. For example, in the village of Lalgarh, a mass organization known as the PCPA materialized, initially under the leadership of women. These organizations spread to many nearby villages as well, along with a new type of governing structure, known as Gram Committees, which are seen as alternative to the Panchayat system.<sup>144</sup> Each committee consists of a ten-member elected body, consisting of five men and five women. Two of these delegates attend larger area meetings, consisting of ten villages. According to Shell, “Above those committees are a total of 35 representatives for central committee meetings (with females occupying a minimum of 12 seats) who play governing roles.”<sup>145</sup> Twelve women out of 35 total seats is still 34 percent, a much higher percentage of women than what is normally seen within the Panchayat system, composed of “legally recognized” political parties.

The majority of the women who work within or support the CPI (M) are agricultural laborers and poor peasants, and it is these people who have been forming the

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<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>144</sup> Shell, Sam. “Revolution in India: Lalgarh’s Hopeful Spark.” 8.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

basis of movements for women's equality and liberation since the 1970s.<sup>146</sup> Many of the women are drawn to the movement because of the promises of a future egalitarian society (which was understood as including gender equality).<sup>147</sup> However, there have been instances when expectation and reality share an antithetical relationship, illustrated, most forcefully, within the institution of "revolutionary marriage." For some women, the reality became that once they were married to a party cadre, their political involvement was curbed significantly and their place in the home was firmly entrenched.<sup>148</sup> Even though there has been a perpetuation of bourgeois gender roles to a certain extent within the Indian Maoist movement, the leader Ganapathi has stated:

...we have never said there are no shades of patriarchy in the party or that the men and women comrades haven't become its victims. We are fighting against the manifestations of patriarchy by increasing the political consciousness of our comrades and people, by taking up anti-patriarchal rectification campaigns and more than anything, increasing the consciousness, self-confidence and individuality of the women comrades and implementing pro-women policies firmly...In fact, in the ongoing revolutionary movement and people's war under our party's leadership women are participating on a large scale. The participation of women in the struggles against various forms of patriarchy, under our party's leadership is very inspiring to us. It is an undeniable fact that no where else in our country and under no other party is there such a huge mobilization of women as in our party.<sup>149</sup>

It is hard to dispute that tremendous numbers of women have gravitated towards the CPI (M), making up sections of the guerilla army and operating as organizers, propagandists, nurses, agricultural workers, etc, in the base areas situated within the "Red Corridor", which consists of parts of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar

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<sup>146</sup> Akerkar, Supriya. "Theory and Practice of Women's Movement in India: A Discourse Analysis." 16.

<sup>147</sup> Roy, Srila. "Revolutionary Marriage: On the Politics of Sexual Stories in Naxalbari." 109.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>149</sup> "Nobody Can Kill the Ideas of 'Azad'! Nobody Can Stop the Advancement of the Revolution! An Interview with Comrade Ganapathi."

Pradesh and West Bengal states, however, it has yet to be seen whether or not the types of campaigns that Ganapathi discussed have been met with any sort of success. Yet, the CPI (M)'s acknowledgment of the problems that face women and that existed even within the party as well as their efforts to rectify previous negative trends shares similarity with the example of the Nepalese Maoists, and thus, they can be deemed "highly successful," to this point in time.

In each of the three cases, and despite the differences in party structure, the movement was able to attract a significant amount of women, particularly due to its deliverance of "popular justice" by way of people's courts. Even though the Shining Path, through its excessive use of violence and its targeting of independent women's organizations, progressively alienated sections of its support base, including women, it did promote gender equality, both in word and in action, resulting in over 30 percent of its party consisting of women. Thus, its efforts, even though not "highly successful", due to the previously mentioned setbacks, were at least highly coordinated and diligently carried out. The latter two groups, the CPN (M) and the CPI (M), actively sought to correct issues of patriarchy and inequality within the party, and in doing so, also strove to include women in all levels of the organization. Even though the CPI (M) is not highly centralized in the same manner as the CPN (M), both parties were able to recruit larger numbers of women than any of the legal political parties that were functioning at the same time. Therefore, the efforts of both the CPN (M) and the CPI (M) could be considered highly coordinated and "highly successful." The next section looks at the territory controlled by each group, with the assumption, based upon the hypothesis, that a

centralized party will be able to spread throughout more territory due to a superior military prowess.

### **Rebel-Controlled Territory**

Every Communist must grasp the truth, “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” Our principle is that that Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party.<sup>150</sup>  
-Mao Tse-tung

Since in our time all the reactionary ruling classes have a tight grip on the main cities, it is necessary for a revolutionary political party to utilize the vulnerable links and areas of reactionary rule, fully arouse the masses, conduct guerrilla warfare, establish stable revolutionary bases and so build up and temper their own forces and, through prolonged fighting, strive step by step for complete victory in the revolution.<sup>151</sup>  
-Lin Biao

In the case of the three groups, the party had the responsibility of creating and controlling armies, oftentimes made up of a blend of rural recruits and idealistic students. In this sense, the party always “commanded the gun.” In a Shining Path document entitled, “The Truth About the People’s War in Peru”, the group identified five stages of the revolution as follows:

- 1) Agitation and armed propaganda, First actions and training of the combatants in attacks with limited objectives. This lasted from May 1980 until the end of 1981.
- 2) Systematic sabotage and initiation of the first regular guerrilla actions destined to destroy the power of the bourgeois landowner in the zones chosen to be the bases of support. This lasted all of 1982.
- 3) Generalization of the guerrilla war and the beginning of the creation of support bases, behind the expulsion of the reactionary authorities. This extended throughout the entire year of 1983 and had to face the intervention of the army.
- 4) Conquest of the bases of support, establishing in them the power of the Popular Committees and strengthening the militias and popular army...Expansion of the

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<sup>150</sup> Mao Tse-tung. “Problems of War and Strategy.” *Selected Works*, Vol. II. 224.

<sup>151</sup> Lin Biao. “Comrade Lin Biao’s Speech at the Peking Rally Commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the October Revolution.”

popular army to new zones (including the city as an auxiliary activity) to obtain the dispersion of enemy forces...

5) Generalized civil war. The popular army will depart the liberated zones to surround the cities... Complete destruction of the reactionaries, and the installation throughout Peru of the Popular Republic of New Democracy as the concrete form of the first stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>152</sup>

This was certainly one of the most explicit and detailed plans of attack issued by any rebel group. The Shining Path was diligent in following this strategy, and throughout the 1980s, was able to increase the amount of territory it controlled as well as the number of militants in its organization. In the Andean highlands in particular, the Shining Path initially gained support from local peasants by filling the political void left by the central government or by actively chasing out or murdering government officials and other state representatives in order to paralyze and eliminate local government institutions.<sup>153</sup> The Shining Path, once establishing its authority in a particular area, would embark on a campaign of “popular justice” which caused the peasantry of many Peruvian villages to express some sympathy for the group, especially in the impoverished and neglected regions of Ayacucho, Apurímac, Junín, Cerro de Pasco and Huancavelica.<sup>154</sup> After large numbers of community leaders, administrators, and other “traitors” were rounded up and tried at a “people’s court”, they would be hanged, shot, or beaten, depending on the seriousness of their “crimes against the revolution”, and afterwards, the Shining Path would declare the region to be a “zone of liberation.”<sup>155</sup>

The Popular Guerrilla Army was the name for the militias established by the Shining Path in their base areas, and it was divided up into a “principle force” (which

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<sup>152</sup> Huston, Major James V. “Insurgency in Peru: The Shining Path.”

<sup>153</sup> Manwaring, Max G. “Peru’s Sendero Luminoso: The Shining Path Beckons.” 162.

<sup>154</sup> Rosenau, William. “Is the Shining Path the ‘New Khmer Rouge’?” 315.

<sup>155</sup> Manwaring, Max G. “Peru’s Sendero Luminoso: The Shining Path Beckons.” 162.

operates regionally), a “local force” and a “base force” (confined to specific villages).<sup>156</sup> In the late 1980s, with nearly 25,000 militants, the Shining Path controlled almost 25 percent of Peru’s municipalities and was supported by roughly 15 percent of Peruvians.<sup>157</sup> The Shining Path seemed to build strength during the presidency of Alan García (1985-1990) despite his creation of “rondas campesinas”, peasant brigades armed by the government with the intention of slowing down the advance of the Shining Path.<sup>158</sup> Despite alienation or disillusionment among Peruvians caused by the movement’s exceptional reliance on the use of violence, during the García presidency, the conditions that made the Shining Path appealing in the first place (extreme poverty, government corruption and inefficiency, etc) continued to exist, and as the García administration unsuccessfully sought a military solution to counter the growing threat, it committed numerous human rights violations. After incidents like the Accomarca massacre, where 47 peasants were gunned down by Peruvian armed forces in August 1985, the Cayara massacre in which some thirty people were killed and dozens disappeared (after they were suspected of being Shining Path sympathizers), and the summary execution of more than 200 inmates during prison riots in Lurigancho, San Juan Bautista and Santa Bárbara in 1986, many peasants, fearing the government military forces, joined the Shining Path.<sup>159</sup>

By 1991, Sendero controlled nearly a third of Peru and had made considerable progress in separating Lima from the countryside.<sup>160</sup> As leader of the Shining Path,

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>157</sup> Arnson, Cynthia J., and I. William Zartman, eds. *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed*. 53.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>159</sup> Starn, Orin. “Maoism in the Andes: The Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path and the Refusal of History.” 419.

<sup>160</sup> Ambrose, Patrick. “A Path of Destruction.”

Guzmán was known to express contempt towards foreign powers and ideas (other than Marxism), and he viewed Alberto Fujimori, the Peruvian Presidential candidate of Japanese descent, as an image of external intervention. When Fujimori was sworn into office, the Shining Path increased the intensity of its attacks in both the rural areas and in Lima.<sup>161</sup> However, Fujimori was able to, after a long and significantly brutal counter-terrorism campaign, accomplish what his predecessor could not; capture Guzmán, effectively beheading the Shining Path and decreasing their influence throughout Peru (in 1992, the Shining Path controlled nearly 30 percent of the country, whereas in 1995, the movement only controlled 8 percent of the country).<sup>162 163</sup> Perhaps Guzmán, in directing the military activities of his party, forgot to heed the advice of Mao, who had written, “If we insisted on leading the masses to do anything against their will, we would certainly fail.”<sup>164</sup> The massive military campaign waged by the Fujimori government against the Shining Path caused, ultimately, the demise of the party (which actually still exists today, but as two, distinct, fragmented groups with only a few hundred fighters each),<sup>165</sup> yet, the group also lost support due to its use of utilizing its militias to carry out reprisal killings of suspected collaborators and massacres of villages supporting the rondas or unsympathetic to the movement.<sup>166</sup> It is impressive that the movement was able to control nearly 30 percent of the country, however, it could not conquer Lima, a city populated by a large majority of Peru’s 9.8 million people living below the poverty line,

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<sup>161</sup> Stavans, Ilan. “Two Peruvians.” 36.

<sup>162</sup> Arnson, Cynthia J., and I. William Zartman, eds. *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed*. 74-75.

<sup>163</sup> Ambrose, Patrick. “A Path of Destruction.”

<sup>164</sup> Mao Tse-tung. “A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the *Shansi-Suiyan Daily*.” *Selected Works*, Vol. IV. 243.

<sup>165</sup> Arnson, Cynthia J., and I. William Zartman, eds. *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed*. 78-79.

<sup>166</sup> Starn, Orin. “Maoism in the Andes: The Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path and the Refusal of History.” 419.

many of whom were sympathetic to the initial aims of the movement.<sup>167</sup> A great decline in the amount of territory controlled was not experienced until after Guzmán was captured, but it seemed that the movement was, from the late 1980s to 1992, largely static, in the respect that it did not increase the territory under its control by any significant margin. The establishment of the *rondas campesinas* by García and the increased reliance upon them by Fujimori, along with the movement's provocation of community rivalry and use of reprisal killings (especially against peasant leaders)<sup>168</sup> may have significantly decreased the Shining Path's potential for expansion. Guzmán never concealed his desire to set up bases throughout the rural, predominantly Quechua-speaking areas, and because the Shining Path was able to build the party in places like Ayacucho, Huancavelica and Apurímac.<sup>169</sup> a strong level of coordination existed between the leader of the party and the lower level members engaged in carrying out political and military work in the various "zones of liberation". However, it was only "successful" and not "highly successful", since it did not exceed 30 percent control of the country and it alienated potential bases for support when its practice of "revolutionary violence" seemed to spiral out of control.

On February 13, 1996, the first actions of what was to become a ten-year long people's war occurred in the districts of Rolpa and Rukum which were previously known for their spectacular mountains and even more spectacular poverty.<sup>170</sup> Over the next several weeks, Nepal experienced over 5000 small- and large-scale actions throughout the country, instigated by the CPN (M). The Nepalese government, under King Birendra,

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<sup>167</sup> "Peru." *The World Factbook*.

<sup>168</sup> Kalyvas, Stathis N. "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars." 480.

<sup>169</sup> Strong, Simon. *Shining Path: Terror and Revolution in Peru*. 20-22.

<sup>170</sup> Onesto, Li. *Dispatches from the People's War in Nepal*. 195.

offered its first comprehensive response to the Maoist threat in 1998, Kilo Sera 2, which transferred thousands of specially trained armed police forces to 20 of the country's 75 districts.<sup>171</sup> After the first several months of the counterinsurgency, during which at least 200 people were killed, Prachanda stated:

On the basis of this outlook the Nepalese reactionary ruling classes "declared" that they would wipe-out the people's forces within one and half to two months and resorted to state terrorism with mass arrest, torture, pillage and genocide. The masses, the Party and the-revolutionary fighters continued to resist this by setting historic examples of devotion and sacrifice... What was the result? The result was consistent with what happens in genuine revolutionary movements all over the world. The result was as per the prognosis of the invincible ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism... here was an even bigger wave of people's sympathy and co-operation for the People's War. That thousands are replacing the hundreds and hundreds of thousands are replacing the thousands! They realized that People's War cannot be easily wished away, that it was a fundamentally a new type of war.<sup>172</sup>

Until 2001, the guerrilla forces of the CPN (M) embarked on small-scale actions (raiding police posts or attacking landlords or politicians) while armed with archaic weapons. Their actions, however, sometimes lead to the seizure and redistribution of land and were greeted with support among many impoverished villagers who witnessed oppressive mayors or officials run out of town and who benefited from social, economic and political transformations that the Maoists strove to implement.<sup>173</sup> In 2001, a ceasefire was implemented, as the leaders of the CPN (M) and the government engaged in peace talks, however, after blaming the government for not responding to any of their conditions, the Maoists walked out of the dialogue and almost immediately stepped up armed attacks.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>172</sup> Prachanda. "Two Momentous Years of Revolutionary Transformation."

<sup>173</sup> Onesto, Li. *Dispatches from the People's War in Nepal*. 219.

<sup>174</sup> Thapa, Manish. "Understanding Maoist Insurgency of Nepal: Context, Cost & Consequences."

Later that year, the Maoists announced the formation of the “People’s Liberation Army” to carry forward the people’s war in a more structured, unified manner.<sup>175</sup>

With a new army came the expansion into new territory and the establishment of political authority and organization in the villages. The CPN (M) divided the areas where it was active into three zones: “Guerrilla zones,” where a police presence was being combated by Maoist armed resistance; “Propaganda zones,” mainly in urban areas, where the Nepali regime’s presence remained strong and the main aim was to prepare the ground for eventual insurrection; and “Main zones,” which were areas where the setting up of a base in order to establish “red political power” was the overall goal.<sup>176</sup> By 2003, the government’s presence in the countryside, if it existed, was inconspicuous and hardly consequential. By this point, the Maoists had established base areas in the Eastern, Western, and Central Regions and claimed to have ten million of Nepal’s 23 million people living under the authority of the CPN (M).<sup>177</sup> Nepal’s government even put forward an estimate of CPN (M) military strength in 2003, indicating that there were approximately 9,500 combatants, 25,000 militia, 150,500 active cadres and over 100,000 sympathizers with the fighting forces consisting of ethnic groups including the Magars, Tharus, Limbus, Tamangs, Dalits, Brahmins and Chhetris.<sup>178</sup>

By 2002, both India and the United States were providing Nepal with military aid in order to defeat to Maoist threat, which seemed to be metastasizing at an alarming rate. Because of the munificence of Washington and Delhi, the Royal Nepal Army was able to

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<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> Onesto, Li. *Dispatches from the People’s War in Nepal*. 219.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>178</sup> International Crisis Group. “Nepal’s Maoists: Their Aims, Structure and Strategy.” 8.

expand to over 90,000 troops and embarked on a renewed counterinsurgency campaign, encompassing parts of the country it had never previously operated in.<sup>179</sup> Despite the renewed aggression by the Royal Nepal Army in 2005, the Maoists had spread to all but two of the country's 75 districts and claimed to control 80 percent of the countryside.<sup>180</sup> The CPN (M) also maintained a visible presence within each of Nepal's 75 districts.<sup>181</sup> Before the official end of the people's war in 2006, the Nepali Maoists astonishingly were able to go from controlling about 5 percent of the country to well over 80 percent. What also makes this remarkable is that Nepal is comprised of 102 different castes and ethnic groups which, historically, co-existed peacefully, but more recently, with the institution of multi-party democracy, hierarchy, dominance and oppression has become more acute among the groups.<sup>182</sup> As part of its foray into parliamentary politics, the CPN (M) had to disarm a percentage of the People's Liberation Army, resulting in the handing over of 2,857 weapons to UN officials working in the area. In the UN agreement, the Royal Nepal Army also agreed to turn in an equal cache in order to balance the power between the two militaries, which were to be gradually integrated.<sup>183</sup> Part of the reason for this action was that the Nepalese government was afraid that the CPN (M) could re-instigate the people's war with the large fighting force that it had amassed, under the leadership of Prachanda. Few other rebel groups have been as successful as the CPN (M) in gaining territory so quickly. High levels of coordination were required as the CPN (M) military operated throughout many of Nepal's 75 districts, fighting the Royal Nepal Army and establishing base areas. Speaking several years prior to the incitement of the

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<sup>179</sup> Vanaik, Achin. "The New Himalayan Republic." 62.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>181</sup> Mishra, Rabindra. "India's Role in Nepal's Maoist Insurgency." 627.

<sup>182</sup> Thapa, Manish. "Understanding Maoist Insurgency of Nepal: Context, Cost & Consequences."

<sup>183</sup> Vanaik, Achin. "The New Himalayan Republic." 49.

people's war by the CPN (M), Baburam Bhattarai stated, "When we perform this new democratic revolution, we will immediately redistribute property. We will confiscate all landed property and redistribute the wealth among the poor."<sup>184</sup> To a great extent, the Maoist armies succeeded in this task, and in the process, won over many new recruits to the party. Because the CPN (M), in the span of ten years, was able to seize control of nearly the entirety of Nepal, it must be viewed as "highly successful."

India's Maoist movement has experienced highs and lows during its 40 years of existence, but it seems to have undergone some remarkable growth in the last several years. In 2003, the Maoists were said to be present in 55 districts in 9 states, but in 2008, operated in 220 districts in 22 states.<sup>185</sup> The consolidation of the two largest Maoist groups in India in 2004 is certainly part of the reason for this success. In India, the Maoists are estimated to have 7,300 weapons for 10,500 armed cadres nationwide, a 25,000-strong people's militia, and 50,000 members in village-level units.<sup>186</sup> In 2009, there were also reports of a resurgence of Maoist activity in three tribal districts of West Bengal where the group was thought to have all but disappeared.<sup>187</sup> Battles between the government and the Maoists have occurred in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu<sup>188</sup> and of particular interest is the struggle between the Maoists and the Communist Party of India (Marxist), a legal political party. Struggling against a supposedly "oppressive" party like the CPI (Marxist), in 2009, the CPI (M) conducted a

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<sup>184</sup> International Crisis Group. "Nepal's Maoists: Their Aims, Structure and Strategy." 3-4.

<sup>185</sup> Shell, Sam. "Revolution in India: Lalgarh's Hopeful Spark." 3.

<sup>186</sup> Sundar, Nandini. "At War With Oneself: Constructing Naxalism as India's Biggest Security Threat." 55.

<sup>187</sup> Anand, Vinod. "Naxalite ideology, strategy and tactics." 20.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

large campaign where they “liberated” 48 villages while taking control of several CPI (Marxist) buildings in Dharampur.<sup>189</sup>

India contains over 80 million tribals, about 15 million of whom live in eastern states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh. It is estimated that the literacy rate among the tribals is about 23 percent, and at least half of them live below the poverty line.<sup>190</sup> These types of conditions, complemented by a dismal security presence (54 police for ever 100 square kilometers in Bihar, 17 in Chhattisgarh), seemingly allowed for the rapid expansion of the Maoists in the impecunious tribal areas.<sup>191</sup> Leaders of the CPI (M), especially Azad (before his death), laud the type of work being done by the Maoists in the newly established base areas. Azad stated in an interview:

We have set up schools in villages where the government had never bothered to go. And where school buildings were built, these are used for accommodating the police and the central forces; there are no teachers worth the name in schools which exist only on paper. In all these villages it is our teachers who teach the boys and girls basic subjects and make them basically literate. We have developed the language of the adivasis, published text-books in their mother-tongue, and thus facilitated a flowering of their culture and rich heritage. There is also a conscious people’s movement for the preservation of forests and an improvement in agricultural productivity. Now no dispute in any of our villages goes to the police station, so naturally, the policemen are angry that they are losing their illegal incomes. Health conditions have significantly improved when compared to those existing a decade or two decades ago. We have set up basic medical facilities in the villages. However, all this development is taking place within the framework of the existing socio-economic system in the country and hence it has its limitations. Moreover, the incessant attacks by the Indian state and vigilante gangs sponsored by the state are obstructing development and even destroying what has been achieved.<sup>192</sup>

Kishenji expanded on the issue of medical care, saying, “The CPI (Maoist) also sends medical help to 1,200 villages in India almost daily. In Bastar, our foot soldiers are

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<sup>189</sup> Shell, Sam. “Revolution in India: Lalgah’s Hopeful Spark.” 6.

<sup>190</sup> Motlagh, Jason. “The Maoists in the Forest: Tracking India’s Separatist Rebels.” 113.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>192</sup> Azad. *Maoists in India: Writings and Interviews*. Hyderabad: Friends of Azad, 2010. 67.

proficient doctors, wearing aprons, working as midwives in the jungle... We have 50 such mobile health teams and 100 mobile hospitals in Bastar itself.”<sup>193</sup> However, outside of the Maoist ranks, the view seems to be a bit different. Arundhati Roy talks about how the Maoist leaders are charged with having a vested interest in keeping people poor and illiterate in order to maintain authority over them. She also writes, “critics ask why, after working in areas like Dandakaranya for thirty years, they still do not run schools and clinics, why they don’t check dams and advanced agriculture, and why people were still dying of malaria and malnutrition.”<sup>194</sup> She goes on to make a point that it is quite difficult to promote development when the members of the CPI (M) are, in some instances, liable to be shot on sight, and also asserts that the government has a similar record of underdevelopment in non-Maoist controlled tribal areas.<sup>195</sup> Yet, it seems as if the major drawing point for the Maoists is the utilization of popular justice, similar to both the Shining Path and the CPN (M). Ranjan Kamath, a filmmaker who has traveled throughout Maoist-controlled territory, asserts that the CPI (M)’s use of people’s courts and their mobilization against state-sponsored militias such as the Salwa Judum or Ranvir Sena, has been viewed favorably, but that these techniques are all the Maoists have to offer.<sup>196</sup> Despite a disagreement about the extent of work being carried out in Maoist base areas, the reality is that, “From two or three states, the movement has now spread to over 15 states, giving jitters to the ruling classes.”<sup>197</sup>

When pressed about the violent nature of the Maoists in rural areas, Kishenji responded, “Our violence is counter violence...the PM should apologize to the tribals and

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<sup>193</sup> Mittal, Tusha. “I am the Real Desh Bhakt.”

<sup>194</sup> Roy, Arundhati. “The Trickle-down Revolution.”

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> Ranjan Kamath, interviewed by the author.

<sup>197</sup> “Interview with Ganapathi, Leader of India’s Growing Maoist Revolution.”

withdraw all the troops deployed in these areas...If the government agrees to this, there will be no violence from us. We will continue our movement in the villages like before.”<sup>198</sup> Later in the interview, he stated, “Whether it’s Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal or Maharashtra, we never started the violence. The first attack always came from the government.”<sup>199</sup> If these statements are interpreted literally, it seems that while the CPI (M) is following the first half of the Maoist slogan, “preserve oneself and destroy the enemy”, it is not interested in carrying out attacks against the government or military targets or spreading its zones of influence. However, the CPI (M) has been responsible for ambushes on police forces, killing 38 members of the elite Greyhound forces in Orissa in 2008 and 74 personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force in Chhattisgarh.<sup>200</sup> Yet in some instances, the actual violence perpetrated by the Maoists belies the threat they supposedly pose in military terms. Chhattisgarh, the state most affected by government-Maoist violence, casualty figures are low enough as to not support the 16 companies of special armed police that were sent there in 1998 or the 10 battalions of paramilitary forces currently posted there.<sup>201</sup> It has yet to be seen the full effect of India’s Operation Green Hunt, the large paramilitary effort unleashed in the “red corridor” in 2009, and how it affects the ability of the CPI (M) to garner popular support and preserve the area within its control. So far, it seems that little progress is actually being made by the Indian government, and in April 2010, the Maoists killed 75 military personnel in the forests of Chhattisgarh. A top CPI (M) leader, Gopal, stated that the attack was a direct consequence of the government’s actions and later stated, “There has been no impact of

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<sup>198</sup> Mittal, Tusha. “I am the Real Desh Bhakt.”

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> Sundar, Nandini. “At War With Oneself: Constructing Naxalism as India’s Biggest Security Threat.” 56.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

Operation Green Hunt on our cadres. We have become more alert since then. We believe that the time to engage in direct battle with the Central Government has now come. There is a new revolutionary zeal in our cadres.”<sup>202</sup> Borrowing one of Mao’s favorite slogans, Ganapathi stated, “People, who are the makers of history, will rise up like a tornado under our party’s leadership to wipe out the reactionary blood-sucking vampires ruling our country.”<sup>203</sup> Whether this will become a reality, it is hard to speculate, however, there is no question that the CPI (M) will want to learn from the mistakes of the previous Maoist movements (especially in India) in order to successfully maintain legitimacy in the areas already under its control as well as spread its influence into new districts and states.

Coordination within the military does not appear as strong in comparison to the CPN (M) or the Shining Path, particularly since the types of actions carried out differ, in some instances, remarkably, by state (where, in some instances, the Maoist militias are more interested in self-preservation, where in others, the goal is to provoke the Indian military forces). Also, because there is a disconnect existing between the stated goals of the party leaders in regards to the development of base areas and what is actually being implemented (social justice with little or no development), this may also suggest a breakdown in coordination. However, the party has been able to expand its influence and authority since 2004, but not to the extent witnessed in Nepal, and it has not demonstrated the same ability to bridge gaps between class, ethnicity and caste.<sup>204</sup> Therefore, at the present moment, the CPI (M) has been “successful”.

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<sup>202</sup> “Chhatisgarh attack 'consequence' of Green Hunt: Maoist leader.”

<sup>203</sup> “Interview with Ganapathi, Leader of India’s Growing Maoist Revolution.”

<sup>204</sup> Ranjan Kamath, interviewed by the author.

## Conclusions

All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet "ripened" for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only "ripened"; they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.

–Leon Trotsky

You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain degree of madness... It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today.

–Thomas Sankara

Operating primarily in the heavily forested states of India and half hidden from much of the Indian public, nearly 10,000 Maoists, under the leadership of the CPI (M), are fighting over stretches of mineral-laden land the size of Portugal known as the Red Corridor. From areas like the Dandakaranya Regional Zone where the rebels operate their own schools and rudimentary clinics, print their own books, and fly a red flag, they carry out attacks which threaten, according to the Indian government, at least \$78 billion in natural resource and mining projects.<sup>205</sup> India's quest to catch up with China and the United States in terms of industrialization depends upon unlocking the supposed treasure chest of resources existing beneath the Maoist-held territory. The Maoists in charge of these areas feel that the state was exploiting the people of the area by stealing the mineral wealth while ignoring rampant underdevelopment. This sentiment can hardly be attributed simply to the group's hardline, anti-government stance; rather it is imbued within India's concrete reality. When over 80 percent of Indians live on less than 50¢ per day, when thousands of debt-ridden farmers are killing themselves, and when child

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<sup>205</sup> Srivastava, Mehul. "India's Maoist Menace."

malnutrition figures are equivalent to most countries in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>206</sup> <sup>207</sup>, India, in reality, is hardly the idyllic picture found in an R.K Narayan novel or the overwhelming capitalist success upheld in the media. In fact, Arundhati Roy summed up the situation aptly when she wrote, “If the motion picture were an art form that involved the olfactory senses, in other words if cinema smelled, then films like ‘Slumdog Millionaire’ would not win Oscars. The stench of that kind of poverty wouldn’t blend with the aroma of warm popcorn.”<sup>208</sup> It is not hard to understand the support shown by millions of poor throughout India for the CPI (M)’s establishment of people’s courts and mass organizations which drive out exploiting corporations, landlords, and political representatives who uphold the status quo.<sup>209</sup> Lalu Yandev, a famous Indian politician from Bihar, famously quipped, “I’ve not given them (the poor people of Bihar) heaven, but I’ve given them a voice.”<sup>210</sup> The cadre of the CPI (M), living throughout the Red Corridor, could certainly proffer a similar claim. And because of the efforts of the CPI (M) to stand up for, and integrate the poorest and most marginalized sectors of Indian society into its movement, it has, from 2004 onwards, achieved success, both in incorporating women into the party ranks, as well as in establishing and expanding bases of influence. Most surprisingly, perhaps, is that this work was achieved with a largely decentralized party structure.

In Nepal, the CPN (M), over a span of ten years, carried out the world’s most successful Maoist insurgency (not including, of course, the Chinese Revolution, although

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<sup>206</sup> Motlagh, Jason. “The Maoists in the Forest: Tracking India’s Separatist Rebels.” 110-11.

<sup>207</sup> “Annual Data.”

<sup>208</sup> Roy, Arundhati. “The Trickle-down Revolution.”

<sup>209</sup> Shah, Alpa, and Judith Pettigrew. “Windows into a revolution: ethnographies of Maoism in South Asia.” 231.

<sup>210</sup> Yandev, Manohar Lal. “Battle of Patliputra is the Litmus Test for Rahul Gandhi.”

Mao probably would not refer to himself or his fighters as Maoist, just as Marx famously quipped, “I’m not a Marxist”).<sup>211 212</sup> With a centralized party structure, it expanded its authority from three or four regions in 1996 to nearly all 75. Coordination existed to a large degree, as the CPN (M) effectively concatenated base areas through unified military actions. The Maoist military also needed to be able to respond once the Nepalese government initiated a countrywide counterinsurgency campaign, and instead of focusing solely on self-preservation, the Maoists pressed forward, directly challenging the Royal Nepal Army, and in many cases, handing them decisive defeats. Because of strong coordination between the upper level of the party hierarchy (and Prachanda in particular) and the regional militias, the Maoists had the Nepalese government on the ropes in 2006. The Nepalese Maoists also appeared to be more successful than the Shining Path in the maintenance of relations among the masses, illustrated by a stronger emphasis on developing beneficial programs for the population in the base areas, such as schools and health clinics. The Shining Path, in some of the territory under its control, was able to achieve similar results, but it alienated its base with its adulation of revolutionary violence. Both parties seemed to demonstrate an analogous approach to gender inequality, and in both Peru and Nepal, women achieved a visibility and influence in the Maoist parties that could not be boasted by any of the “legal” political parties.

The CPN (M) is a great example of a centralized party operating efficaciously and achieving success. The Shining Path was not as successful, and may have even benefited from a different party structure. Had Guzmán’s leadership been more decentralized and

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<sup>211</sup> Mishra, Rabindra. “India’s Role in Nepal’s Maoist Insurgency.” 627.

<sup>212</sup> Thapa, Manish. “Understanding Maoist Insurgency of Nepal: Context, Cost & Consequences.”

less hierarchical, his capture in 1992 may have been less consequential.<sup>213</sup> Even though many of the social and economic problems that initially fueled the movement still remain,<sup>214</sup> state repression in response to a guerrilla insurgency may undermine the vibrancy possessed by that type of movement.<sup>215</sup> The state's overall response, along with the Shining Path's violent tendencies, both played a significant role in limiting the amount of territory that the Shining Path could capture. Both the CPN (M) and the Shining Path had well-organized military forces, but the former proved more adroit at utilizing its military capabilities. The CPI (M) cannot, at this moment, be judged as rigorously as the previous two groups, primarily due to its shorter existence. Also, since it is still active, it is hard to fully understand its exact achievements and failures. It has certainly achieved a great success up to this point in the empowerment and mobilization of women, especially within its military. Also, because the group appeals to poor tribal communities, it has been able to spread significantly throughout India since 2004. Both of these successes have come despite the CPI (M) being a largely decentralized organization. Therefore, it cannot be stated definitively that a centralized party necessarily is more capable of achieving its stated goals.

Today, in a somewhat ironic twist of fate, Guzmán shares a prison in Callao with two of his former government pursuers, Alberto Fujimori and the former head of Peru's intelligence agency, Vladimiro Montesinos, and he has largely distanced himself from today's incarnation of the Shining Path. In Nepal, the Maoists (under the new name "Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)") have been caught up in internecine fighting, with leader Prachanda accused of, "revisionism, eclecticism, reformism and

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<sup>213</sup> Eckstein, Susan, ed. *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*. 363.

<sup>214</sup> Salazar, Milagros. "Peru: Local Gov'ts Fail to Prioritise Equality for Women."

<sup>215</sup> Eckstein, Susan, ed. *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*. 363.

dishonesty” by members of his own party.<sup>216</sup> In both cases, the centralized party seemed to break down, and in the case of Nepal, a power struggle appears eminent. The Nepali Maoists were quite successful in leading a people’s war with a centralized, vanguard party. Yet, by the same criterion, the Indian Maoists have also been successful with a decentralized form of authority. Therefore, my hypothesis is incorrect, evidenced by the spread of the CPI (M) in India and its conspicuous role in recruiting and training women. The Indian Maoists, therefore, are a new threat in that they can achieve similar results as a centralized party without having one, distinct head. Thus, the group has had a somewhat easier time in rebounding after the death or capture of a key member. Despite problems of coercive compliance and member motivation, decentralization seems to be the more desirable authority structure within social movements, and it appears that the Indian Maoists are following this path, and with early success.<sup>217 218</sup> These findings are my contribution to the discourse of leadership and the party in Marxism, and although the example of the CPI (M) is not enough to completely shatter or negate the idea of the “vanguard party”, it is a relevant example of a group leading a revolution in a decentralized manner.

This is obviously quite a laconic and somewhat accelerated look at three different Maoist rebel groups, their party structure, and how that structure may have helped them accrue “success” in combating gender equality and gaining bases of influence. While theoretically, there may a link between gender equality and the ability to spread into new territory, I am not directly addressing that in this paper. In the future, it might be useful

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<sup>216</sup> Pun, Kiran. “Baidya document lambasts Dahal.”

<sup>217</sup> Snow, David A., Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi, eds. *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*.

<sup>218</sup> Ganz, Marshall. “Social Movement Leadership: Relationship, Story, Strategy, and Action.”

to do a more extensive analysis of the base areas of each group in order to see if there was any progress made in combating illiteracy, malnutrition, the spread of disease, etc. If the CPI (M) is truly India's "largest internal threat", it would be interesting to see if they are offering a true alternative to the Indian government, or if it is simply a new form of oppression. In many of the areas under their control, the CPI (M) seems to be more concerned with administering popular justice, and have either been a hindrance to, or neglected development.<sup>219</sup> Development indicators for the areas under rebel control could either reinforce or discredit the desirability of each of movements, based upon their performances. The performances would also suggest the strength of coordination (i.e. a rise in the literacy rate would suggest coordination if the party stated that it wanted to erase illiteracy). Another appealing topic for future examination would be each party's approach to differences in class, ethnicity, and (where it exists) caste. In the interview I conducted with Ranjan Kamath, he indicated that the Indian Maoists oftentimes are associated with a particular caste and have a difficult time discerning the class-caste overlap.<sup>220</sup> Overall, the CPI (M) has not yet attained the successes of the Nepalese Maoists, but if the government of India continues to pursue a policy of counterinsurgency rather than one of development, the insurgency will exist for quite some time as an alternative. Today, one of the major hurdles for the Indian Maoists is the overlap of caste and class and how that affects its support base. This may be a problem that can never be fully assuaged, yet the Indian Maoists seem continually engaged within the complexities and contradictions which exist in modern India. The French author Anatole France once wrote, "It is by acts and not by ideas that people live." The three Maoist groups would

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<sup>219</sup> Ranjan Kamath, interviewed by the author.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

claim that they are acting upon certain ideas, yet, because the vast amount of people living in Maoist base areas in India do not know who Marx or Lenin were, it is action that sustains the masses and defines the capabilities of the leadership, centralized or otherwise.

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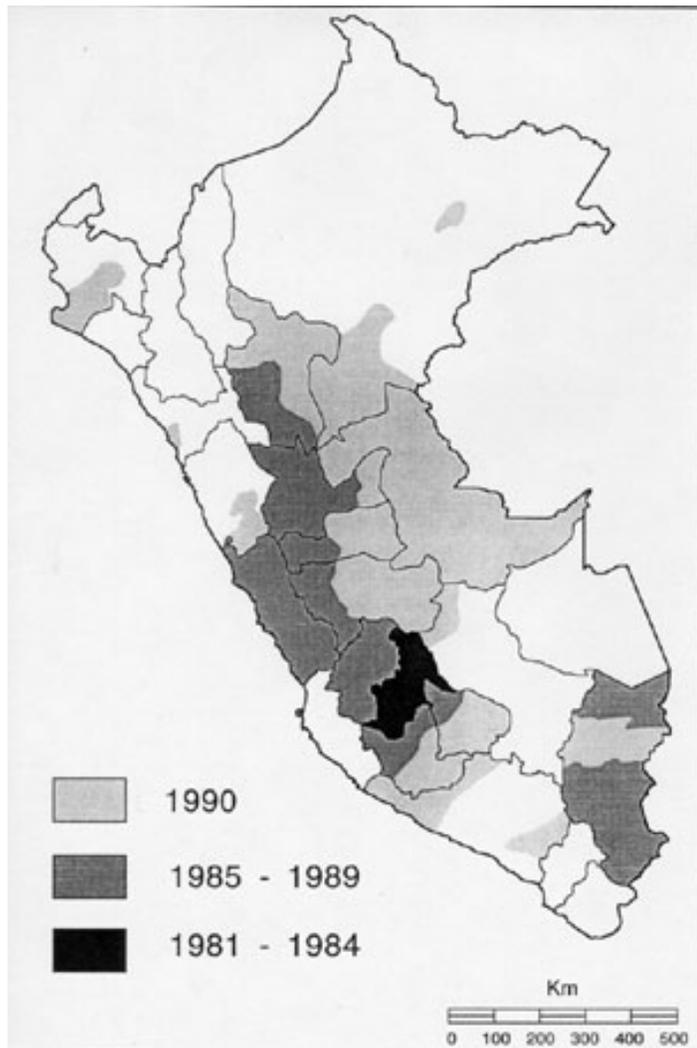
## Appendix I. Maps of Peru, Nepal and India

Map of Peru<sup>221</sup>



<sup>221</sup> "Peru's Geopolitical Map." Go2peru.com

Area controlled by the Shining Path, 1981-1990<sup>222</sup>



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<sup>222</sup> Kent, Robert B. "Geographical Dimension of the Shining Path Insurgency in Peru."

Map of Nepal<sup>223</sup>



<sup>223</sup> “Nepal Map.” <http://www.mapsofworld.com/nepal/nepal-district-map.html>.

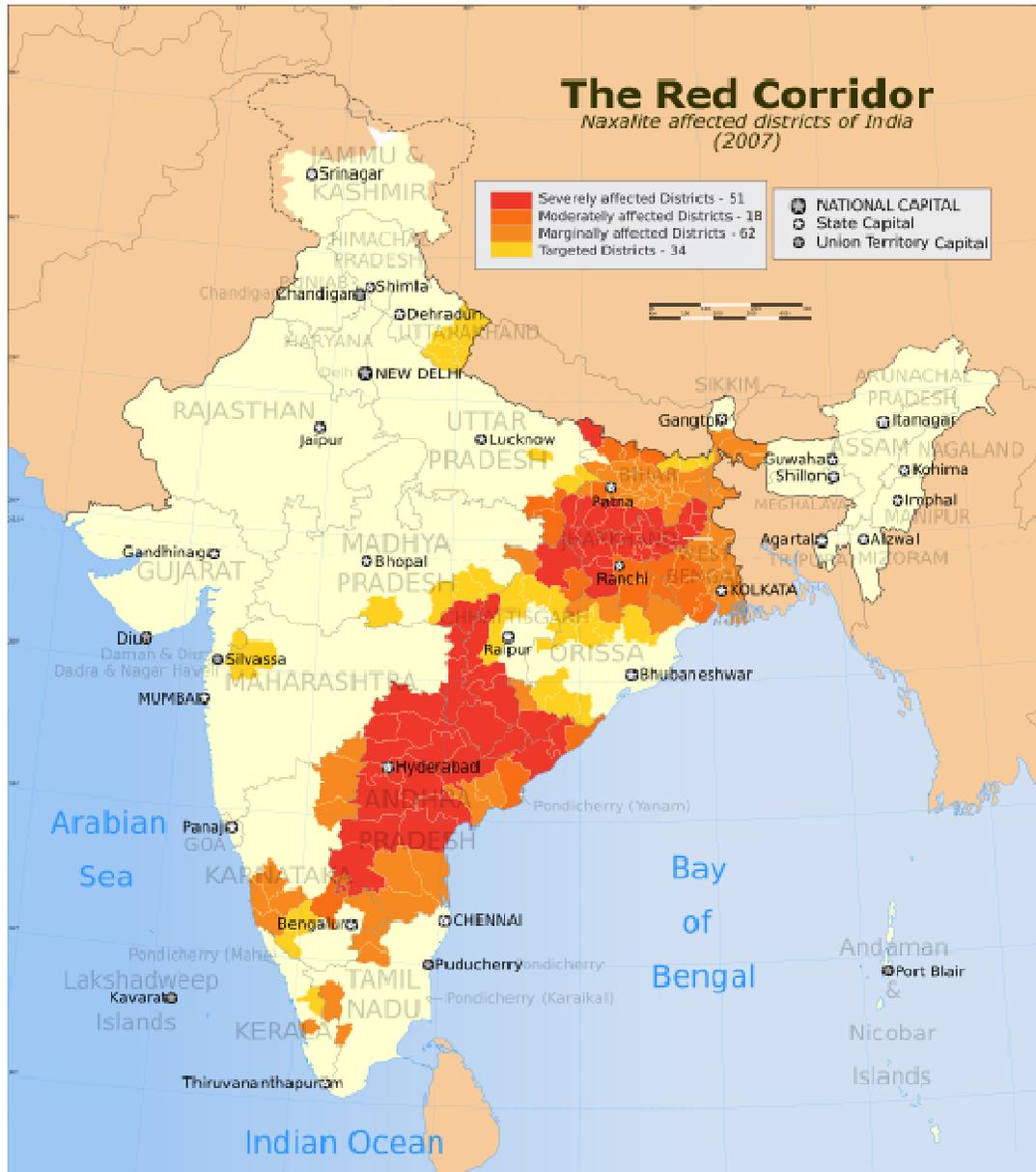
Area affected by the CPN (M), 2004<sup>224</sup>



<sup>224</sup> “Maoist Affected Area in Nepal.” <http://ncthakur.itgo.com/maoistinfo.htm>.



The “Red Corridor”: Area affected by the CPI (M), 2007<sup>226</sup>



<sup>226</sup> Srivastava, Mehul. “India’s Maoist Menace.”

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