Women and the Maobadi: ideology and agency in Nepal’s Maoist movement

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Abstract:
One of the most reported aspects of the Maoist ‘People’s War’ in Nepal has been its high levels of female participation, with up to 40% of all combatant and civilian political supporters allegedly being women (Sharma and Prasain 2004:151; Onesto 2003 [1999]:169). Striking photos of young, gun-toting guerrilla women are prominently displayed on the “official” Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) website, and distributed from New York to London to Peru in materials produced by the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM). These images are apparently intended to serve as evidence of the movement’s egalitarianism and “empowering” effects for Nepali women.

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