

CHAPTER - VIII

CONCLUSION

There are two major points about a revolution. Revolutions, as Stalin said, can not be exported in a suitcase. At the same time, no revolution can grow within a shell. There has to be external contacts while the revolution must be made by the people themselves.

For Nepal India has been the most important catalyst. Her sheer size, their mutual geographical accessibility, their cultural similarities, their long historical contacts and economic interdependence have bound the two countries together. But there was one political difference. Whereas India was colonised by the British for nearly two centuries, Nepal was not a colony as such. India, in the British days, was divided into two parts. (I) British India under the sovereign authority of the British Government and (II) Native India under the paramountcy of the British Government and consisting of 562 states of different sizes and powers. The British regarded Nepal, loosely, as a part of their "Indian Empire". But Nepal actually was more than a princely state. It was a vassal state.

Indian influence over Nepal covered a very wide area including economy, culture and politics. Nepal got one of the most reactionary feudal governments of the world under

the blessings of the British empire. On the other hand, the Indian renaissance had its delayed but sure impact on the Nepalese society. The year of Anglo-Gorkha war was also the year when Raja Rammohan Roy settled in Calcutta. The Nepalese were shocked by the defeat in the war. The revival was sought not through the enlightenment of the Bengal Renaissance but through the folk tradition of the Ramayana. Indeed, modern literary movement under the Western impact did start much later in the twentieth century. By that time social protest had started gathering in Nepal. In 1896, the Arya Samaj arrived at Kathmandu and challenged the rigid caste system of the Nepalese society that had strengthened the Rana autocracy.

The political impact of the nationalist agitation in British India on Nepal is noticed since the anti-partition agitation of 1905 and the growth of extremism in Indian politics since 1906. We have defined the "Indian Left" in the broadest sense - to include the radical opposition to the empire and all programmes of radical social transformation. The justification of including radical-nationalists in the left lies in the fact that India was a colonial country and approaches to colonial power varied among sections of the Indian populations. Secondly, there is a positive connection between the extremist politics and the radical Left of the later period through revolutionary terrorism. The organised 'Left' emerged in India in the late twenties of this century. It ran parallel to the Gandhian

stream of the nationalist agitation and, in some cases, confronted each other. In Nepal both these streams arrived late, and, happily, joined hands. The Charkha, the anti-Rama conspiracy and the agitation against untouchability - all strengthened the same demand for a re-structuring of the Nepalese polity.

In India, the Left was somewhat fragmented. It grew within the Congress with different names. The Nehrus along with C.R. Das and Subhas Bose were associated with the main Left in the Congress. The Communists, the Congress Socialists and the Forward Bloc grew at the margin of the Congress. The organisational needs under governmental terror forced the C.P.I. to work within the C.S.P. from 1934 to 1939. The C.S.P. superiority in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh brought it closer to Nepali Politics than the Communists. Yet the C.S.P.'s influence was essentially concentrated in Bihar between Biratnagar/Jogbani and Raxual. U.P. remained largely under an even control of the Congress Left led by Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and the Congress Socialist led by Achariya Narendra Dev. In Calcutta the Communists had a greater presence. These three influences criss-crossed each other and, happily, again, did not clash in Nepal. Even in Bihar and U.P., inspite of the People's War line of the C.P.I.,¹ communists and socialists both went to jail during the Quit India movement. But the Indian left did not directly bring

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Nepal on its agenda until the end of World War II. In 1942 Jayaprakash and his colleagues escaped to Nepal for shelter. But that was nothing new. People had crossed the India-Nepal border for at least a century to escape state repression. It was during the short stay of J.P. and his colleagues in Nepal that we find Rammanohar Lohia developing a political line about Nepal. This line, subsequently, developed into Lohia's Himalayan Policy.

Democratic movement in Nepal, as elsewhere, was a middle class phenomenon. In Nepal this middle class was immature and very small in size. Essentially, it was the product of minor feudal benefits like Birta, transborder trade and services in the Government and the army, both native and British. Modern English education came almost at the end of the day, and, that too, to a handful of persons beyond the aristocracy. The border towns of India provided this middle class with a few elements of modernity as well as shelter from the wrath of the rulers. The border towns of India, thus, became major nodes of Nepalese modernisation.

Within Nepal, there were two major segments of the Nepalese middle class that became disgruntled with the Nepalese political system. One grew out of the tradition of social reform generated by the Arya Samaj and Gandhi. The other grew out of dissent within the feudal elite and enjoying the indirect help of the King. To the first group belonged the activities of prayer meetings (Kirtan),

propagation of Charkha and removal of untouchability. To the second group belonged the organisations, Prachanda Gorkha, Praja Parishad and Nagarik Adhikar Samitee.

The British Government in India consistently supported the Rana regime. The most active anti-Rana elements, therefore, sought their moral and material support from the critics of the British empire in India. They developed different channels of communication with the Indian political groups or parties. Officially, the Indian National Congress could not take side in the struggle for democracy in Nepal. Individuals and groups in the Indian National Congress, however, bore sympathy for the struggle. The only Indian political group which extended moral support to the Rana regime was the Hindu Mahasabha.

It is not that the Rana regime was totally insensitive to the changes taking place around them. They tried to send priests to British India to teach the Nepalese there the virtues of caste and loyalty. They made liberal grants to certain institutions like Banaras Hindu University and were successful in winning the admiration of certain Indian leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya. Padma Shumsher bore considerable sympathy for popular Nepalese political aspirations and tried reforms. His successor, Mohan Shumsher, made a mess of every thing through sheer arrogance.

The Nepalese revolution was actually a product of different forces, both internal and external. Certain individuals played critical roles in mobilising these forces. Tanka Prasad Acharya, Ganesh Man Singh and the Koirala brothers gave the weight of their names to the organisation of the movement. Bishweswar Prasad Koirala was the most crucial link in developing the co-ordination between the Nepalese democratic movement and the left wing of the Indian nationalist movement. His roots in the Nepalese democratic movements appear to be less firm than his brother, M.P. Koirala's. He also does not seem to have as much rapport with the Communists as with the socialists in India.

Tanka Prasad Acharya's long imprisonment made him a legend in his life time in Nepal. Ganeshman Singh added a bit of high drama to his sufferings by effecting escape from the Rana prison. Matrika Prasad Koirala maintained a low profile but carried conviction with his people as well as the King, so much so that when the Nepali Congress formed its first cabinet after the revolution, M.P. Koirala was called upon to head it.

It will be an exaggeration to give credit to Nepali Congress alone for the democratic revolution. In spite of pockets of rebellion, near the Indian border, being set up for short durations, the Government would not have bowed down had the King not deserted it. And there international

politics played a crucial role. It is true that Jayaprakash Narayan continuously goaded Jawaharlal Nehru to come out in open support to the Nepalese democrats. It is also true that in the first Nehru cabinet there were members opposed to the Government of India's supports to the democratic movement in Nepal. It is reasonable to guess that the Chinese take over of Tibet hastened the process. But it will certainly be wrong to assume Jawaharlal Nehru to be unsympathetic to the democratic movement in Nepal.

It will also be wrong to give the entire credit of the Nepali revolution, on the Indian side, to the (Congress) Socialist Party. Of course, it maintained the major public relation function of the Nepali Congress in India. Jayaprakash Narayan's connections with the Second Socialist International brought some weapons from Burma. In the subsequent years this connection brought B.P. Koirala himself into the fold of the Socialist International.

On the other hand, the arms supply from Sheikh Abdullah from Kashmir could not be connected with the Socialist. If at all, it suggests a linkage between Shaikh and the Nepalese fighters through Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, a left-wing Congress man of Uttar Pradesh, and Minister in Nehru cabinet at that time and probably the indirect role of the Government of India. But the connection of Kidwai is strongly suspected, because of Sibbanlal Saksena in organising revolt in Western Tarai.

Sakena was a known supporter of Kidwai and belonged to the Congress 'Left'.

Last, but not the least, there were the communists. Communist interest in Nepal started at least in 1939 with the publication of Sajjad Zahir's article in Janata strongly criticising the Rana regime and arrest of a batch of suspected communists trying to cross the Nepal border about the same time.

Communists of Nepal and India fought in 1947. In 1949, with the formation of the Communist Party of Nepal, appears a distortion in their movement. The Communists participated in 1950's struggle but seemed to be more eager to 'expose' the leadership of the Nepali Congress as agents of Indian capitalism.