

CHAPTER III

BACK GROUND OF POLITICAL EXTREMISM IN NEPAL

Imperialism and Nepal

The rise of political extremism within Nepal had two main sources : - (1) Internal and (2) External.

Internally, Nepal was a feudal state with an extremely backward economy and a fragmented society, Prithvinarayan Shaha and Bahadur Shaha territorially united a land mass under Gorkha military power, which was mutilated by the Anglo-Gorkha war, and gave shape to modern Nepal. No communication system could develop among the regions, no civil society could grow. The royal family was plagued by factionalism and intrigues were very often erupting into murder. Such intrigues virtually transferred power even in the nineteenth century from the Monarch to the Prime Minister, Bhimsen Thapa.¹ As early as 1833, Brian Hodgson reported that,

"The Minister had grown so great by virtue of two minorities (with but a short interval between them) and 30 years of almost uninterrupted sovereign sway that he can

1. Shaha, Rishikesh, An Introduction to Nepal, pp.102-107.

not now subside into subject and is determined to keep the Raja cypher, as his nonage, both with respect to power and to observance as far as possible".²

The 'kot massacre' of 1846 merely confirmed this transfer of power from King to Prime Minister who happened to be a Rana. The earlier Prime Ministers were Pandes. This situation created an intra-caste rivalry, within the Nepalese Chhatri elite, between the Ranas, the Pandes and the Shahas.³

The second impact of this transfer of power was the growth of factionalism and intrigues within the Rana dynasty. The licentiousness of the privileged Rana dynasty often broke the caste barriers and gave birth to different grades of social status to their offsprings. They went on advancing conflicting claims to the Rana Gaddi. Juddha Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana (1932-45) made use of the misery and confusion of the great earthquake that shook Nepal, on January 15, 1934, to revise the role of succession and remove the 'C' class Ranas from it on March 18, 1934. They were reduced to the entitlement to only district-level

2. B.H. Hodgson to Political Secy. to the Government, Fort William, dated 18 Feb. 1833, Foreign Secret Consultation (March 5, 1833) quoted in Kusum Shrestha, Monarchy in Nepal, p.100.

3. Shaha, op.cit., pp-157-158.

offices.⁴ Many of the 'C' class Rana's, as a result, became disgruntled with the seat of power. The Nepal Annual Report indicates conflicts between Sir Bahadur Shumsher and Mohan Shumsher, head of the family of Chandra Shumsher, Juddha's elder brother and Prime Minister before 1932.⁵ In 1937, Sir Bahadur Shumsher suggested that illness could force Juddha Shumsher to abdicate. Juddha Shumsher did abdicate in 1945, in favour of his nephew, Padma Shumsher (son of Bhim Shumsher, Juddha's Predecessor).⁶

Externally, the British Government appears to have maintained a general interest in Nepalese Political affairs in 1817 to 1842.⁷ It's policy, towards Nepal, was initially not distinguishable from its politics with regard to other major princely states. The British Government in India was represented in Nepal by a Resident. In 1920, the British Residency was called "Legation" and the Resident was called "Minister." In 1923, a fresh treaty was concluded between Britain and Nepal confirming all treaties since 1815 and recognising Nepal as a "Buffer State" different from the -----

4. Shaha, op.cit. pp 158-159, Anirudha Gupta, Politics in Nepal, p.16. Also see Shaha, Modern Nepal, Vol II, p.335.

5. Nepal Annual Report, January 1938, India Office Records. N.E.G. 9436.

6. Nepal Annual Report, op.cit. (1938).

7. Ibid.

Princely states of India.⁸

The Nepalese sentiments remained anti-British and there were occasional skirmishes between the Nepalese Government and the British authorities. The British became somewhat passive about the Nepalese affairs in 1842. It extended qualified support to the Prime Minister after 1846. But a firm friendship between the British and the Ranas grew only after the Maharaja sent thousands of Gorkha soldiers to quell the Indian rebellion of 1857.

But the internal contradiction of colonialism is such that, whereas its official policy supports the traditional vested interest, its nemesis springs from the wave of modernisation that it generates. The modernization came from the impact of:

- (1) The modern administration
- (2) The recruitment of thousands of Gorkha soldiers into the British army, many of whom returned to Nepal after seeing quite a bit of the modern world.
- (3) Spread of modern education, and
- (4) Nepal's proximity to India which herself was in the process of modernization and, from the beginning of the twentieth century, burning with nationalist fire.

8. Shaha, Modern Nepal, Vol.II, pp.334-335.

While many a Nepalese settled in India became an active participant in the Indian national movement, the dream of a democratic modern Nepal, free from British colonial dominance, was inspiring a section of the Nepalese youth, particularly the disgruntled section of the Nepalese elite.

The Indian National Movement and Gandhi

Until the first world war no political activity in Nepal could be conceived of. In 1920 the Government of Nepal, however, came down heavily on the Arya Samajists led by Tulshi Meher, Chakra Bahadur and Amar Raj Joshi.⁹ The movement suffered a temporary eclipse but the samajists carried on their work under different guises. Krishna Prasad Koirala, father of Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala, of Biratnagar, started spreading ideas of Gandhi in his poems. Known as "Nepal's Gandhi," he was banished from Nepal. Tulsi Meher was released from prison in 1926 and started to propagate the importance of Charkha.¹⁰ He was sent back to prison. Later, another group of young Nepalese was campaigning against untouchability and cruelty to animals. Their inspiration was Gandhi's ideas of ahimsa and social

9. Gupta, Anirudha, op.cit. p.23.

10. Ibid.

equality.

But the direct impact of Gandhiji on Nepal was felt only with the beginning of the civil disobedience movement in India in 1930. The civil disobedience movement was the second all-India political agitation sponsored by the Indian National Congress against the British Raj. It came at the peak of Indian frustration with the Simon Commission Report which failed to promise India a dominion status. In 1930 Congress demanded complete independence and launched Civil Disobedience Movement. It should be noted that the young Congress leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawahar Lal Nehru had been impatiently urging the Congress leadership to launch such a movement since 1929. Gandhiji had resisted their pressure in 1929 but endorsed them in 1930. It may also be noted that, in 1929, a circular was issued by the British Government warning the Provincial administrations against "the Bolshevik menace".¹¹ In 1930, further, the Meerut conspiracy case was launched against the communists in India. The association of Jawahar Lal Nehru with the communist movement since 1928 is a well-known phenomenon. The setting up of the 'Meerut Defence Committee' under

11. Sinha, L.P. Left Wing in India, p.23. Sumit Sarkar has noted the unusual British panic about the 'Bolshevik menace' since November 1917. On May 5, 1918, the Bombay Governor, Willingdon described Gandhi as a 'Bolshevik' Modern India, pp.177 & 249.

Motilal's chairmanship is a further proof of the surcharged atmosphere in India.¹²

The Kharag Bahadur Episode

On November 14, 1930, the police arrested one Kharag Bahadur Singh, a graduate, son of one Rup Singh, at Delhi main railway station in connection with the murder of a Calcutta trader, Hiralal Aggarwal, who had been involved in the illicit trade in Nepalese women. On search of his luggage, however, the Criminal Investigation Department of the British Indian Government stumbled upon alarming political information. Kharag Bahadur had earlier been arrested and convicted, in June 1930, along with thirteen other Gorkhas, while proceeding by train to Dehradun for manufacturing 'contraband salt'.¹³ They had infact been awarded 30 months' rigorous imprisonment.

Obviously, Kharag Bahadur was an activist. His involvement with Gandhiji's salt agitation of 1930 was established. But the materials recovered from him had several implications. At the time of his arrest he was proceeding to Allahabad to take part in the programme of -----

12. Sinha, L.P. op.cit. pp.234 and 239.

13. Home Political Department, File No.14/93, 1931, N.A.I.

'Jawahar Day' on November 16, 1930. He was carrying three trunk loads of pamphlets entitled the Eight Days' Interlude containing the speeches and statements of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru during the week he had been out of jail. These pamphlets had been printed at 'Jawahar' press, Delhi, on behalf of the All India Congress Committee, Allahabad for distribution on the Jawahar's Day. (Possibly he was acting as a courier of AICC).¹⁴

The other belongings of Kharag Bahadur included the following:-

- (a) A cyclostyled leaflet in Gorkha language urging the Gorkhas to join the National Congress.
- (b) 4 copies of printed circular orders from the Brigadier, Dehradun prohibiting the Gorkha Sepoys and officers to join the Congress. Kharag Bahadur also had in his possession the draft of a handbill written in his own handwriting rebutting the circular.
- (c) A list of names of 22 officers serving the 1/9 Gorkha Rifles and 5 officers serving in the depot of 2/9 Gorkha Rifles.
- (d) A notebook and loose papers showing details of

14. Home Political Department, File No.14/9, 1931.

expenditure in connection with enlistment of Gorkha Volunteers for the Dehradun, Delhi and Rohtak Congress Committees.

- (e) An English draft of a scheme prepared by Kharag Bahadur Singh about publicity, propaganda and recruitment of Gorkha volunteers involving an expenditure of Rs. 820/- for two months.¹⁵
- (f) Some songs exciting nationalism among the Gorkha volunteers.

The correspondences obtained from Kharag Bahadur's papers revealed interesting details of the Congress contacts with the Gorkhas in India. Kharag Bahadur, assisted by Dhruva Singh and Dhanpati Singh, had been active in enlisting Gorkha volunteers for the civil Disobedience Movement of the Congress since May 1930. The first batch of Gorkha Volunteers arrived in Delhi in June, 1930.¹⁶

A letter was discovered from Kharag Bahadur's luggage that had been written by a Gorkha soldier to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru stressing that the different classes of Gorkhas and the domiciled Gorkhas' fate was indissolubly bound up

15. File No. 14/9, 1931, op.cit.

16. File No. 14/9, 1931, op.cit.

with the fortune of India and the Gorkhas had in their hearts a warm and sympathetic corner for the Satyagraha Movement. Another letter was written from the All India Congress Committee, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, dated November 2, 1930, and stated that Motilal Nehru acknowledged the receipt of Kharag Bahadur's letter to Jawahar Lal Nehru,¹⁷ a day after Jawahar Lal was arrested. The letter was, however, read by Jawahar Lal and the proposal was made to issue an authoritative statement assuring the Gorkha brethren on behalf of the Indian National Congress, that they were an integral part of the Indian community.

However, one swallow does not make a summer. There were not many Kharag Bahadur's around. Dhana Pati Singh had infact turned an approver. His statement confirms the view that many a Gorkha was induced by a monthly stipend of Rs.10/- to join the Civil Disobedience Movement. But undoubtedly, among the educated Nepalese settlers in India, political awareness was spreading fast.

Tradition Versus Modernity

The Rana regime's attitude to social transformation in Nepal was split between the need for progress in keeping

17. File No. 14/9, 1931, op.cit.

with British India and preservation of the traditional order. The progress in education in Nepal was inhibited by tradition the opposition of the vested interests and religious orthodoxy', writes Prof. Majumdar.¹⁸ Dev Shumsher set up a number of modern schools in the nineteenth century. They had to be closed down due to the opposition of the Bharadars. Chandra Shumsher pursued a moderate policy of enlightenment, but his moves were largely thwarted by the privileged Bharadars. Prof. Gupta writes that during the later phase of the Rana rule it became an article of faith with the rulers to suppress the growth of an educated intelligentsia.¹⁹ Disturbed by the radicalism Chandra's successor, Juddha Shumsher, tried to use religion to bring the errant Gorkhas back to their right conduct.

In 1930 the Maharaja sent a request to the British Indian Government for posting religious representatives along with Government officers in the plains where the Gorkhas lived to fight disloyalty to British Indian and Nepal Governments and to rigorously apply caste rules that were being undermined by Gandhiji's movements.²⁰ While the -----

18. Majumdar, Kanchanmoy, Political Relation between India and Nepal, pp.257.

19. Gupta, Anirudha, op.cit. p.17.

20. See copy of letter no.2(88)C dt. 23rd July '30 from the British Envoy at the Court of Nepal to Foreign Secy, Govt. of Simla (India).

Government of India officers were sympathetic, the Bengal officers did not give much credence to the letter and documents, forwarded by the Maharaj of Nepal, and thought that the information was either fictitious or motivated by consideration of local politics, particularly, the Hindus' association at Darjeeling.²¹

Rise of Political Extremism

While India was churning under the Civil Disobedience Movement led by the Indian National Congress and Mahatma Gandhi, the British Legation claimed to have discovered a major conspiracy against the Maharaja. A Nepalese Officer reported to C. Dankes that some six men "under the influence of revolutionary ideas prevalent in India had formed a sort of 'Congress' party with disloyal intentions."²² The Legation gathered that fourteen or fifteen individuals conspired together and succeeded in securing the co-operation of one or two officers who were in a position to obtain possession of a number of revolvers and bombs from the Nepal arsenal.²³

The leader of this party was "said to be a relative of
-----"

21. File No. 14/9, 1931, op.cit.

22. Home Political Department, Govt. of India, File No. 232/3/31, N.A.I.

23. File No. 232/31 op.cit.

the Maharajadhiraj" and there was a rumour that a plot was hatched to restore him to power. But the Maharaja obtained information and got them arrested unexpectedly at a ceremony of officers.²⁴

Dankes was however not clear about these moves and promised to report further. The archival sources are not equipped with the subsequent report. But it appears that the reference was to the setting up of a secret society called "Prachanda Gorkha".

Prachanda Gorkha (1931)

The Prachanda Gorkha was established by a group of young men like Umesh Bikram Shah, Khadga Man Singh, Maina Bahadur and Ranga Nath Sharma.²⁵

The formation of Prachanda Gorkha in 1931 as a secret society is ascribed by the historians of Modern Nepal to the impact of the revolutionary movement in India in general and Bengal in particular. According to G.P. Bhattacharjee the founders of the society formed the organisation with a view to ending the Rana rule and establishing a democracy under

24. File No. 232/31/, op.cit.

25. Shaha, Rishikesh, An Introduction to Nepal, p.158.

the King.²⁶ But the dimension of the family feud is expressed by the fact that Khadga Man Singh²⁷ belonged to a powerful minister's family and Umesh Bikram Shaha was a royal collateral. The other members of the society like Maina Bahadur and Ranga Nath Sharma were said to have links with the Indian revolutionaries. They obtained bomb and revolvers from India.²⁸ It also appears that this group of revolutionaries were deported.²⁹

Educational Movement (1935-36)

In 1935-36, a batch of Nepalese youth like Fatta Bahadur, Chiniyaman Lal, Rameshwar and Anandaman decided to set up a school on the model of Gandhi's Rastriya Vidya Pith (National School) in Kathmandu.³⁰ The Mahavir School, as it was called, was established at Khimla Tole, By May-June, 1937, they had drawn up syllabus of studies. Purna

26. Bhattacharjee, G.P. India and Politics in Modern Nepal, p.22.
27. Khadga Man Singh was a descendant of Abhiman Singh Basnyat, who had lost his life during the 'Kot Massacre' of 1846. Khadga Man's father was a civil servant in the Rana regime and was sent to the prison for 11 years on charge of misappropriation of state fund. (see Uprety, op.cit., pp.59-60).
28. Home Political, File No. 232/3/1.
29. Confidential letter from British Envoy, No. F 257-X/31. INA.
30. Ibid.

Bahadur, Tanka Vilas, Bakpati Raj Joshi, Indra Prasad Pradhan, Siddhi Charan, Suryya Bahadur Bharadwaj and others started teaching in the school. Naturally the school attracted the Maharaja's attention. The teachers of the school were arrested and some of them got life imprisonment.³¹

Praja Parishad (1935)

In 1935, the Praja Parishad was established by Tanka Prasad Acharyya, Dasharath Chandra, Ramhari Sharma, Dharma Bhakta Mathema, Puskar Nath Uprety, Balchandra Sharma and Chandra Man Dongol were the other influential members of the Parishad. Dharma Bhakta Mathema was the physical instructor of the King. He also had good relations with ^{1K}^Ranas. His association with the founding of the Parishad and the observance of the Silver Jubilee of King Tribhuvan's accession to the Throne (in 1911 at the age of five) by the Parishad gave rise to the suspicion that the Parishad had the blessings of the Maharaja.

The aspiration of the Parishad, however, reached wider horizons. Some of its members received support from the Nepali Sangh, an association of Nepalese students reading in

31. Shaha, Rishikesh, Modern Nepal, vol.II, p-126.

Banaras.³² The Parishad grew ⁱⁿ its membership fast. It's secret organisation and outstretching influence produced a serious dilemma for it and exposed its leaders to arrest. The publicity of the Parishad followed two lines:

- (1) Starting a pamphlet war within the country for which they procured a printing Press from Banaras and placed it at Kathmandu.
- (2) Publishing articles and reports in the Indian media. It appears that they were able to obtain a column in the Janata,³³ published from Patna by Ram Briksha Benipuri, a Congress Socialist.

Janata was of course a paper of the Congress Socialists, but Rishikesh Shah^a mentions two other Hindi periodicals in India as publishing attack on the Rana regime in Nepal (I) Naya Hindustan and (II) Agragami.³⁴

32. Bhattacharjee, G.P. India and Politics in Modern Nepal, p-24.
33. The first article appeared in June, 1938 in Janata and the last article appeared in 1940 revealing the plan of the Parishad to launch a Satyagraha. The Nepal Government banned the Janata in Nepal. The British Indian Government raided the office of Janata thrice at Patna before the Journal was closed down in 1940. However, a number of Janata copies were smuggled into Nepal. (For details see D.R.Regmi, A Century of Family Autocracy, pp.173-176.
34. Shaha, Rishikesh, op.cit., p-126.

Nepal Annual Report 1939 (for 1938) says " 1 vernacular Indian paper was writing against Maharaja for isolating the King and his sons".³⁵ According to the Annual reports ^{the king was} taking personal interest in the abdication of Sir Juddha Shumsher and family and disliked the form of Government, King had no power to change the form of Government.³⁶

In the trial that followed four persons, Sukraraj Shastri, Ganga Lal, Dharma Bhakta Mathema and Dasharath Chand were executed and a number of other activists were awarded long-term imprisonment. The Parishad's president, Tanka Prasad Acharya, and secretary, Ramhari Sharma, could not be executed according to Nepali law as they were Brahmins.³⁷

Civil Rights Movement

Side by side with the Praja Parishad, in 1937, a reformist movement, under the name of Nagarik Adhikar Samitee, was launched by Pandit Sukraraj Shastri, (son of

35. India Office Records, London, N.E.G. 9436.

36. Ibid.

37. Bhattacharjee, G.P., India and Politics of Modern Nepal, p.24.

Madhav Rao Joshi of Arya Samaj fame), Raja Lal, Ganga Lal, Kedar Man Singh (Byathith).³⁸

The main personality in this movement was Pandit Sukraraj Shastri, a teacher of the state-run Trichandra College of Kathamandu. Shastri had met Mahatma Gandhi in Calcutta and had been influenced by his ideas³⁹, when his meeting with Gandhiji was known in Nepal, he was immediately dismissed from service. But it did not stop him from propagating his message. The important point about it was that Shastri fell back to the tradition of religious discourse and kirtan.⁴⁰ His moderate tone in criticising the power elite, however, made some of his young followers impatient and exposed the move to the Ranas' assault.

The First Climax in Nepal

From 1938, as the Annual Report on Nepal, 1940 notes, "an increasing number of educated people were beginning to question the authority of the Rana Family." The criticism "started with the morals of Juddha Shumsher, extended to the

38. Sharma, Balchandra, Nepal Ki Aitihaski Ruprekha, p.391.

39. File No.-33/66/42, Home/Deptt. Government of India, N.A.I.

40. Chauhan, R.S. Political Development in Nepal, p.19-20.

Rana family and to the whole system." Disaffection was spreading in the army, in 1940, according to the British Report. The Gorkha battalion stationed at Kohat (Baluchistan, in British India) had to be disarmed.⁴¹

A contemporary British record admits that "Sir Juddha Shumsher is a naughty old man and his way of life has left much to be desired". The same report mentions that the excessive number of legitimate and illegitimate children notwithstanding, he was an extremely wealthy man. It further observes that "although Sir Juddha is not peculiar in this respect, times had changed". He had antagonized the priesthood, the people and even the royalty.⁴²

Three streams of movement headed together from 1935 and came to a climax in 1940: (1) The Praja Parishad, (2) The Mahavir School, (3) The Nagarik Adhikar Samitee. Then the Rana Government came down heavily on the critics.

Sukra Raj Shastri met Gandhi at Calcutta and came back to Nepal only to lose his job in the Government College. Being a son of Madhav Raj Joshi, an Arya Samajist and a

41. Nepal Annual Report 1940, dated 26.4.41, I.O.R. (India Office Record) NEG 9436.

42. Sir Geoffrey Betham's letter to Sir Olaf Carore, dated 17, August, 1939, quoted in *shaha*, vol - II pp. 127-128.

Sanskrit scholar himself, persecuted by the Rana regime earlier, Sukra Raj started lecturing on the 'Geeta' and other scriptures in public places. The Government suspected him to be indirectly criticizing the regime and arrested him on 26th November, 1938 for voicing demands for civil rights and social reforms.⁴³ In fact he is reported to have convened a public meeting at Kathmandu chowk in which "half" a congratulation was sent to the Prime Minister for fixing the minimum age of girls for marriage at 16 and passing no such law for men.⁴⁴ However, Shastri's associates like Pandit Muraridhar Bhattarai went on spreading his message in Shastri's way.

Shastri belonged to the Nagarik Adhikar Samiti, not the Praja Parishad which was politically outspoken. The Praja Parishad formally elected Tanka Prasad Acharya as its President. In May-June, 1940 leaflets condemning the Rana

43. Shaha, vol. II, p.127-131.

44. Extract from E.A. Deptt. File No.61(2)-X/42 Secret: Publication in the Durbar, a Hindi Weekly, Delhi Article by Pandi Nara Dev Shastri, regarding a conspiracy against the P.M. of Nepal etc. File No.33/66/42 H/Deptt. N.A.I. Professor Anirudha Gupta (op.cit.p.26) reproduces a narrative of Ganeshman Singh which reveals that, while Shastri's lecture was within the limits of Gitappravachan the younger followers like Ganga Lal, spoke in the meeting forcefully against the Ranas turning that meeting into the first political meeting in Kathmandu.

rule were circulated in Kathmandu by the Praja Parishad.⁴⁵

In August 1940 the Praja Parishad was banned. By October 1940, about 500 persons belonging to the Praja Parishad, the Nagarik Samiti and even the Mahavir School were arrested.⁴⁶ Dharma Bhakta, Dasarath Chand, Ganga Lal and Sukararaj Shastri were executed. Subba Purna Narayan Pradhan, sentenced to death, was, however, spared capital punishment., 20 imprisonments from three to eight years and four banishment from the empire. 28 teachers of Mahavir school were arrested too. Two of them, Fatte Bahadur and Chiniyaman (two brothers), were sentenced for life, two awarded 18 years' prison sentence and one 12 years'. The rest were fined.⁴⁷

It will, therefore, be wrong to claim the 1940 upsurge as a Praja Parishad movement only. On a comparative scale, perhaps, the attack on the Nagarik Adhikar Samiti will appear more severe. Two interesting things, however, stand out. One, the turning of Bakpati Joshi into an informer, particularly in the context of the implication of the already imprisoned Sukra Raj Shastri, his brother, in the

45. Shaha, An Introduction to Nepal, p.161.

46. Gupta, Anirudha, op.cit. p.27.

47. Shaha, Modern Nepal, vol. II, op.cit., pp.130-137.

case.⁴⁸

Two, the effort to depict the whole episode into an anti-Rana conspiracy involving the name of the king too. In the first place, there is a mention of a "Raktapat Mandal"⁴⁹ (Bloodshed group), allegedly 'under the direct control and guidance of the king himself' entrusted with the task of blowing up the kings' private cinema hall where the Ranas would be invited on the Dewali night according to established practice. One Ramdas Khawas, a confidant of the king, was in charge of the operation. The others belonging to the group are said to have been Ganesh Raj Gorkhali, one Sharma and the driver and mechanics of the royal palace who was also a member of the Praja Parishad. There were attempts to personally implicate the king and he was actually interrogated.

Finally the king was exonerated, as the British officers advised the Maharaja against convicting the king at

48. Shaha, op.cit. pp.128-129.

49. The letter of Colonel Betham, His Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the court of Nepal, reported the name of one "Rajat-pat Parishad' which, alongwith the Praja Parishad, "put in papers various kinds of news indiscriminately." It's members had been arrested and were tried. It is not possible to connect Rajat-Pat Parishad and the Raktapat Mandal though the similarity of the names is striking.

the time when the World War II was at its peak.

The Annual Report of Nepal, 1941 stated two probable reasons of the king being exonerated: (i) the crown prince declined the throne in the event of the king abdicating and (ii) the Ranas did not know what to do with the king if he was found to be guilty.⁵⁰ According to the same report, the Nepal Government also suspected Major General Mahabir Sumsher, grand son of Maharaja Bhim Shumsher, who had been exiled from the capital (Kathmandu) in the coup d'état of 1934 to be the chief instigator.⁵¹

The anti-Rana agitation went under a lull for several years after 1940 as far as the internal situation of Nepal was concerned. The Nepal Annual Report, 1942, records the absence of anti-Rana agitation during the year 1941.⁵² Violence in India did not affect Nepal, though some Congress activist in Bihar started escaping to Nepal.

The Indian dimension of the Anti-rana Conspiracy Case

The Maharaja sent to the British Indian Government a

50. Nepal Annual Report, 1941, India Office Library Records, London, N.E.G. 9436.

51. Nepal Annual Report, 1941, op.cit.

52. Ibid.

messenger to the effect that he had discovered a plot to overthrow the Rana family and set up the king of Nepal as the actual and not only the nominal ruler. He sought British assistance in tracing the Indian connection of the plot. He sent in the name of a Bombay firm (The Excelsior Finishing Products Company of Bombay) to be searched in connection with the manufacture of explosive in Nepal. Subsequently he requested a close watch on some Indians as well as Nepalese settlers in British India in connection with the movement.⁵³

Sir Olaf Caroe, secretary, External Affairs Department, advised D.I.B. to keep a watch on the premises and individuals.⁵⁴ He was also advised that any act prejudicial to the interest of a friendly country was actionable under the defence of India Act.

A series of searches was conducted by the British Government in Bengal, United Provinces and Bihar in connection with the alleged plot against the Rana family in Nepal in 1940. Ten Indian socialists having connection with the Janata and the Nepal Praja Parishad were in the

53. O.K. Caroe's note dated 20.11.90, File No. 791-X/40 (Sec.) External Affairs Department, 1940, N.A.I.

54. O.K. Caroe's note dated 26.10.40, External Affairs Department, 1940, N.A.I.

list of suspects. Though none of them could be positively implicated. Of the ten three (Suraj Narayan Singh, Mahabir Prasad Singh and Oudhesh Prasad Singh) could be traced and four were already under detention under the Defence of India Rule 26(1).⁵⁵ An enquiry was made in Bombay regarding a letter from a firm found in the possession of one of the Nepalese arrested in Nepal, Dharam Singh.

Of the ten Indians subjected to search four persons reported to be 'communist', two of them (Anil Mitra and Yogendra Sukul) being already in prison. It was reported by Frampton that in 1938, Devendra Prasad Singh was in touch with B.P. Koirala, Maniram Verma was likely to be concerned in the agitation against the Nepal Ranas. Anil Mitra was desirous of meeting a friend who was taking a leading part in the agitation against the Ranas.⁵⁶ Yogendra Sukul was a member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (H.S.R.A.). 23 names of Nepalese subjects living in India were also sent by the Maharaja. They were:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Raja Lal Kanwar | Raxaul |
| 2. Shib Shankar Das | Mathura or Dehradun |
| 3. Anu Rudra (Bhique) | Burma |
| 4. Dr. Mani Ram | Panch Ganga (U.P.) |
| ----- | |

55. File No.. 791-X/40, Diary No. 212-X/41.

56. File No. 791-X/40, op.cit.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 5. Baglunga Shwamee | Lalit Ghat, Banaras |
| 6. Nani Babu Jyotish
alias Haim Nath | Panch Ganga Benaras
(U.P.) |
| 7. Udai Raj Shastri | Panch Ganga Benaras |
| 8. Gopal Singh Byait | Champanan, Bihar |
| 9. Seva Singh Salamee
(Narapati Pal Singh) | ?? |
| 10. N. Prakash | Harrison Road, Calcutta |
| 11. Sahuman Kazi | Bowbazar Street, Calcutta |
| 12. Paga Ghose | Hazra Road, Calcutta |
| 13. D.P. Pradhan | 103/1, Upper Chitpur Road
Calcutta |
| 14. Beer Bahadur Singh | Vill. Rampat, Dist.
Bhagalpur |
| 15. B.P. Koirala | Banaras |
| 16. Lakshmi Bilas
Upadhyaya | Student of B.H.U. |
| 17. Subba Adi Bhagta | Lansdown Road, Calcutta |
| 18. Basuvdev Upadhyaya | (Student) Calcutta. |
| 19. Jagadish Chandra Ghosh | Kalimpong. |
| 20. Batuk Raj | Meheralli (Maulali)
Street, Calcutta. |
| 21. Bhet Narayan | Elgin Road, Calcutta. |
| 22. Shankar Prasad | Allahabad, U.P. |
| 23. Mukendra Nath | Lucknow. |

The Government of India reported back that eleven of these people, that is numbers 3,5,9,10,11,12,14, 18,20,22, and 23 were untraced. Nothing incriminating^{was found} in the case of eight, that is, numbers 1,4,7,8,13,15,16 and 19 (of whom 1,7,8 and 16 were British subjects). No. 6 had gone to his native place and a search of his premises had produced one Khukri. Action was being taken by the Provincial Government under the Arms Act, No. 3 belonged to Burma and did not concern the Bengal Government.⁵⁷

The search of the premises of No. 20 had led to the arrest of one Thakur Nath Raimal as he had in his possession a letter from the Commander-in-charge of the Southern Command, Nepal directing him to return to Nepal at once. The Bengal police thought that he might be wanted by the Nepal Raj.⁵⁸

Three arrested persons evoke interest in this connection. Subba Adi Bhakta happened to be the father of Dharma Bhakta Mathema,⁵⁹ the Praja Parishad leader who had been executed by the Ranas. Bhet Narayan Singh was a T.B. patient and was transferred from Alipur Jail to Jabbalpur

57. File No. 791-X/41, External Affairs Department, 1940, N.A.I.

58. File No. 791-X/41 op.cit.

59. Upreti, op.cit., p-117, F.N.32.

T.B. hospital. But one Santbir Lama was also arrested in Bengal in connection with this plot. He was described as a dangerous person. His name, however, had not appeared in the Maharaja's list.⁶⁰

60. File No. 791-X/41, op.cit.