

**COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN NEPAL: IDEOLOGY, STRATEGY AND  
SOCIAL BASIS OF COMMUNIST MOVEMENT UNDER  
PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM**

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By  
Mukunds Giri

Guide  
Prof. Dyutish Chakrabarti  
Department of Political Science  
July 2015

## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “Communist Movement in Nepal: Ideology, Strategy and Social Basis of Communist Movement under Parliamentary System” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Prof. Dyutish Chakrabarty, Professor of the Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree of fellowship previously.



Mukunds Giri  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Bengal  
Raja Rammohunpur, Dt. Darjeeling  
Pin-734013

Date: 8 July 2015

## CERTIFICATE

I certify that Mukunds Giri has prepared the thesis entitled “Communist Movement in Nepal: Ideology, Strategy and Social Basis of Communist Movement under Parliamentary System”, for the award of Ph.D degree of the University of North Bengal, under my guidance. He has carried out the work at the Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal.



Prof. Dyutish Chakrobarti  
Department of Political Science  
University of North Bengal  
Raja Rammohunpur, Dt. Darjeeling  
Pin-734013

Date: 8 July 2015

## ABSTRACT

Till 1950, feudal Nepal was under dual rule: the Shah Kings were the legal rulers, but the control of the kingdom lay in the hands of their Rana Prime Ministers. Under such political structure, the Communist Party of Nepal was born in September 1949. From 1950 onwards the kingdom passed through a series of political upheavals. The 1950 revolt led to the fall of the Rana rule and brought Shah King, Tribhuvan to power. He had risen to power on the condition that he would, in future, set up a Constituent Assembly to give the people of Nepal a democratic arrangement. However, with the passage of time, the Shah Kings manipulated the political system to concentrate power in themselves while disregarding the political parties' frequent cry for the establishment of the promised Constituent Assembly. The situation, in 1960, ultimately lapsed into the establishment of Panchayat system. It was a system which, in the name of democracy, perpetuated the autocratic rule of the Shah Kings. In its three decade lifetime, 1960–1990, the Panchayat Constitution, the basis of the system was amended thrice presumably to increase the participation of the people. However, even then the feudal control became tighter. The 1989/90 trade deadlock and the resultant hardships faced by the people of the kingdom gave way to the 1990 *Jana Andolan*. The *Andolan* led to the establishment of Parliamentary democracy there, but the system, owing to the Maoist movement since 1996 was stressed. Eventually, in 2002, Monarchy returned under the leadership of Gyanendra. Functioning under these different political arrangements the Nepal Communist Party had to go through many experiences. It was banned on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 1952. Later differences arose among the Communist leadership regarding the tactics to be followed to remove the ban. Thereafter, the movement began cracking and after 1960 it fragmented into many factions. And from 1960–1990 the movement witnessed both the trend of fragmentation and unity. The later trend gained prominence during the Parliamentary phase. However, fragmentation during this phase led to the rise of NCP (Maoists). Their activities engulfed the kingdom into disorder. Taking advantage of the situation Gyanendra captured power in 2002 and reintroduced King's direct rule from 2004. The present dissertation tries to understand the Communist movement of Nepal under such political context considering it as a product of the social, political and economic environment of the kingdom. Following the critical historical method, it traces the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of the kingdom as perceived by the Communist leadership. Then, in the light of their perceptions as expressed in their documents, it analyses their activities since the birth of the Party in 1949 focusing on the period between 1990–2002, when the majority of the Communist factions, save the Maoist, participated in the electoral process. The study specifically focuses on the ideology, strategies, social basis of Communist parties of Nepal and the contradiction that arises from the strategies undertaken by various Communist groups. It is assumed that such an analysis will provide a comprehensive idea about the Communist movement and the relationship between prevailing social formation and the Communist movement. The specific objectives of the study may be summarised as follows:

- To examine the ideology and strategies of various Communist parties and ideological shifts and changes in strategies (if any) to adjust with parliamentary democracy and also to examine the consequences.
- To examine the problem of combining a revolutionary ideology with electoral system and its impact on the unity of Communist movement.
- To explore the relationship between communism and nationalism in the context of Parliamentary democracy, i.e., to analyse whether parliamentary democracy itself, compels the Communist parties to embrace a more nationalistic outlook. It is also the objectives of this study to examine the relationship between nationalistic outlook and success of Communist movement.
- The study also aims at answering the question whether there is a determinate relationship between economic conditions and social formation (including caste system) in the one hand and the growth of Communist support on the other.
- Finally the study intends to investigate the forms of protests used by various Communist groups to understand the nature and reasons behind the growth of Communist movement in Nepal.

The above objectives which clarify the focus and main thrust of the study raise the basic question regarding the relationship between Parliamentary democracy and communism. They raise a host of questions about influence of nationalism, effect of 'parliamentarianism', role of economic factors, significance of caste and other social identities etcetera which are systematically presented below:

- Why have Communist parties in Nepal ultimately joined electoral process by repudiating it initially and what ideological, organisational, strategic changes have they initiated to enter Parliamentary politics and with what consequences? How does Parliamentary system affect their methods of protest?
- Whether participation in parliamentary system ensures greater unity in Communist movement of Nepal or does it create further fractionalisation of the movement?
- Is nationalism an inescapable element of parliamentary politics or do the Communist parties intentionally assume a nationalist outlook for greater mobilisation and support? (In other words, the study intends to answer the question of relationship between nationalism and Communist organisation in Nepal)
- Whether there exists any relationship between economic backwardness, caste affiliation and social formation in one side and Communist politics on the other?

The study reveals that the movement from the very beginning was a middle class phenomenon with liberal ideological orientation. It was basically aimed at destroying the feudal system and to create a nation with an independent economy. Hence, while advocating different strategies they gave importance to nationalism which in the context of Nepal meant the end of Indian influence on

her economic arrangement. As a result, Communist factions which emphasised more on nationalism came to be regarded as more revolutionary than the other resulting in the fragmentation of the movement. Besides, considering their final choice for a liberal set up and the resignation with which they have accepted the Indo-Nepal relation it is clear that they were using nationalism just to mobilise the masses. And though their ideological dilution, visible in their embrace in the cause of sectarian groups like caste, ethnicity etc., appears to strengthen the movement's relation with such groups, yet nothing determinate flows out of the relation. Similar is the relation of the movement with the backward regions of the nation. As for the effect of the parliamentary system on the movement it is seen that the phase was more effective in causing greater unity among the factions than in other environment. (1000 words)

## PREFACE

After a series of consultations with Professor Dyutish Chakraborti of North Bengal University, I took up this dissertation for my Doctoral degree in the year 1998. However, because of my teaching responsibilities in Sikkim Government College, I could spare only two months a year, December and January, to carry out the necessary fieldwork for the task. So, I did the first fieldwork for collecting the documents in January 1999. This, in later years, was followed by regular visits to Kathmandu. By 2004, I had collected a few documents, but there were still some gaps. These I took care of after 2006 when the Maoist movement ended. Therefore, the work, in earnest, started only since the beginning of 2006.

This work, considers the Communist movement of Nepal as a movement born of the social, economic and political environment of the kingdom. It records how the Communist leaders of Nepal perceived the socio-economic condition of Nepal in her geopolitical setting. Then it seeks to understand their activities, especially during the parliamentary phase, 1990–2002, as responses to their perceptions. So, running through this work are two streams. One stream records the kingdom's political history in the perception of the Communist leaders. The other, portrays the activities of the leaders and of the various factions of the movement to answer questions related to the process of political mobilisation.

Structurally, it is woven around seven chapters. Chapter I, is the introductory section which deals with the problems, survey of literatures, research questions and the methodology chosen for examining the problems. Chapter II is devoted to understanding the political history of the country since her evolution as Nepal. It traces how her administrative, social, political and economic structures developed until 2002. Chapter III focuses on the development of the Communist movement of Nepal since its birth in 1949. It

analyses the various causes behind its fragmentation until 1990 while pointing out the role of nationalism as one of the most important causes. Chapter IV traces the movement after 1990 to understand the ideological positions of the Communist parties, the issues they raised, the forms of protests they used and the social base which they represented. While doing so the work infers that the ideological position of the movement was always liberal owing to its middle-class social base.

Chapter V traces the strategy and tactics of the non-Parliamentary groups focusing on the role of the Maoists from 1996–2002. It points out that their movement was also for setting up Parliamentary democracy. Chapter VI is the concluding part of the dissertation. It highlights the importance of nationalism in Nepal Communist movement. It reveals it as a notion which Communists have always used to explain the kingdom's problems and to seek their solutions. So, it concludes that the notion is indispensable in understanding the movement. Besides, the chapter infers that Communist mobilisation and radical movements have succeeded there not only in geographically remote and underdeveloped areas, but also in areas which were relatively developed. Hence, for such complexion of the movement the study draws attention towards the kingdom's overall economic status, which has always been underdeveloped. The last chapter tries to describe briefly the political development in the State after 2002. It tries to explain why the Constituent Assembly created in 2008 failed to deliver the much-awaited Constitution of Nepal.

Mukunds Giri

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Though Kathmandu was not an unknown destination for me, yet it presented an uninviting look in the January of 1999. The winter cold heightened the air of fear and apprehension let loose by the continuing Maoist insurgency. In such a situation, my earliest tries for collecting documents related to the Communist movement of Nepal yielded nothing but despair. After several visits to the Party Office of NCP (Masal) at Bagbazar, Kathmandu I was informed that their leader Mohan Bikram Gharti was underground and that their documents were not available. My other attempts to contact leaders of the several Communist factions proved equally futile. However, after spending more than two weeks I accidentally came across a building at Putalisadak—the Pushpalal Foundation. My entry into the Foundation Office changed everything. I came across Lok Krishna Bhattarai, the then General Secretary of the Foundation. Through him, I came across the movement's many old documents which were stored there. Besides, he proved valuable in helping me build my contact with the different Communist leaders, whom I hardly knew. From then on, he with his team of the Foundation, namely Laxmi Bhakta Upadhyaya, Gauri Bhakta Pradhan, Buddha Maharjan and Laxuman Bista were my constant companion whenever I reached Kathmandu. I thank them for their sincere help.

During this work I came across many Communist leaders of Nepal. Chief among them were Mohan Bikram Gharti of NCP (Masal), Bishnubahadur Manandhar and Chandradeo Joshi of NCP (United), Krishna Das Shrestha and Nanda Kumar Prasai of NCP (MLM), Narayan Man Bijukche of NCP (NWPP), Keshavlal Shrestha, Bamdev Gautam and Hiranyalal Shrestha of NCP (ML), Loknarayan Subedi of NCP (Marxist), Narayan Kazi Shrestha of NCP (Unity Centre), Mohan Bikram Baidhya and Ram Bahadur Thapa of NCP (Maoist), Madhav Kumar Nepal and C. P

Mainali of NCP (UML). They helped me both in finding the documents of their parties and in clarifying my understanding of the movement. I am grateful for their help and support. Besides, I cannot forget the support and cooperation extended me by the staff of Tribhuwan University Library. Without the help of Babukazi Shrestha and Duk Hari my work there would not have made headway: with friendly smile they helped me trace the materials related with my field of study. In the same way I am indebted to the staff of the document section of Gorkhapatra. Their warm welcome and cooperation in the winters of 2009, 2010 and 2012 helped me scan through the pages of the Rising Nepal. However, the collection without my guide, Professor, Dyutish Charaborti's suggestions would have failed to yield much. His understanding about the nature of social movements and his insight helped me cross the many hurdles that I faced during this work. I am thankful to him.

Finally, I thank my family members, uncle, Shankar Giri; aunt, Banira Giri; wife, Dipa and my children Atidipt and Vrinda. The cosiness of my uncle and aunt's home at Banewar, Kathmandu eased my intermittent stay there. And in Gangtok, Dipa along with my children Atidipt and Vrinda were always at my back: they wished to see the work through at the earliest. Indirectly, their impatience made me wade through the task. I thank them all.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Framework, Review of Literature and Methodology

##### 1. Introduction

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when modernisation and nationalist politics had initiated major transformation in the social and political life of South Asia, Nepal was still limping under a traditional social structure and religious order. Though the King remained the *de jure* ruler of the country the Ranas monopolised all political authority and military power. Nepal at that time was not really a theocracy, yet religion and Brahmanical order dominated every walk of her life. The social structure and values were traditional without any traces of modern education, ideas and values. The country did not have a system of modern education: first College was established in 1918, and there was an absence of modern administration and legal system. The level of industrialisation was insignificant. Though the rulers of Nepal maintained close political and military links with neighbouring British India, yet they successfully insulated Nepalese society from the influences of modernisation. The ruling elites were able to confine new ideas and aspirations sweeping other parts of South Asia, to certain pockets, if not only to certain families. As a result, the ideas equality, freedom, right of self-determination, popular government as well as democracy, socialism, communism, which were rapidly spreading in neighbouring countries, took time to enter Nepal. As a consequence, the Communist movement in Nepal has been a late starter. The first attempt at forming a Communist Party of Nepal was made in April 1949, when Pushpalal Shrestha with the help of Nripen Chakravarty and Ratanlal Brahmin initiated the process of forming the NCP (Nepal Communist Party) in Kolkata.

From then onwards the Party functioned under different political systems of Nepal. From 18 February 1951, real power passed on from the hands of the Ranas to the King. The 30 March 1951 Interim Constitution legalised the shift in power. Under it, the King was the real administrator, and he administered the kingdom with the aid

and advice of a Council of ministers, chosen by him. Later, the first written Constitution was proclaimed on 12 February 1959 followed by a general election on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1959 for the 109 *Pratinidhi Sabha* seats. This experiment in democracy ended when the King dismissed the 18 month-old B.P. Koirala Government in December 1960. From January 1961, he banned all political parties and in December 16, 1962 the Second Constitution, which provided for a 'party-less' system was put into effect. The system lasted until 16 April 1990. On 9 November 1990, when the Third Constitution was promulgated it provided for a multi-Party democratic system which included various communist parties. The system continued until October 4, 2002, when King Gyanendra took over power after sacking Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

Operating within such a political context, the NCP, first faced a period of ban from 1952 to 1956, and later after 1960, the Party, which had started in 1949 as a single movement, fragmented into multiple Communist parties. By 1990, there were as many as nine different Communist parties. Though the trend of unity among them was visible before the 1991 General Election, yet fragmentation continued. Such fragmentation produced the NCP (M) in 1992 and the NCP (Maoist) in 1996. Further, while functioning under the 1990 Democratic Constitution the Communists faced three general elections in 1991, 1994 and 1999. Interestingly, in these elections even after being a late starter, a relatively new political group, which basically was a faction of the NCP, the NCP (UML) was able to garner enough support to become one of the two major parties of Nepal in 1991 by winning 69 seats in a house of 205 (the other being the Nepali Congress which won 110 seats). Later in the 1994 election the NCP (UML) became the largest Party in the Parliament by winning 88 seats followed by the Nepali Congress with 83. Then it formed a minority government which lasted for nine months. However, in the May 1999 election, because of a split, the Party could secure only 71 seats, but still it was in the second position following the Nepali Congress which secured 111 seats. And such phenomenal growth and presence of a Communist Party occurred in an industrially backward country without a numerically significant

and organised working class. Such expansion of the support base of the Communist parties and Communist movement under pre-capitalist economy and social formation indeed demands attention of scholars.

## 2. Research Problem

Communist movements are supposed to be proletarian movements with the goal of establishing socialism. Such movements are often multi-class movements to include peasantry, petty bourgeois and traders and so on, but, at least, the leadership of the movement theoretically should remain in the hands of the working class. However, this has not happened in Nepal; in fact, the working class itself is numerically and organisationally insignificant: even in 1990, the percentage of labour force involved in industry was less than 01%. The leadership is mostly drawn from educated middle classes and more significantly, from among the members of upper-castes: in the beginning, it was led by Pushpalal Shrestha and Tulsilal Amatya, both of whom belonged to the upper castes Newar family. The later factions, the NCP (M) was under Man Mohan Adhikari and the NCP (UML), under Madan Bhandari both of whom were Brahmins, so were the leaders of NCP (Maoist) which was under the leadership of Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Baburam Bhattarai and a little lesser known Mohan Bikram Baidhya.

At another level, the electoral support base of Communist parties and groups does not include poor and backward areas of Nepal from where the Nepali Congress and other parties have won elections since 1991: the Nepali Congress won elections in the far western region of Nepal where there were districts like Rolpa, Rukum etceteras, which are among the most underdeveloped districts of Nepal. However, in the Eastern region, the NCP (UML) was in the dominant position in districts like Terathum, Jhapa and Morang, the relatively more developed districts of Nepal in terms of education and other indices of Human Development Index. It seems that there is a definite (not determinate) relation between education, literacy etcetera and predominance of Communist parties.

A particular problem that deserves attention is regarding the participation of Communist parties in Parliamentary system after 1990. Most of the Communist parties in Nepal even the Maoists under the leadership of Prachanda (Pushpa Kamal Dahal) repudiated the parliamentary system at the time of formation of the Party. In fact, the issue of participation in elections has remained one of the most controversial debate among the Communists in Nepal. But, ultimately different Communist parties have joined the electoral politics: even the NCP (Maoist), which led the decade long revolution, expressed its view to join the parliamentary process in its VS 2062 (2005) October/November Chunwang meeting. In this context, it is worth mentioning that major Communist parties like the NCP (UML) and the NCP (Maoists) are still theoretically committed to revolutionary transformation and *Janabad*. In fact, from the inception of the first Communist Party, the Communist movement in Nepal has pendulated between revolutionary politics and electoral participation. In this sense, Nepal, in 1990-2002, presents an interesting case of Communist politics under Parliamentary system in an extremely backward country. Application of revolutionary politics in a Parliamentary framework has given birth to the problem of striking a balance between two contending sources of legitimacy: revolutionary practice and electoral politics. This in turn raises the conceptual problem whether revolutionary politics is at all possible in and through Parliamentary electoral politics.

Fractionalisation of the Communist movement is another related problem. It is true that growth of factions is associated with almost all Communist movements including those of Russia and China. The problem is to find out as to what are the real reasons behind such fractionalisations in the Communist movement of Nepal. It is also necessary to explore whether such fractionalisations actually stem from secretive organisations practising revolutionary politics or electoral politics is the real source of division.

The experiences of Communist movement in Nepal throw up yet another issue concerning the relationship between nationalism and communism in Communist practices. Theoretically, Marxist theory of class struggle and proletarian internationalism

is absolutely contradictory to the idea of nationalism, though Stalin attempted at accommodation of cultural rights of nationalities in his analysis of nationalism. In practice, however, successful Communist movement in China, Vietnam and Cuba have always tried to integrate national aspirations with their struggle against imperialism and their practice of revolutionary politics. In the context of Nepal also different Communist parties tried to project themselves as protectors of national culture and national interest in cases of language, identity, water disputes, and trade facilities etcetera. Such Communist practice in Nepal creates the problem of comprehending the basis of Communist politics. Therefore, the basic problem is to understand the relationship between nationalism and communism.

### 3. Review of Literature and Methodology

Though Communist movement formed an integral element in the political system of Nepal from 1949, yet it has received very little attention from scholars who have worked on Nepal. As a result, there is a dearth of adequate literature focusing on the development of Communist parties and Communist movement. Most of the literatures on politics in Nepal, since 1950, have given importance to the broad political development of the nation with sketchy remarks on the Communist movement. However; there are a few works, which mainly provide a historical account of Communist movement in Nepal. Some of such books, at the same time offer useful analytical insights, particularly on the areas of Party splits, fragmentation, and strategies of the movement. One may categorise the available literature broadly into two groups, works on Nepalese history, society and politics; and secondly studies or writings on Communist movement and movements by oppressed groups in Nepal. Obviously, numbers of publications belonging to the second category are very limited and the majority of them are written in Nepali. Apart from these, the present work because of the very nature of the exercise also draws heavily from general theoretical books on social movements and Communist movements elsewhere.

There exists a host of theoretical works on social movements, and they offer necessary conceptual insights on both social and political movements. Works by Paul

Wilkinson and by D. Della Porta and others need a special mention for the present study derives its conceptual framework largely from these works. Paul Wilkinson's book "Social Movement" analyses the problems related with the concept of social movement. He divides the problems under five headings; the problem of generality, dangers of ambiguity, problem of reification, problem of type concept and problem of comparison. Any analysis of social or political movements should take cognizance of the problems raised by Wilkinson in order to avoid partial and ambiguous conceptualisation. After explaining these problems associated with the term social movement, he reviews the attempts made in the past, by sociologists, social anthropologist and political scientists in conceptualising the concept. Then he suggests a working concept of social movement, which he claims would attempt to identify and generally define the quintessential characteristics of social movement. These are;

1) A social movement is a deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any direction, and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into 'utopian' communities. Social movements are different from historical movements, tendencies or trends. 2) A social movement must evince a minimal degree of organisation, though this may range from a loose, informal or partial level of organisation to the highly institutionalised and bureaucratised movement. 3) A Social movement's commitment to change and the *raison d'être* of its organisation are founded upon the conscious volition, normative commitment (here it implies that all social movements are to some degree spontaneous, self-directing and autonomous) to the movement's aims or beliefs, and active participation on the part of the followers or members.

Wilkinson's framework and analysis, however, is difficult to emulate in case of the present study for Wilkinson introduces a clear distinction between social movements and political parties where the latter competes essentially for power. The present work revolves around not only a political movement, but a number of political parties striving to gain political power in Nepal with a view to controlling the State

machinery. Further, the idea of spontaneous and autonomous movements does not fit the study of political movements, though Wilkinson's analysis of organisations of movements is useful for the purpose of present study. Besides; Wilkinson's framework approaches the movement as it exists, and the social and historical background of the movement and the organisation carrying out such movement are relegated to a secondary position. It is to be noted here the history of the movement often is a key to understanding the nature of the movement.

Donatella Della Porta and Maria Diani in their work "Social Movements: An Introduction" reviews the various theoretical perspectives on Social Movements, and then they provide four characteristic aspects of social movements. These include:

- 1) Informal interaction networks; movements exhibit an informal interaction networks between plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations. These networks promote the circulation of essential information, expertise and material among the individuals and organisations. As such networks create a precondition for mobilisation and the proper setting for the elaboration of a specific world view.
- 2) Shared beliefs and solidarity: a social movement requires an interacting collectivity with a set of shared beliefs, and a sense of belonging.
- 3) Collective action focusing on conflicts: social movement actors are engaged in political and/or cultural conflicts— an oppositional relationship between actors who seek control of the same stake. These conflicts are meant to promote or oppose social changes at either the systemic or non-systemic level.
- 4) Use of protests: the writers point out that social movements cannot be distinguished on the basis of unusual protests. However, they contend that public protests are a distinctive feature of a political movement.

In comparison with the working concept provided by Paul Wilkinson these four characteristic aspects of movement are much more clear in distinguishing a movement from a political Party because a political Party exhibits informal interaction network and unconventional exploitation of protests. The characterisation of social movements by Della Porta and Diani explores the inner mechanisms and internal processes of movements and thereby makes the study of social/political movements

more meaningful. At the same time their effort concentrates primarily on the structure of the movement and less on the dynamics save for their focus on use of protests by movements.

Rajendra Singh's work "Social Movement Old and New: A Post Modernist Critique" is an attempt in understanding the Indian society which is caught in a double contradiction: it is not fully modernised, yet it shows the cultural conditions of post-modernist society. So, there are movements both of the old type (movements based on issues such as raising labour wages in the industry and against economic injustice and exploitation) and of the new type that is movements based on issues such as disarmament, feminism, environmentalism etcetera. To understand such a society he points out that social studies need a new perspective. Singh contends that social movements and society are linked together; social movements are culture and history specific, social movements project an aspiration of the society and lead to the reproduction and renewal of the society.

Windmiller and Overstreet's work "Communism in India" written in a narrative style provides insight into the strategy and tactics of the Communist party of India. However, the book also fulfills one of the intentions of the writers which was to help researchers in detecting relation between the Communist Party of India and Communist parties formed in the subcontinent. While going through the work it becomes clear, subtly though, that the NCP in the 50s was following the footsteps of the Communist Party of India while framing its strategy and tactics. Two examples prove this point. The first was the confusing strategy of the NCP which it advocated in September 1949. During that time, the party identified its enemy as the feudal and imperialist forces, but it advocated an anti-capitalist line. This naturally raised the question why was the party so confused? The answer seems to lie in the then strategy of the Communist party of India. At the same moment Ranadive, according to Windmiller and Overstreet, was propounding a formulation of people's democracy which was anti-capitalist in stance. Second, in April 1951, when the Communist Party of India changed its tactics, that is replaced Rajeshwar Rao's Telangana line by

bringing in Dange and Ajoy Ghosh to follow a non-violent line, the NCP also removed Pushpalal, the follower of violent line and brought in Man Mohan Adhikari to propound a non-violent line in June/July 1952. The similarities were, therefore, more than coincidental in explaining the influences of Communist party of India on the NCP. The other book which is of importance in understanding the Communist movement of Nepal is that of Chalmer Johnson. His work “ Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: the Emergence of Revolutionary China,1937–1945” is important in understanding the fact that even in China the Communists under Mao had used nationalism to mobilise his forces. Thus, similar complexion of the Communist movement in Nepal only supports the view that for the Communists some other props, besides class, are required for mobilising their forces.

Kumar Pradhan’s work “ The Gorkha Conquests: the Process and Consequences of the Unification of Nepal with Particular Reference to Eastern Nepal focuses on answering two questions namely, the reason behind Gorkha Conquest and its effect on the society. According to him, the conquest was driven by economic reasons and not with the intention of forming a nation. And while answering the second question he subscribes to the usual view that the conquest led to the subjugation and exploitation of the ethnic groups of Nepal. As such, it supports the ethnic argument that their present day condition is the outcome of upper caste domination which was perpetuated by the conquest.

D. R Regmi’s works, “ Ancient Nepal”; “ Medieval Nepal: vol. I” Medieval Nepal: vol II; and “ Modern Nepal: vol I and II” provide in detail the march of the kingdom through time. Though the books are not related to the Communist movement of Nepal, yet they provide valuable insights into the past of the kingdom to clarify many of the issues which one comes across while going through the documents of the NCP’s and the CPN (Maoist). These books are essential readings for understanding the history of the kingdom. Similarly, Adrian Sever’s “ Nepal under the Ranas” focuses on the Rana period to clarify the nature of social arrangement during the period, besides bringing out the nature of the relation between the Ranas and British

India. It helps in understanding why Communists of Nepal consider the Rana-British relation better than the relation which came into existence between Nepal and India after the signing of the 1950 treaties. John Whelpton's work, "A History of Nepal" is comprehensive. Besides, explaining the evolution of Nepal's society and economy it traces the political evolution of the kingdom until 2002. However, the work suffers from an error while interpreting the tactics of the NCP (ML) in the 90s. Despite this the work is significant in understanding the various facets of the politics of the kingdom during the post-1990 period. Rishikesh Shaha's work "Modern Nepal: A Political History, 1785–1955" besides describing the political history of Nepal is useful in understanding the tactics followed by the NCP until 1955. His other work, "Three Decades and Two Kings (1960–1990): Eclipse of Nepal's Partyless Monarchic Rule" is a small work, but it helps in understanding the nature of Panchayat System and activities of the political parties from 1960–1990. His last book in this line is: "Politics in Nepal 1980–1990: Referendum, Stalemate and Triumph of People Power". It provides the political context, which helps in understanding the Communist movement in the period. He points out that the major factions of the Communist movement did not participate in the May 9, 1981 elections for electing four-fifths of the membership in Nepal Rastriya Panchayat. Besides, the work explains why there was referendum in 1980 and what were the reasons behind the 1990 uprising and the cry for democracy. While explaining the latter movement he also clarifies the role of the Communists especially those of the United Left Front and the United National People's Movement. Bhuwan Lal Joshi and Leo. E. Rose's work "Democratic Innovations in Nepal: A Case Study of Political Acculturation" is a case study of the political development in Nepal. Being a case study, it is highly analytical and it provides the Nepalese political context from 1950 to 1962, when the Communist movement flourished. Connected with the present work are its comments on the reaction of the Communist Party after the Royal takeover in 1960. It points out that the takeover did not affect the movement, because it had the taste of operating as an underground movement during 1952 to 1956. The book throws light on the causes

underlying the first split of the Party in September 1960. In the conclusion of the work there are a few statements which are of importance in understanding the nature of the political elites of the then political parties operating in Nepal. It is pointed out that most of the leaders were persons without economic substance or even fixed income. The leadership then was provided by members of émigré Nepali families who had been deprived of their traditional means of livelihood by the Ranas and who lived in India on a marginal subsistence basis. Lastly, they point out that the leaders were those who had a family history to some events in the past which had caused their dissatisfaction with the old system. Analysis of leadership pattern no doubt is useful but the basic problem of the work is its neglect of the socio-economic formation leading to Communist mobilisation which cannot be explained with reference to leadership only. Anirudha Gupta's "Politics in Nepal: A Study of Post-Rana Political Developments and Party Politics" is a work that traces the political development of Nepal from 1950 to 1960. It focuses largely on the role of the Nepali Congress. However, drawing on Party documents of the NCP, the work describes the perception of the Party after 1951. It points out that the Communists considered the Nepali Congress-Rana Ministry of 1950 as the stooge of India, and called upon all progressive forces to form Peoples' front to fight it. Then it also draws attention to the causes behind the split in the Party in 1960. This work; however, does not add anything significant in understanding the Communist movement. Dhundi Raj Bhandari's work "Nepalko Aitihashik Vivechana" (in Nepali) provides a detailed account of the Rana rule. It describes the movement of the Praja Panchayat during 1935 to 1940 and points out how the revolutionaries were engaged in exposing the nature of Rana rule among the people. Louise.T. Brown's work "The Challenge to Democracy in Nepal" is an account of the political developments in Nepal from 1990 to 1994. It does not; however, shed much light upon the Communist movement. Besides, it suffers from a few factual errors which leads the author in judging the NCP (UML)'s activities in post-1990 Nepal unfavourably. The work by Jana Sharma entitled "Democracy without Roots" describes the political events from 1990 to 2000.

The significance of this work lies in the fact that it brings together many of the political facts besides describing the nature of the policies adopted by the Communists during November 1994 to September 1995, when it was in power as a minority government.

Mahesh. C. Regmi's work "Landownership in Nepal" describes the nature of the various forms of tenancy system that was/is prevalent in Nepal. It is a good book for understanding the nature of *birta*, *jagir*, *Kipat* and *Mohiyani* systems of Nepal. His other work, "A Study in Nepali Economic History" is a detailed account of the economic arrangement that existed during the Rana period. The significance of the work is that it explains the influence of the past in the post-1950 economy of Nepal. The work of Hari Bansh Jha "Duty-Free Border Trade and Special Economic Zone Between Nepal and India" is specifically important in understanding the complexities involved in the Indo-Nepal trade and transit relations, which are governed by the 1950 treaties. Devendra Raj Panday's work "Nepal's Failed Development: Reflections on the Mission and the Maladies" traces the problems associated with the modern economy of Nepal. In his work, he points out that the major problems associated with the economy of Nepal is the non-implementation of the various plans and programmes. And though the work of Dor Bahadur Bista, "Fatalism and development: Nepal's struggle for modernization" has a sociological perspective, yet it explains why Nepal is underdeveloped. To do so the book draws attention towards the existence of a fatalistic cultural trait, a value system, prevalent among and patronised by the ruling elite as the cause behind Nepal's failure to develop. Finally, Baburam Bhattarai's work "The Nature of Underdevelopment and Regional Structure of Nepal: A Marxist Analysis" concludes that Nepal's failure in emerging as a prosperous economy is owing to its dependence on the economy of India. As such the work does not go beyond the usual Communist's view which sees in the Indo-Nepal economic relation a neo-colonial configuration. All these works are, therefore, relevant in understanding the Nepalese society, its historical evolution and existing forms of domination and deprivation which contributed to the growth of protest.

Among the books, which deal with the history of the Communist movement in Nepal there exists a substantial number of publications but majority of them are written in Nepali except those which deal with the CPN (Maoist) movement. Besides, all of them cannot be considered as academic works, but among them the works of two authors stand out. These are the works of Surendra K. C and of Bhim Rawal. Surendra K. C's work "Nepalma Communist Andolanko Itihas (Pahilo Bhag)" focuses on the origin of the movement; the controversies surrounding the date of birth of the movement, its organisational structure and the causes that led to its division after November 1960 Moscow conference. The work, being academic, is analytical and is based on documentary evidence and interviews. It covers the period up to 1962. Following it, he has two more books to his credit namely "Nepalma Communist Andolanko Itihas (Bhag 2)", and "Nepalma Communist Andolanko Itihas (Tesro Bhag)". However, these two works are not like the first volume. They are not critical in their approach, but they do help in providing a continuous history about the Communist movement until 2006. Bhim Rawal's work "Nepalma Samyabadi Andolanko Udbhav Ra Bikash" covers the period from the birth of the Party until 1986. The basic limitation of Rawal's work is that it is largely based on interviews with Party leaders with insufficient documentary substantiation. The merit of the work rests in the fact that it provides valuable information about the smaller Communist groups and factions. However, the works of both the authors will be understandable only to those who are conversant with the general political history of Nepal, because their works do not provide the political context of the Communist movement. Compared with such academic works, there are two important works of Communist history written by leaders like Pushpalal Shrestha and Mohan Bikram Singh/Gharti. Pushpalal Shrestha's work "Nepalma Communist Andolanko Sangchipta Itihas" is the history of the movement until 1962. It is in the form of a memoir from a founding member of the Communist movement. It sheds light on many of the issues connected with the movement especially the causes behind the formation of the Party in 1949. However, many of the statements made therein, cannot be taken as authentic, because

there are no citations of documents in the work except a few. In similar vein, the work of Mohan Bikram Gharti (Singh), “Dwitiya Mahadhiwayshundekhi Darbangha Plenumsamma vs 2014–2017” reminisces about the complexion of the movement within a brief period extending from 1957–1960/61. However, except for providing a few facts, the work fails in its objective. It does not explain clearly the reason why there was the first fragmentation in the movement after 1960. This is because the work fails to provide the content of the document passed in the NCP’s Second Congress. Had the author, as an insider of the movement, provided the document, which is missing and unavailable, then the work would have stood out. Books and articles written after 1990 on the Communist movement focus specifically in explaining the Maoist movement. These works, which are written in English are as follows:

Deepak Thapa and Bandita Sijapati’s book “A kingdom Under Siege: Nepal’s Maoist Insurgency, 1996 to 2004” traces briefly the rise of the NCP (Maoist) and focuses on the causes behind the growth of the Maoist insurgency. According to the work the causes were: inefficient governance characterised by corruption; poverty, imbalances in the economic development of the five development zones; the decade long indoctrination of the people in mid-Western Nepal into radical communism under Mohun Bikram Singh, the leader of NCP (Masal); the suppression of the United People's Front Nepal [the front organisation of the NCP (Unity Centre)] by the Nepali Congress Government, and the disparity that existed in the economic, political and social front between the *khas* (Brahmin/Chettri), Newar combine and the indigenous people i.e. Rai, Limboo, Magar etcetera. In explaining the reasons behind the growth of the NCP (Maoist) their contribution lies in pointing out the role of Mohun Bikram Singh in mid-Western Nepal. Besides, the work helps in constructing the flow of events related with the movement during 1996–2004. Deepak Thapa’s edited book “Understanding the Maoist Movement of Nepal” brings together a number of articles authored by writers like R. Andrew Nickson (Democratisation and the Growth of Communism in Nepal: A Peruvian Scenario in the Making?) which points out the

similarity between the Communist movement of Nepal and that of Peru. Other articles contained in the work are those of Stephen L. Mikesell's (*The Paradoxical Support of Nepal's Left for Comrade Gonzalo*); Shyam Shrestha's (*Nepali Cart Before Horse*); Anne de Sales's (*The Kham Magar Country, Nepal Between Ethnic Claims and Maoism*), where she contends that the NCP (Maoist) leadership's continuation of Naxalite trend of tribal recruitment, was the cause behind the rise of the movement in Central Nepal.

Similarly, Michael Hutt's edited work "Himalayan 'People's War': Nepal's Maoist Rebellion" contains a number of articles. such as those of Deepak Thapa's (*Radicalism and the Emergence of the Maoist*) which traces the rise of the NCP (Maoist); Krishna Hachhethu's (*The Nepali State and the Maoist Insurgency, 1996-2001*), which focuses on the relation between the Maoist movement and the political system of Nepal; Sara Shneiderman and Mark Turin's (*The Path to Jan Sarkar in Dolakha District: Towards an Ethnography of the Maoist Movement*), which explains the techniques used by the Maoist to spread their influence from the village to the towns. Hutt's collection of articles, though addresses only the Maoist movement in Nepal, is a reliable book on current history of Communist movement in that country. The uniqueness of the collection is that it attempts at exploring different dimensions like ideology, organisation, tactics, peasants participation etcetera, which offer a better opportunity for analysing the movement. Like Michael Hutt's, David N. Gellner edited book "Resistance and the State, Nepalese Experience" (2008) is also a collection of essays which focuses on varieties of protest movements including those of the Maoists. It contains relevant information regarding the relationship between different communities like Gurungs and Kham Magars on the one hand and the Maoist on the other.

Arjun Karki and David Seddon's edited work "The People's War in Nepal, Left Perspective" contains a few articles and a number of Maoist documents. The book also contains some articles by active members of the Maoist group like the article on women's participation by one Parvati (pseudonym). Overall the book is a

good source of information for scholars working in the field, because of the presence of Maoist documents. However, the work should not be readily accepted because of two facts. First, there are multiple error in its treatment about the history of the Communist movement and second there are errors in a few of the documents, the translated versions, which are provided by it for example, the 40 point demand which the Maoists had submitted before going underground has not been properly translated.

“ The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the Twenty-First Century” is a recent book edited by Mahendra Lawoti and Anup K. Pahari. It has articles authored by Kristine Eck (Recruiting Rebels: Indoctrination and Political Education in Nepal) which argues that for understanding the Maoist movement one has to focus more on the Maoist’s method of recruitment. In similar line Monica Motin’s article (Catchy Melodies and Clenched Fists: Performance as Politics in Maoist Cultural Programs) highlights the use of the cultural program in the Maoist’s method of mobilisation. In addition, the book has articles by Amanda Snellinger (The Repertoire of Scientific Organisation: Ideology, Identity and the Maoist Student Union) which traces the link between the student wing of the Maoist and of the Party and of Mahendra Lawoti’s (Ethnic Dimensions of the Maoist Insurgencies: Indigenous Groups’ Participation and Insurgency Trajectories in Nepal, Peru, and India) which compares the Maoist movements in Nepal, Peru and India to conclude that the movement in Nepal, in comparison with the movements in the other two countries, could last long owing to the participation of indigenous people. .

Available literature, therefore, indicates that the works on Communist movement of Nepal can be classified under two broad headings: those dealing with the history of the movement and those trying to explain the rise of the Maoist movement. However, they all lack in providing a comprehensive and critical analysis of Communist movement in the parliamentary phase by neglecting questions about issues related with the movement’s adaptation of revolutionary politics in the Parliamentary framework, its relationship with nationalism, ethnicity etcetera.

Besides, very few scholars have attempted to examine the nature and class basis of the movement.

#### 4. Objectives of Research and Research Questions

The basic purpose of the present study is to examine the development of Communist parties and Communist movement in Nepal since the introduction of Parliamentary Democratic system in 1990 and to analyse the way the Communist parties and leadership tried to merge revolutionary political ideology with the structure of parliamentary democracy during the period between 1990 and 2002. Actually this is the period when the majority of Communist groups except the Maoist participated in the electoral process until 2002 when the Parliament was dissolved by King Gyanendra. The study specifically focuses on the ideology, strategies, social basis of Communist parties of Nepal and the contradiction that arises from the strategies undertaken by various Communist groups. It is assumed that such an analysis will provide a more comprehensive idea about the Communist movement and the relationship between prevailing social formation and the Communist movement. The focus of the study though limited to the aforesaid period, for a better comprehension of Communist movement in Nepal in general and the period of parliamentary participation, in particular, the study also examines the development of the Communist movement including its fragments from the inception of the Communist party in 1949. Certain sections of the work therefore traces the history of the Communist movement from 1950s to the decade of 80s. It is assumed that for a proper understanding of ideological/strategy shifts and the issue of fragmentation such an effort is necessary. Similarly, the study also adds a note on the developments of the post-2002 period. The specific objectives of the study may be summarised as follows:

• To trace the chronological history of the Communist movement in Nepal and the NCP and other Communist parties.

• To examine the ideology and strategies of various Communist parties and ideological shifts and changes in strategies (if any) to adjust with parliamentary democracy and also to examine the consequences.

• To examine the problem of combining a revolutionary ideology with electoral system and its impact on the unity of Communist movement.

• To explore the relationship between communism and nationalism in the context of Parliamentary democracy, i.e., to analyse whether parliamentary democracy itself, compels the Communist parties to embrace a more nationalistic outlook. It is also the objectives of this study to examine the relationship between nationalistic outlook and success of Communist movement.

• The study also aims at answering the question whether there is a determinate relationship between economic conditions and social formation (including caste system) in the one hand and the growth of Communist support on the other.

• Finally the study intends to investigate the organisational network of and forms of protests used by various Communist groups to understand the nature and reasons behind the growth of Communist movement in Nepal.

The above objectives which clarify the focus and main thrust of the study raise the basic question regarding the relationship between Parliamentary democracy and communism. They raise a host of questions about influence of nationalism, effect of parliamentarian system, role of economic factors, significance of caste and other social identities etcetera which are systematically presented below:

• Why have Communist parties in Nepal ultimately joined electoral process by repudiating it initially and what ideological, organisational, strategic changes have they initiated to enter Parliamentary politics and with what consequences? How does Parliamentary system affect their networks and methods of protest?

• Whether participation in parliamentary system ensures greater unity in Communist movement of Nepal or does it create further fractionalisation of the movement?

• Is nationalism an inescapable element of parliamentary politics or do the Communist parties intentionally assume a nationalist outlook for greater mobilisation and support? (In other words, the study intends to answer the question of relationship between nationalism and Communist organisation in Nepal)

• Whether there exists any relationship between economic backwardness, caste affiliation and social formation in one side and Communist politics on the other?

## 5. Conceptual Frameworks and Methods

Social and political movements have been approached from different perspective by different scholars. In fact there exists heterogeneity of positions taken by scholars and it is almost impossible to narrate and categorise such positions in a comprehensive manner. Yet it is necessary to describe briefly the central points of five such perspectives from which the present study has borrowed its conceptual framework. The first of such perspective is generally known as the viewpoint of social movements as collective behaviours shared mainly by sociologists of the structural functional school, which considers social movements as outcomes of social transformations. From this view movements are not agglomeration of individual behaviours or results of individual rootlessness, alienation and deprivation. But it is a collective behaviour and a macro phenomenon which aims at general change. The second perspective, which is also propounded by sociologists (Charles Tilly, *From Mobilisation to Revolution*, 1978), perceives movements as rational action and an extension of political action to correct certain social inadequacies. Movements are products of malfunctioning of the social system. The movements try to change the pattern of resources and value distribution. The third perspective which is closely related to the Rational Action perspective views political movements as protests within political system. The central focus here is the political process and the attempt is to show the relationship between institutional politics and the movement. It argues that movements cannot be understood without reference to the political and institutional environment. The fourth perspective which is relevant in this study is the class perspective which believes that unequal economic distribution and resultant

class antagonism are at the roots of the movements. Finally, the historical perspective approaches social and political movements as part of general historical process in which a collectivity reacts to some needs in a specific historical context. It emphasises the process of gradual evolution of the movement and the internal dynamics of it.

The present study; on the basis of the prevailing perspectives on social movements, perceives the Communist movement in Nepal as a historically evolving dynamic process, which has assumed a specific shape and structure through its negotiations with prevailing political institutions and social-economic structure, and has evolved a specific form, ideological outlook and organisational network through such negotiations. Through this entire historical process a movement or a political party defines and redefines in different historical contexts its tasks, strategies and ideological positions. The task of the researcher is to understand this process of evolving. This perspective expands the scope of the study to the areas of: (a) historical evolution of the movement, (b) ideology and the strategy including alterations in these areas, (c) exchanges with the idea and the structure of Parliamentary democracy, (d) economic and social basis of the movements and (e) forms of protests.

The study employs historical and critical methods of analysis to examine the process of evolution of the communist movement of Nepal, its internal dynamics and relationship between the movement and its socio-economic and political environment. To do so, it focuses on specific issues related to the movement without aiming to understand the movement in its totality. Emphasis is given on primary documents and publications of Communist parties and they will be narrated in the context of Nepal's socio-economic and changing political conditions for two reasons: First, to describe the historical evolution of the movement correctly, a characteristic missing in many of the existing works and secondly, to examine the causal relationship between the context and the Communist movement to avoid the understanding of the issues in abstraction.

## 6. Chapters

Chapter I Introduction: Framework, Review of Literature and Methodology.

Chapter II Social Formation and Political Structure of Nepal: History of Nepal in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Economy of Nepal: 1990-2002, Population and Caste-Structure, Political and Administrative System.

Chapter III Evolution of Communist Movement in Nepal until 1990: Early Years, Developments after 1960, Splits within the Movement.

Chapter IV Communist Movement after 1990: Parliamentary system, and various Communist parties: Their Ideologies and Strategies, Major Issues, Forms of Protests, Support Base/Social base.

Chapter V Revolutionary Groups (non-parliamentary politics): Emergence of Maoists as a major force: Maoist Strategy, Maoist and Parliamentary Democracy.

Chapter VI Conclusion: Parliamentary Politics Versus Revolutionary Politics—Fragmentation Versus Unity within Parliamentary System—Communist Parties and National Sentiments—Ideological Shifts in Parliamentary System—Economic Backwardness and Communist Mobilisation—Caste, Ethnicity and Communist Mobilisation.

Postscript: Developments after 2002

## 7. Relevance of the Study

The review of literature points out the absence of a comprehensive study of Nepal Communist movement in the post-1990 period. The relevance of the present study therefore, lies in its attempt at filling up this research gap. While doing so it will try to understand the class basis of the movement; the factors which compel the movement in invoking nationalism while practising communism, the nature of Communist movement in an extremely underdeveloped country, and the link between revolutionary politics and Parliamentary system, where the King occupied a preëminent position.

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## Chapter 2

### Social Formation and Political Structure of Nepal

History of Nepal in the 20th Century, Economy of Nepal (1990-2002), Population and Caste Structure, Political and Administrative System.

#### 1. Nepal under the Ranas

Communist movement in present-day Nepal formally began when Pushpalal and his group formed Nepal Communist Party in 1949. However, to understand why they formed the Party, and how they sensed the society, the economy, and the politics within the nation one needs to understand its history. This history, in particular, is the history of Nepal in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, this history was the result of political events of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Therefore, the account needs to take the history of the past two centuries as well.

In the ancient period, the word Nepal referred to Kathmandu Valley, which by 1482 disintegrated into three kingdoms: Kathmandu, Bhatgaon and Patan.<sup>1</sup>From the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the areas lying to its West, the part in Karnali and in Gandak basins (See, p. 220) came under the Khasas.<sup>2</sup>In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when Rajputs from Rajputana (India) migrated to this part, they carved out kingdoms for themselves. As a result, 22 kingdoms, the *Baisi* came into existence in the Karnali basin area, and likewise, 24 kingdoms; the *Chaubisi* was formed within the area falling under the Gandak basin (Regmi, D. R., Modern Vol. I 1) . After 1559 A.D, Gorkha was added among the *Chaubisi*<sup>3</sup> (Regmi, D. R., Medieval Vol. II 2). Similarly, the areas lying to

<sup>1</sup> See Regmi, D. R., Medieval Vol. II 34–375, for an account of their disintegration.

<sup>2</sup> See Regmi, D. R., Medieval Vol. I 733–4, where the author on the basis of the study of history by Sylvan Levi and on the basis of the historical evidences, points out that the Khasas were a tribe inhabiting the Himalayas with their spread as far as the river Bheri flowing through the present Dailekh district of Nepal.

<sup>3</sup> See, Pradhan 20 The author contests this view and points out that it did not belong either to the *Baisi* or the *Chaubisi* group.

the East of the Valley were also divided into multiple principalities (Pradhan 69–76). Among them the western principalities, were continually in conflict and so were the three Valley kingdoms, which fought over their “roughly” demarcated boundary lines (Regmi, D. R., Medieval Vol. II 381). So, Nepal then, as Regmi says, resembled a “theatre of war” (3). But even under such circumstances, the Valley kingdoms were prosperous because of their command over the trade routes which connected them to Tibet.

From 1737, the Valley attracted Gorkha invaders. However, the invasion, in earnest, began from 1743 under the leadership of Prithivinarayan Shah, who nursed a vision<sup>4</sup> to create a “state worth its name” (Regmi, D. R., Modern Vol. I 94). By 1769, he succeeded in conquering the Valley. From 1773, the eastern campaign began, and by 1774 the frontier of the Gorkha kingdom reached the border of Sikkim (238). After his death in 11 January 1775, his successors kept the flame of conquest ablaze. In 1788, the eastern border was then extended up to river Tista by conquering a “large part of Sikkim” (370). However, Gorkha ambition to push its western frontier beyond river Sutlej was cut short when, in 1809, Sikh King, Ranajit Singh defeated them in Kangra. Hence, by 1810 river Sutlej in the West and river Tista in the East constrained the Gorkhas and in the South, East India Company sealed its possibility of expansion (225).

<sup>4</sup> See, Pradhan 167–72 This vision according to the author was the economic and the political subjugation of the conquered territories and in no way aimed at the formation of a nation. Such, understanding of Pradhan, which saw in Gorkha exploits the aim of political subjugation of the conquered territories, I presume, was necessary to provide the groundwork for concluding that the conquest was not aimed at forming a nation—a conclusion, which in turn was necessary to critique the post-1962 situation of Nepal. However, in judging Gorkha conquest from such standpoint, I think he was being too harsh, because during the period of the conquest the idea of nation-state or even that of state was not prevalent in the Gorkha discourse. These ideas grew later, after a series of six episodes which ended in King Mahendra’s attempt to shape a nation-state out of the kingdom from 1962. For an explanation of these episodes, see, Burghart 113 Hence, it would be better to go by Regmi’s view, which perceived pure economic reason behind Prithivinarayan’s military exploits. For Regmi’s view, see, Regmi, M. C., Economic 9 .

Meantime, the Company began laying unreasonable claims all along Nepalese border to force Nepal into an engagement<sup>5</sup> to “deprive ... [Nepal] of [her] valuable Terai lands” (Regmi, D. R. 279). The Company succeeded in its tactics: Anglo-Nepalese war began in November 1814. It ended when “the Nepalese capitulated and signed a peace treaty, the Treaty of Seaguli, in March 1816” (Sever 32). The Treaty cost Nepal one-third of her territory: it was forced to cede the whole of her Terai land. However, in December 1816 “with a view to gratify the Rajah (King)” as M. C Regmi puts it, the Company returned a part of its capture (Regmi, M. C., Economic 167). Since then, her territorial boundary came to resemble closely with the present-day boundary of Nepal.

During this period of expansion and contraction of its borders, and especially after the death of Prithivinarayan Shah the Court politics of Nepal took an ugly turn. It turned into hub of plots and counterplots for power. Involved in these were four powerful families namely the Shahs,<sup>6</sup> the Thapas, the Pandeys and the Basnets. They competed for monopoly control over the administrative<sup>7</sup> and military posts of the kingdom. These competitions, which took place within the precincts of the Shah

<sup>5</sup> See, Regmi, D. R. 233–303 The author reaches such conclusion after analysing numerous letters exchanged among the then Nepalese Government, generals and the British Government. See, also, Burghart 114 From sociological point of view the author contends that the skirmishes along the borders were due to the difference in the understanding of the two parties regarding what constituted the border. For the Company it meant a fixed line. For the Gorkhas, it meant a shifting line which corresponded with the changing tenurial authority of the King.

<sup>6</sup> These were the brothers of Prithivinarayan Shah; the brother of the reigning kings, and their queens. They are sometimes referred to as *Chautarias*.

<sup>7</sup> See, Shrestha, T. N., Nepalese Administration ... Perspective 129–31 During the Shah period there were three high level institutions around the Shah King or the regent. These were the *Thargar*, the Assembly of Notables and the *Bhardari*. However, the *Bhardari*, composed of high level politicians, administrators, nobles and military officials, was the most important. It performed some executive functions and rendered advice to the King. The *Thargar* and the Assembly of Notables also advised the King, but through the *Bhardari*. Naturally, when conspiracies triggered changes in the administrative posts, the captors sought to staff the *Bhardari*.

court, were conspiratorial and violent and they often ended in massacres of the competitors. In one such plot of 15 September 1846, Jang Bahadur; a member of a minor noble family, the Kunwar family, acquired power by assassinating scores of nobles at the *Kot*.<sup>8</sup> Following the massacre, the *Kot* massacre, Jang Bahadur consolidated his position: in May 12, 1847 he deposed reigning Shah King; installed Prince Surendra, the heir apparent, to the throne and later forced him to issue a royal charter—the *Sanad* of 6 August 1856.<sup>9</sup> The charter made Prime Minister, Jang Bahadur Rana<sup>10</sup> the *de facto* ruler, and the Shah King, his political puppet. For some time; the Company wavered<sup>11</sup> in recognising the change, but finally it conceded to Jang Bahadur Rana’s request that the recognition would strengthen “closer and more friendly relations” between Nepal and the Company (67). The relation, did grow stronger when, in 1857, Jang Bahadur Rana responded to the Company’s call for military support to quell Indian mutineers mutinying against the Company rule. As a *quid pro quo* to Rana’s military support, the Company, in May 1858, returned a part of the southern Nepalese territory ceded by Nepal in the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814–16. Thereafter, a mutual relation developed between Nepal and British India: from 1885,

<sup>8</sup> See, Regmi, D. R., *Modern Vol. I* 290 footnote 2. The *Kot* was a house with a courtyard built as an adjunct to the palace where arms were kept and certain rooms were used as prison for political suspects.

<sup>9</sup> See, Sever 93 The charter perpetuated the control of the Ranas over Nepal. The order made the office of the Prime Minister hereditary. It passed first among the brothers of Jang Bahadur on the basis of seniority, and then among his sons and nephews. Besides, such unusual system of succession, the order also endowed wide political, judicial and diplomatic powers upon the Ranas.

<sup>10</sup> See, Sever 86 Jang Bahadur, in order to raise the status of his family crafted an apocryphal genealogy to show that his Kunwar family was a descendent of the House of Rana, the 14 century ruler of Chittor. Since then the title Rana was appended to his name.

<sup>11</sup> See, Sever 67 The Company wavered because of its policy of wait and see, its policy of neutrality, and because of its Governor-General, Lord Hardinge’s disapproval of the method used by Jang Bahadur to capture power. He viewed it as inhuman and reprehensible.

Nepal allowed the British to recruit Gorkha soldiers in their army, and the 1923 treaty<sup>12</sup> between the British and the Nepalese Government recognised the independence of Nepal. Such British support to the Ranas lent a characteristic air of power, which helped them to remain as rulers until 1950.

### 1.1. Economic, Administrative and Legal Structure

History apart, what distinguished the Rana period is their economic, administrative and legal structures. If the first two were built upon carry over of the past, the legal structure was the result of their ingenuity. Before 1814–16 Anglo-Nepal war (the period which marked the high point of Gorkha expansion), Nepal was a land-based economy, where rulers craved for revenue producing land. However, even after achieving its utmost expansion before 1814, Mahesh C. Regmi points out that its revenue did not increase in ratio of its expansion.<sup>13</sup> The reason behind such uneven relation between its expanse and its returns, as Regmi writes, was due to its land tenure and land tenancy practices. And since the economy was agricultural the land tenure laws and tenancy practices,<sup>14</sup> which prevailed before and after unification, characterised the economy of Nepal. Before unification, there were five major forms of land tenure. They were *Raikar*, *Birta*, *Guthi*, *Sera* and *Kipat*” (Regmi, M. C., Economic 26). During unification period and later, the *Jagir* form of tenure gained ground (72–3).

<sup>12</sup> This Treaty allowed Nepal to import arms without the permission of British India besides it treated Nepal not as the princely states of India but as a sovereign state.

<sup>13</sup> See, Regmi, M. C., Economic 57 The author presents two figures: the estimated annual revenue of Rs. 5,000, 000/-when the Gorkhas had gained control over eastern Terai and the actual annual revenue that was collected after its utmost expansion. The latter amount was Rs. 8000, 000/-.

<sup>14</sup> See, Regmi, M. C., Landownership 15 Land tenure system is the legal or customary laws under which land is owned or occupied. And land tenancy system is the arrangement under which land is cultivated by tenants and the product is divided between land owner and tenants. It also takes into account the burden imposed by the government on the landowner and tenant in the form of taxation.

Traditionally, the existing kingdoms or principalities of the land considered the occupied lands as their property. Such kingdom or principality owned lands were the *Raikar* lands. When peasants cultivated such lands, they, as “tenants,” “made payments directly to the state” (26). However, when the State granted *Raikar* lands to “individuals” and allowed the recipients of such lands “to appropriate” the cultivators’ produce, then it was called *Birta*. Similar grants made to “temples and monasteries” or in general for “charitable purposes” was termed *Guthis* (Regmi, M. C., Economic 26, 48–50). When the Crown set aside *Raikar* lands “for meeting the food grain and other requirements of the Royal Palace household” it formed the *Sera* (26). Finally, both in the eastern and the western part of Nepal, some ethnic groups “owned lands on a communal basis without any legal title” (27). These were *Kipat* lands. During unity drive and after, owing to the absence of money economy, the kingdom granted lands to the nobilities, soldiers and other functionaries. Such land grants, the *Jagirs*, were granted, instead of salaries to the employees to cope with the rising administrative and military expenses of the State.

The kingdom granted *Birta* holdings for various reasons. They were granted for winning political support, enriching nobilities, and for seeking the blessings of Brahmins. So, the beneficiaries were “Brahmans, Chhetris, and other classes of Indo-Aryan origin” (27). These grants were permanent in nature. The *Birta* holder enjoyed exclusive right over them. However, the kingdom forbade the sale and transfer of *Guthi* lands, because of their religious overtones. Compared with these, the *Jagir* grants were not permanent: the *Jagirdar*, the owner of the *Jagir* holding, could not transfer or sell his holding. He enjoyed the land until he served the kingdom (Regmi, M. C., Landownership 76). In contrast, the *Kipat* form of land tenure rejected the traditional belief that lands belonged to the kingdom. It recognised a tribe or its chief as the owner of the land, which the tribe occupied in “a particular geographical area” (87). However, this short description of the different land tenure forms does not reflect in full the nature of the then Nepalese economy. For fuller understanding one needs to pair it with tenancy practices of the period. During the period of unification

and until 1846, the kingdom brought vast areas under a taxable form by confiscating even “unregistered *Birta*, *Guthi* and *Kipat* lands” (Regmi, M. C., Economic 75). These lands were mostly converted into *Birta* and *Jagir* tenure. As a result, even a few owner-cultivated lands ceased to exist and tenant cultivators ruled the roost. Besides, the kingdom changed tenancy practices. The changes as Mahesh C. Regmi observes: “diminished the status and earnings of the cultivators and ...convert[ed] him into a virtual serf” (76). Later, the kingdom introduced *Kut* method of taxation, under which the cultivators paid a fixed rent irrespective of the amount produced. This fixed rent was generally more than 50% (86). Besides, when the *Birta* holders and the *Jagirdars* held huge plots, the tenant cultivators employed sub-tenants who paid even higher rents (94–8). In addition, “it was the common obligation of tenants cultivating *Jagir* lands to supply loans to their landlords” (98). As money was rare, to fulfil the bond, they borrowed money from the moneylenders. On such borrowings, the moneylenders charged interest rates ranging from 25% to 50% (98). When the peasants failed to return the money, the moneylenders used “the labour power of defaulting borrower through the institution of slavery” (117). Thus, until 1846, landlords consumed all rents leaving little for the kingdom and for the market. So, Government lacked wages to pay those, whom it employed as “porters and as laborers” (102). This led to the growth of exacting forced labour from the people<sup>15</sup> and the peasants. However, from 1813 the Government exempted “Brahmins” from such labour, but the burden continued for the peasants (Regmi, M. C., Economic 104).

After 1814–16 war, though Nepal realised that another war with the Company would be at the cost of her independence, yet she continued preparing for war. This trend went on until the rise of Jang Bahadur in 1846 (168). With Terai area gone, for the war effort the only choice left for the kingdom was to rely on its traditional

<sup>15</sup> See, Regmi, M. C., Economic 103 In its initial form the practice involved the use of entire adult male population irrespective of class and caste. For them it was compulsory to provide unpaid labour services.

resources for finance. Among these, the kingdom preferred increase in land taxes. Such measures, along with its attendant forces of moneylenders and slave owners, heightened the burden of the cultivators. Describing the essential nature of the Nepalese economy and its effect until 1846, Mahesh C. Regmi writes:

The post-war period, in fact, witnessed a large scale exodus of people from several parts of Nepal to Indian Territory. Among the important factors contributing to the exodus were excessive taxation ... and the pressure of moneylenders and slave owners ... (194)

From 1846 to 1951, the Ranas used the land tenure forms for three specific purposes. These were: to win support for their regime; to enrich Rana family including the Prime Minister himself, and to increase tax. To win support for their regime they granted “waste tracts” as *Birta* or *Guthi*, but for themselves they arrogated prime lands (Regmi, M. C., Landownership 31). However, a little later they eliminated *Jagir* lands for their own end while pocketing other taxes for personal needs. Depicting the exploitative nature<sup>16</sup> of the Rana rule and its policy towards the *Jagir* tenure Mahesh C. Regmi writes:

The Rana Government functioned as nothing more than an instrument to exploit the country’s resources in order to enhance the personal wealth of the Rana prime minister and his family. No distinction was made between the personal treasury of the Rana ruler and the Treasury of the Government; any Government revenue in excess of administrative expenses was pocketed by the Rana ruler as private income. The *Jagir* system did not serve these interests of the Rana Government, for *Jagir* assignments reduced revenue and thus prime minister’s profits (Regmi, M. C., Landownership 83)

So, by 1950 the *Jagir* form of land tenure nearly vanished, but other dated land tenure forms the *Zamindari*<sup>17</sup> and the *Jimidari*<sup>18</sup> continued.

<sup>16</sup> See, also, Pradhan 198 where the author describes the tax focused administration of the Gorkhas based on his findings about Gorkha rule in Kumaon.

<sup>17</sup> See, Regmi, M. C., Landownership 107 The *Zamindari* system in Nepal was different from that of India. The *Zamindar* did not enjoy ownership over the land given to him. He collected tax from land owned by others and transferred them to the Government.

<sup>18</sup> See, Regmi, M. C., Landownership 115–6 A *Jimidar* was directly appointed by the Government. His functions were two-fold: to collect taxes and to provide

## 1.2. Administrative and Legal Structure

Before Rana period, the kingdom's objective was to expand and consolidate the expansion. Therefore, her administration then was centralised and militarised. The King was the centre of all powers. Below him, in order of power, were the Crown Prince, the *Chautaria* (Prime Minister) and *Kazis* (ministers). These posts were staffed either by royal descendants or by military generals drawn from a pool of nobles—the *Thargars*.<sup>19</sup> Besides, two advisory institutions functioned under him: the *Bhardari* and the Assembly of Notables. Of these, the advice of the Assembly of Notables, as Tulsi Narayan writes, “never controlled” the opinion of the Court (131), but the advice of the *Bhardari* was given importance. Hence, it survived through the passage of time. The Shahs administered the kingdom by dividing her into districts and districts into villages (Shrestha, T. N., Nepalese Administration ... Perspective 151), where central authority was extended through centrally appointed officials except in the *Kirata* villages of eastern Nepal where power was given to “village headman” (162).

The Ranas inherited the centralised administration of the Shahs, and changed them to strengthen their control to serve their lust for wealth. During the Shah period, though by circumstances the Prime Minister enjoyed powers, yet legally they were concentrated in the King. But, after the proclamation of the 1856 *Sanad* the Prime

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agricultural credit. But, in course of time the land allotted to him turned into his property and as a credit provider he turned into an usurer.

<sup>19</sup> See Agarwal, Administrative System 5, where in the context of the *Thargar* he quotes Sylvain Levi as follows; “it is between them that the government must share the principal employments, but all have not equal rights; they form a hierarchy with three different stages, the highest group in dignity comprises six families who receive by reason of their number and name of Chattra. The Chattras have a kind of right of preference for the first employments of the kingdom.” See, also, Pradhan 22–3 The institution, *Thar-Ghar*, as Pradhan calls it, came into being under Dravya Shah who became the King of Gorkha in 1616. In the beginning it was a six-member Council composed of Brahman-Chettri and Magars, Chettri Magars.

Ministers turned into the legal and real rulers of Nepal. However, to satisfy the religious sentiments of the “people of Nepal, who were enmeshed in a traditional society” they kept alive the belief that deified the King and projected him as the legal ruler (Agarwal, *Administrative System* 31). Hence, from 1847 or more precisely from 1858 until 1950 the Ranas, as Prime Ministers, upheld an autocratic rule, where the government was “answerable” to them (Sever 127).

During the Shah period, the kings of Nepal ruled according to “a legal code of 40 articles” based upon the principles of “Hindu *Shastras*”. In 1851, “Jang Bahadur appointed a Law Council, the *Ain Kausal*, to reform and codify law”. Based on the Hindu *Shastras* and the “three sources of justice mentioned in the *Manu Smriti*”, the Council framed the *Mulki Ain*, which was proclaimed in 1854. Aimed at imposing “uniformity on the administration of justice”, it sought to regulate every side of human life (Sever 79). Commenting on the general principle of the *Mulki Ain* Severs writes, “It was a general principle of the *Mulki Ain* that loss of life was to be paid for by loss of life ... the only exception being that Brahmins and women were never put to death” (82). It prohibited social evils like gambling, but maintained silence regarding the practice of *Sati* and child marriage for fear of antagonising a highly orthodox Hindu society. The *Ain*, in its modified form, still lives in Nepal.

### 1.3. Beginning of the End

However, from the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> and from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century several external influences influenced Nepal. These were: the activities of Arya Samaj movement in India, the effects of the First World War and the activities of Indian National movement. From 1893, influenced by Swami Dayananda Saraswati’s teachings Madhav Raj Joshi started two centres in Nepal: first in Pokhara and the second in Kathmandu. Alarmed probably by “the egalitarian and anti-clerical [anticlerical] spirit of the movement” (Sever 277), the Ranas imprisoned Joshi in 1905 and forced him to leave the kingdom in 1907. To what extent his activities weakened the foundation of the Rana regime is a matter of anybody’s guess. However, based on

later activities<sup>20</sup> of the Arya Samaj there, Shiva Bahadur points out that they led to the rise of “a new social consciousness ... among the Nepalese youth” (83). Similarly, scholars, like Upreti, credit the First World War for liberalising the outlook of the Gorkha soldiers who were lent by the Ranas to the British to man their war fronts abroad. According to Upreti the War freed the soldiers from the grip of orthodox Hindu caste rules. So, Upreti writes, when they “returned home” they had turned into “spark[s] for the liberalisation of the social ethos and values” of the Nepalese society (92). Obviously, within Nepal the spark took time to flare up, but in Dehradun, in 1921, it inspired Army ex-servicemen to found the All India Gorkha League, whose members supported an anti-Rana, anti-British stand. Finally, despite Chandra Shamsher’s best effort<sup>21</sup> to seal Nepal from the influences of Communism and Gandhian activities (activities related with Indian National movement), which he considered as “subversive movements”, they penetrated Nepal (Upreti 97). So, in 1913, influenced by the “terrorist organisations” of India “Prachanda Gorkha”, a “secret” anti-Rana group grew in Kathmandu (Singh, S. B. 88). Then in the 30s, Kathmandu youths set up the Nepali Nagarik Adhikar Samity. Its members like Gangalal, brother of Pushpalal, “openly abused the Rana rulers” inviting Rana suppression, which resulted in its closure (89). In 1935, the Kathmandu intellectuals formed the Praja Panchayat. From 1935–1940, it exposed the nature of the Rana rule among the people. In 1940, it elected Tanka Prasad Acharya, Dasrathchand and Ramhari Sharma its President, Vice President and General Secretary respectively. In

<sup>20</sup> See, Singh, S. B. 83 Even after the expulsion of Madhav Raj Joshi; Amar Raj, the son of Madhav Raj Joshi attempted the revival of the movement. When the Ranas suppressed the attempt of Amar Raj; Satya Charan, a commoner of Kathmandu followed suit only to meet similar fate.

<sup>21</sup> See, Upreti 97–101 The government of Nepal banned English and vernacular papers coming from India into Nepal; employed a Bengali to spy on students studying in Calcutta to find if they had imbibed the tenets of Communism and Indian national movement, and established Tri-Chandra College in 1918 in Kathmandu to check the flow of Nepalese students to India.

August 1940, it issued anti-Rana tract in the name of Praja Parishad. However, Rana suppression shortened its active existence. By the close of 1940, four of its leaders namely, “Sukraraj Shastri, Dharmabhakta, Dasrathchand and Gangalal” were sentenced to death and Tanka Prasad was jailed (90). Similarly, in 1936, when educated youths had started the Mahabir school in Kathmandu and produced anti-Rana activists the Ranas forced its closure.

These incidents, it seems, dampened the spirit of the politically active minority, because after that until the end of forties one hardly comes across any individual or group effort towards founding of anti-Rana political parties within Nepal. However, such activities flourished in Darjeeling, Benares [Varanasi] and Calcutta, the Indian cities which from the beginning of thirties had turned into centres of political refuge for the anti-Rana activists from Nepal. Added to it, they were also encouraged by the changing political environment in India: In March 1946, the British Labour Government sent in India a Cabinet Mission to work for the smooth transfer of power. In the arrival of the Mission, the Indians and the Nepalese activists sensed British desire to leave India in near future—the pull out of one of the most powerful political props of the Rana regime. Hence, their activities increased. “In Darjeeling towards the close of 1941 ... a secret organisation called Akhil Nepal Barga Mahasabha” was formed (Upreti 243). Its “chief aim was to incite the Nepalese mass to revolt through two steps: creation and dissemination of revolutionary literature and the formation of a militant organisation called the *Raktapat Kommittee* (Bloodshed Committee)” (243–4). According to Upreti, the body was linked with the “Politburo of Bolsheviks and Kalong Samity of the Japanese”, and it stood for the establishment of a “Republic” (244). However, nothing remains to record the continuation of the movement and to check if it was in any way related with the yet to be born, Nepal Communist Party. From 1947 onwards, the focus of political activities shifted to Calcutta and Patna. “On 25 January 1947 a conference of the activists was held in Calcutta” (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 3), and this led to the birth of Nepali Rastriya Congress [Nepali National Congress]. The Party then elected Tanka Prasad Acharya, the jailed

Praja Parishad leader, its President and Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala (from now on B.P Koirala) its acting President. Functioning as a converging point for political activists of Nepal, it was home to individuals with different political commitments. According to Mohan Dhvaj Gurung [Pushpalal], they represented three different political ideologies namely, “liberal-feudal, constitutional-monarchist and communists” (Mohan Dhvaj Gurung 3). The liberal-feudal were “C”<sup>22</sup>class Ranas like Mahavir Shamsher and Suvarna Shamsher, who financially helped Nepali National Congress (from now on NNC) in its formative stage. B. P Koirala, Ganesh Man Singh, Matrika Prasad Koirala and their group represented the constitutional-monarchist. And, “Pushpalal, Tanka Vilas, Hikmat Singh, Sambhuram, Sahana Pradhan, Narayan Vilas and Narbahadur ...” were sympathisers of Communist ideology (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 40–1). Later, political events segregated these forces in between the years 1947 to 1949.

#### 1.4. End of Traditional Rana Rule

4 March 1947 marked an important date in the history of political movement in Nepal. On this day, Gupta writes, “the mill workers of Biratnagar struck work and began the first organized strike in Nepal” . According to him, it was “a small employer-employee conflict, [which changed] into a full-fledged political battle” (29). But, B. P Koirala describes it as a big strike with political overtones for he says:

It began when five to seven thousand labourers of the Biratnagar Jute Mills under the leadership of their co-workers Man Mohan Adhikari, then a Communist sympathiser, and Girija Prasad Koirala launched strike demanding potable water, good working condition ... and the right to organise trade unions ... the demands were mostly political ... (Sharma, G. 43)

On the 9<sup>th</sup> B. P Koirala joined them. But, the movement was suppressed by Rana

<sup>22</sup> Ranas classified their progeny into three classes: A, B and C. Class A Ranas were those born out of their relation with women of their social standing. Class B, were those born out of their relation with Kshatriya women and class C, were those born out of their relation with their concubines. Initially, higher offices of the kingdom were the preserve of Class A and Class B Ranas and later of only class A Ranas.

troops. On 24 March “its leaders<sup>23</sup>... were arrested and sent to Kathmandu” (Mohan Dhvaj Gurung 3). In response, the NNC held a meeting in Calcutta and “sent an ultimatum to put an end to its [the Ranas’] policy of coercion” (Gupta 29). When nothing transpired the NNC, on the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> of April held its conference in Jogbani<sup>24</sup>(a town in Bihar, India). The conference, according to Gurung [Pushpalal], “decided to launch a Satyagraha movement throughout Nepal ... [demanding] release of political prisoners, civil liberties, political rights and freedom and legalisation of the Nepali National Congress” (Mohan Dhvaj Gurung 3). When it started on 13 April, Gurung [Pushpalal] claims that it engulfed the kingdom under a deluge of political slogans like “‘Down with Ranashahi’, ‘Long Live democratic rights and liberties’, ‘Release all political prisoners’ etc.’” (4). So widespread was the movement that Gupta, while describing it, noted, “it appeared as if ... a mass movement was in the making in Nepal” (30). Meanwhile, Pushpalal observes:

In Kathmandu, as counter measure the Rana Government resorted to arresting the front leaders of the movement. It arrested 27 leaders, which included, among others, Tanka Vilas, Hikmat Singh, Sambhuram, Narayan Vilas, Narbahadur, Devendra, Tilak, Rajshahi, Pushpalal, Snehalata, Kanaklata, Sadhana and Sahana ... later many of these turned into members of Nepal Communist Party (Pushpalal, Itihas 14)

Despite such measures, when the movement did not cave in, Padma Shamsheer—who was considered more liberal than other Ranas (Sharma, G. 48)—the then Rana Prime Minister, to pacify the situation, announced on 16 May, his desire to introduce a list of reform measures if the NNC called off its movement. These measures, according to Joshi and Rose were as follows: (a) establishment of a Reform Committee to consider plans for political liberalization; (b) establishment of elected municipalities and district boards in various districts; (c) separation of judiciary from the executive

<sup>23</sup> See, Sharma, G. 44 These leaders were B. P Koirala, Tarini, Man Mohan Adhikari, Giriya Prasad Koirala, Viku and Yuvraj.

<sup>24</sup> See, Gupta 30, Footnote 29 Dr. Rammanohar Lohia was present in the conference.

branch of the Government and the establishment of an independent judiciary; (d) authorization of seven new schools in Kathmandu Valley, and (e) publication of annual budget of the country (62). After the announcement, Gupta writes, “On 2 June ... the Rastriya Congress decided to call off the movement” (30). But, according to Pushpalal the NNC withdrew the movement immediately declaring that “the demands were going to be fulfilled” and held a conference in Varanasi just “to justify the withdrawal” (Mohan Dhvaj Gurung 4). To explain the withdrawal scholars offered multiple answers. According to Gupta, the NNC called off the movement because of two reasons. “First, the offer seemed to give it [the Congress] a partial victory over the Ranas. Secondly ... [owing to] its [weak] organizational resources ... a settlement through compromise appeared to be the most expedient under the circumstance” (30). Besides, quoting K.P Upadhyaya, the then general secretary of the Congress, Gupta again points out to the prevalence of a view which considered “Nehru’s personal intervention” as the cause behind the pull out (Footnote 31, 30). But, Joshi and Rose state that the NNC called off the movement “in consideration of the liberal profession of the Rana Government” (62). However, for Mohan Dhvaj Gurung [Pushpalal] there was only one reason behind the pull out: NNC’s “secret deal with the Ranas” (4). And though another memoir of his explains the same event, yet the explanation does not transcend his earlier position. It simply clarifies as to what motivated the ‘secret deal’ for he writes: “The movement was withdrawn, because in the event of its continuity some sections of the Ranas, the leadership of the NNC and the Indian monopoly capitalists feared the transfer of the leadership of the movement into the hand of the exploited class” (Pushpalal, “Nepali ... Ek Samiksha” 184). Nonetheless, these varied explanations pose a challenge: though each explanation seems to have a grain of truth, yet each, for want of further evidence, fails to qualify as the final truth. The answer, therefore, remains inconclusive. Soon after the withdrawal of the movement, Padma Shamsher, in keeping with his promises, initiated the elections to local bodies and invited a team of legal experts from India to frame a constitution (Sanwal 156). In June, as first step towards reform, municipality elections were held in 21 wards of

Kathmandu Valley. After that he promulgated the Government of Nepal Act, VS 2004 (1948), the first Constitution of Nepal, on 26 January 1948. But, it did not see the light of the day for after his abdication and subsequent departure to India power passed on to Mohan Shamsheer, the anti-reformist, in February 1948. Meanwhile, the NNC in the middle of July 1947 held its third conference in Varanasi (Benares). According to Pushpalal, the conference which was attended even by Indian socialist leader, Dr Rammanohar Lohia took two decisions and one of them rationalised the withdrawal of the Satyagraha. The conference pointed out that the movement was withdrawn “to prevent the attrition of democratic power [owing to violence] when alternative peaceful methods of struggle were available” (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 17). Narrating the procedure followed in the conference and the outcome of the election held for the central leadership<sup>25</sup> of the Party, Pushpalal states:

In every decision Lohia used to function as the principal spokesman of the NNC. It hurt me and many of my colleagues. So I floated the idea, that the leader of Nepal should be a Nepali, and that the movement should take, besides Indian socialists, the help of even the Indian National Congress and the Communists ... The conference ended with the election of the Central leadership of the Party. In the election the scale tilted in favour of the Communists and the Neutral. It elected Dilli Raman Regmi [Communist sympathiser], Prembahadur Kamsakar [Neutral], and Pushpalal Shrestha [Communist sympathiser] the President, the General Secretary and the Secretary respectively (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 17).

A month after the conference, that is, in August 1947 B.P Koirala was released from jail. Joshi and Rose point out that the release was owing to “Gandhi’s intercession” and was probably timed “by the hope of creating a split in the Nepali National Congress” (63). But, Pushpalal alleges that the release was owing to “The pressure of Indian monopoly capitalists, the socialist leaders and the “C” class Ranas” (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 21). And like Joshi and Rose’s statements his statements were perhaps trying to point out that it was designed to create problems within the NNC, which in the absence of B. P Koirala was under the influence of Communist sympathisers. Koirala

<sup>25</sup> See, Joshi, et al. 63 It was held on the assumption that Koirala would not be released soon.

himself is silent regarding the reasons behind his release. After his release there began a bitter struggle between Regmi and Koirala for Party leadership. In the struggle, Koirala claims that “his Party colleagues requested him to take over the Party President-ship” (Sharma, G. 69). Whether he was so requested is not verifiable. But, considering what he says a little later it is clear that he did not approve of Regmi’s leadership for he alleges, “Regmi’s style of functioning was detrimental to the interest of the Party ... He was inert and hoped for political changes in Nepal through Indian intervention ...” (70). Thus, it seems that this dislike rather than the request of his colleagues explained his later actions in April.

In April 1948, in Patna, Pushpalal writes, “Koirala, without going through Party election, declared himself as Party President” (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 21). This led to the division of the Party into two groups: NNC (Koirala group) and NNC (Regmi group). These two parties functioned until April 1950 under same name and under identical flags (Joshi, et al. 63). Then Pushpalal notes, “I myself with Prembahadur Kamsakar supported Regmi group ... hoping the group would change in future into the Communist Party of Nepal ... But, [Pushpalal alleges] ... in course of time, Regmi secretly hobnobbed with the feudal elements ...” (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 25). So he says, he resigned and left for Calcutta (Kolkata). Meanwhile, in August 1948, under the leadership of Subarna Shamsheer and Mahabir Shamsheer<sup>26</sup> Nepal Prajatantrik Congress (Nepal Democratic Congress, henceforth NDC) came into existence in India (Singh, S. B. 95–6). Headquartered in Calcutta, this Party advocated the end of the Rana regime by any means even by violent insurrection. So, it organized a private army, which later evolved as the *Mukti Sena* of the 1950 revolution (Joshi, et al. 68). And around September–October, Kathmandu witnessed the birth of yet another Party, the Nepal Praja Panchayat, which unlike the NNC and the NDC, professed “to function within the framework of the 1948 Constitution” (Joshi, et al. 69). However,

<sup>26</sup> See, Joshi, et al. 67 These two Ranas had been exiled from Kathmandu since 1934.

despite its accommodative stance it failed to ward off the suppressive posture of Mohan Shamsher, and when it was convinced that the Prime Minister was not in mood to implement the reform measures initiated by Padma Shamsher it “launched a satyagraha movement in the three cities of Kathmandu” (Joshi, et al. 69). Then, Joshi and Rose write, that “B. P Koirala and some of his associates” reached there in “October 1948” (69) to contact leaders of the Praja Panchayat, a fact<sup>27</sup> attested by B.P Koirala (Sharma, G. 70). But then, they (Koirala, Krishnaprasad Bhattarai and Kedarman Byathit) were caught and jailed by the Ranas. When pressures from Indian political leaders in March failed to accomplish their release, the NNC threatened fresh wave of nonviolent struggle throughout Nepal. Then, in May, Koirala and his friends began their hunger strike in jail. The threat and the accompanying strike paid off: Mohan Shamsher released them promising implementation of the reforms. But, he never tried to respect his words. On the contrary, after British pull out from India, he busied himself in maintaining his hold over power by culturing diplomatic relations first with the outside world, mainly Britain and America, and then with India (Joshi, et al. 66–7; Gupta 40). It was during this period that he signed the July 1950 treaties of peace and friendship and of trade and commerce with India (Gupta 40).

With the dawn of 50s, signals of political changes flickered in Nepal. In April 1950 at a general conference in Calcutta, the Nepali National Congress and the Nepali Democratic Congress merged to form the Nepali Congress with Matrika Prasad Koirala as the President. According to Pushpalal, the merger was instigated by the then Indian Government to ... [install] a democratic Government in Nepal to check the tide of communism there.<sup>28</sup>If one takes scattered opinions of B. P Koirala from his

<sup>27</sup> See, Gupta 39 Koirala and his contingent were there to lay the foundation of an underground net-work.

<sup>28</sup> See, Pushpalal, *Itihas* 60 Pushpalal argues that after the establishment of the Republic of China on the 6th of October 1949, Indian Government felt that the continuity of the conservative Rana rule of Mohan Shamsher in Nepal would push the masses towards the Communists’ fold. So it felt the need for a progressive democratic

biography then they implicitly tend to support Pushpalal's observations for at one point Koirala says, "Immediately after the merger Subarna Shamsher broached the idea of an armed struggle against the Ranas" (Sharma, G. 112). Next he says, "They [Subarna Shamsher and his men] were in contact with the King, and it appeared that India also supported them" (113). And a little later he notes, "Nehru told me that India was interested in Nepalese politics, because of the entry of the Chinese in Tibet" (138). The fact that India was concerned about the possibility of Chinese incursion in Nepal, the growth of forces against freedom within Nepal, and that she favoured the advent of democracy there is supported by Nehru's 17 March 1950 statements to Indian Parliament where he is said to have stated:

Freedom interests us in the abstract as well as in the guise of a practical and, in the context of Asia, a necessary step. If it does not come, forces that will ultimately disrupt freedom itself will be created and discouraged. We have accordingly advised the Government of Nepal, in all earnestness, to bring themselves into line with democratic forces that are stirring in the world today. Not to do so is not only wrong but also unwise from the point of view of what is happening in the world today (Gupta 41).

But, whether Indian concern regarding the growth of forces against democracy included the growth of communism there is not supported by the statements. Then the question is why was Pushpalal making such statements? This can be explained only speculatively: Pushpalal in his visits to India might have come across writings of Soviet Indologists like E. Zhukov who by July 1947 had begun characterising the leadership of Indian National Congress as representative of the Indian big bourgeoisie and Nehru as a "rich man" (Windmiller and Overstreet 254). Or, more precisely he was perhaps influenced by Yugoslav Communist line.<sup>29</sup> From then on what Pushpalal

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government to check the tide of communism. Hence, the merger was instigated by the then Indian Government as a prelude towards its goal for a democratic government.

<sup>29</sup> For the influence of Yugoslav Communists in the strategy and tactics of Indian Communists in 1948, see Windmiller, et al. 270–75. According to the authors the influence led Ranadive, the CPI leader, in 1948 to observe that "the Indian

needed was just a stretch of his imagination to see Nehru as an opponent of communism. But, if one takes the merger in its face value, and if India was at all involved in the process then it appears that Indian tactics then was to control the political actors of Nepal by reducing them to two: the King and the Nepali Congress.

After its formation, Nepali Congress immediately set out to plan its struggle against the Rana regime. The plan consisted of the use of both violent and nonviolent methods of struggle. It was to begin with “the consented abduction of the King to Palpa”, a western Nepalese town, where they visualised “to form a new Government and to try for its recognition by India and other countries of the world” to internationalise the event (Sharma, G. 113). Obviously, the plan reflected that they had the consent of the King, a fact which finds its support in Joshi and Rose’s statements where they note, “There is little doubt that the plans of the Nepali Congress had the blessing of the King ...” (Joshi, et al. 72). After that, in September the Congress took its decision to launch its plan of struggle in its Bairganiya conference (Gupta 43). However, when the Congress wished to put its plan into action was not clear. As such, in November, the Party was just swayed by the turn of events. They were faced with utter confusion<sup>30</sup> when in the morning of 6 November 1950, on the pretext of a hunting trip, King Tribhuwan with his two sons took refuge in Indian embassy leaving behind his four-year-old grandson Prince Gyanendra (son of Mahendra). According to Joshi and Rose, he was probably left behind to “avoid suspicion” and for protecting the “royal line in the event of mishap to others” (73).

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bourgeoisie [which included Nehru] was lining up with the Anglo-American imperialist camp, which was in ‘irreconcilable conflict’ with the democratic camp led by the Soviet Union” (272).

<sup>30</sup> See, Sharma, G. 116–17 The leadership did not know the steps to be taken after King Tribhuwan’s refuge in the Indian Embassy.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, the Rana response to the event was to call an emergent meeting of the Rana dominated Parliament.<sup>31</sup> The meeting took two mutually exclusive decisions (a) to persuade the King to return (b) to install Prince Gyanendra on the throne, if the King refused to return. In line with the first decision, the Ranas transmitted their request to the King through Indian Ambassador, but the King refused to oblige. So, the next decision was implemented. Prince Gyanendra Bikram Shah was crowned “at 2:45 P.M. of the same day” (Joshi, et al. 73).

Events moved fast, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1950, the royal family was flown to Delhi. This assured the royal family’s safety to the Congress, which “had planned the revolt in the name of the King” (Sharma, G. 117). Freed from its preoccupation of the royalties’ safety, the Congress pressed forward with its planned revolt. On the night of November 11, the *Mukti Sena* captured Government offices in Birganj and within a week the revolt spread in the Eastern and Western part of the kingdom (Gupta 44). Describing further the trend of the revolt Gupta writes, “Meanwhile the rebellion spread from village to village in the form of loot, arson, and stray murder of Zamindars and money lenders. By January 1951 the rebel forces captured Dang, Deokhuri, Kailali, Kanchanpur and Palpa in the Western Terai...” (44). Why did the movement take such a trend? This is perhaps explained by Pushpalal’s account, which indicates that it was the Communists and the radical wing of the Congress’s making. They took on Dr. Lohia’s advice to the Congress’s leadership for he says, “Lohia had advised ... B. P Koirala to distribute the lands of the landlords to the peasants in the course of the armed struggle ... [and] to prepare the ground for the election of the constituent assembly”. But, then he rues, “The advice of Dr. Lohia went against the compromising policy of the leadership of the Nepali Congress. Hence, it was rejected. But, the Communists ... came out in support of Dr. Lohia’s advice” (Mohan Dhvaj

<sup>31</sup> See, Joshi, et al. 71; Gupta 42 Alarmed by the developments of September, Mohan Shamsheer established a Parliament in line with the 1948 Constitution. But, it was fully staffed with his men, hence both authors point out that the exercise was a mockery in the name of the 1948 Constitution.

Gurung 10). Then commenting on the role of the Communists and of the radical wing of the Congress in the revolt he says:

In a statement, Pushpalal, General Secretary of the CPN supported the armed struggle of the Nepalese people and called upon the people, particularly the peasants to arm themselves to confiscate the lands of the landlords and distribute them among the peasantry. He also appealed for strengthening the People's revolutionary army. All over the country, the peasants, the radical wings of the Nepali Congress and the Communists made common cause to distribute the lands to the peasants and punish the landlords and culprits through People's Courts. The landlords had no alternative but to run away from their areas where they had been ruling over the people for decades (10).

Meanwhile, Indian Government made its intent clear. On 6 December 1950 Nehru, the Prime Minister of India told the Indian Parliament that Government of India would continue recognizing Tribhuwan as the head of the Nepalese State. In the same context, he is said to have stated,

We have tried ... to advise Nepal to act in a manner so as to prevent any major upheaval. We have tried to find a way.., which will ensure the progress of Nepal and the introduction of or some advance in the ways of democracy in Nepal. We have reached for a way which would at the same time, avoid the total uprooting of the ancient order (Gupta 46).

When India maintained its stand for change, the Ranas began negotiating with Indian Government. According to Joshi and Rose, they sent two Rana representatives to Delhi. Their visit ended in talks with Indian officials where Nepali Congress and King Tribhuwan were ignored (76). Then on 8 December 1950, in line with Nehru's December statement to the Indian Parliament, Government of India submitted a memorandum to the Government of Nepal. The memorandum sought to effect constitutional reforms in Nepal. However, the Ranas paid no heed to the suggestions because they did not approve of one of India's proposals: restoration of Tribhuwan to the throne. In the meantime, 40 "C" class Ranas resigned from high offices. Their resignations were "...in protest against the oppressive policies of the A branch of the family and in support of the restoration of King Tribhuwan to the throne" (Joshi, et al. 76). It proved to be the breaking point: the Ranas agreed to accept Government of India's proposal. They agreed to recognize King Tribhuwan the King of Nepal; to form an Interim Cabinet of 14 members half of whom would be popular

representatives, to hold elections to the Constituent Assembly by 1952, and to give legal sanctions to political parties functioning within or outside Nepal. But, the Congress did not accept the settlement on grounds that it was not a participant in the negotiations, and because the outcome fell short of their goal to destroy feudalism and to transfer power to the people (Joshi, et al. 78). To assuage them, which was necessary because without their consent it was not possible to implement the terms of the settlement, a third round of talk was arranged on the first week of February, 1951. It was said to be a tripartite talk between the King, the Ranas and the Congress. Then on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, with minor changes, a settlement, popularly known as the “Delhi Accord<sup>32</sup> was finally reached” (Gupta 49). The number of members in the Interim Cabinet was brought down to 10: a decision which was taken in a hurry considering the violent situation of western Nepal (Gupta 49; Singh, S. B. 190). On 18, a royal proclamation installed a new Government. However, even a week after the formation of the new Government the Terai area was disturbed and so was western Nepal, where rebel unit, under K. I Singh still continued their struggle. So, Gupta writes, “In order to curb his activities and bring under control the panic on the Indo-Nepal border, a combined military operation of Indian armed constabulary and Nepal State troops was carried out in the area” (54). K. I Singh was caught and jailed in Bhairawa. From there he escaped on 11 July 1951 only to be rearrested on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August.<sup>33</sup> Thereafter, he was lodged in Singha Durbar, Kathmandu as a State prisoner (Gupta 54). However, Pushpalal’s account of the situation is crafted in such a manner that it implies that the continuing disturbances in the kingdom were owing to the rebels’ rejection of the Accord and of Indian interference for he says:

<sup>32</sup> See, Sharma, G. 146 B.P Koirala states, “...the so called Delhi Accord is a figment of imagination... it was not a tripartite talk in the usual sense of the term because the entire talk was carried on through Jawaharlal Nehru, the parties never sat together, Nehru spoke to each one of us and arrived at a settlement [moreover there] was no written agreement, everything was orally decided.

<sup>33</sup> See, Joshi, et al. 130 he was rearrested with the help of Indian Army.

Some units of the liberation Army refused to lay down arms, Ram Prasad Rai in the East, Ek Dev Ale in the middle, K I Singh in the mid-Tarai region (sic), Chitra Bahadur Gurung in the far west were leaders of these units. They continued the struggle. The appeal made by the Nepali Congress leadership and the King went unheeded. The Nepali Army and the police were incapable of disarming the rebels. In violation of the international border, the Indian Army shamelessly marched inside Nepalese territory and with their superior force cordoned off the Nepalese rebels and started disarming them. Under various pretexts and covers, the Indian army units were stationed inside the country or just near the border.

The CPN strongly opposed the hated Delhi compromise and condemned the Indian intervention and appealed to the people to fight for their rights. All the national minded and radical Democrats rallied around the CPN banner. The CPN took a lead of the people's struggle for defence of national sovereignty and the extension of democratic rights and freedom (Mohan Dhvaj Gurung 11).

Besides, he viewed the Accord as a “compromise” (Mohan Dhvaj Gurung 8); a ‘deal’ struck among the involved parties, who were alarmed at the changing complexion of the movement for he says, “Alarmed at the rising tide of the anti-feudal movement, the ruling Ranas, the King and his family and the leaders of the NC made a hated deal at Delhi under the mediation of the Indian leaders. The deal is known in Nepal as the Delhi Compromise. It made the safe return of the King Tribhuwan possible” (10–1). As for its effects, Koirala observed that it provided Nehru an opportunity to increase Indian influence in Nepal, “when China had captured Tibet” (Sharma, G. 138). And though in the assessments of later document of the NCP the effects of the Accord or ‘compromise’ towed somewhat the line of B. P Koirala, yet they had something more to say. The assessments viewed the Accord as an instrument in Indian hand to extend her control and to serve her interests in Nepal using the Congress. These interests were: 1) to protect the interest of Indian monopoly capitalists; 2) to support anti-Chinese campaign in collusion with the Anglo-American imperialists to isolate Nepal from the socialist Camp, and 3) to check the progress of democracy in Nepal. For the NCP the Accord was a compromise against Nepalese nationalism, independence and democracy for it stated:

The compromise placed the representatives of the capitalist class, the Nepali Congress in a rewarding position. This changed the political environment of Nepal. In this changed environment ... The Indian Government could protect its monopoly capitalists; attract anti-Communist forces towards it using anti-Chinese slogans, and keep

Nepal under its political, economic and military influence. To support them are in the Anglo-American imperialists. By the compromise these three forces ... Have tried to keep Nepal away from the socialist camp; to contain the growth of its democracy, and to stymie People's movement in Nepal. Thus, through the Delhi compromise they have countered Nepalese nationalism, independence and democracy (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 27–8).

Why was NCP calling the Accord a compromise against Nepali nationalism, independence and democracy? In doing so it was influenced by the experiences of the Communists in the 1950 revolt. According to Pushpalal, the Communists participated in the revolt to convert it into a long drawn armed peasant anti-feudal and anti-imperialist movement (See p. 270). So when the armed movement began the ruling Ranas, the King and the Nepali Congress viewed their activities as sign of rising tide of anti-feudal movement in Nepal. Therefore, “the feudal forces, organised under the King, decided to end the revolt in a compromise ... Hence Nepali Congress leaders, King Tribhuvan and Rana rulers entered into an agreement to stall the movement” (Pushpalal, Itihas 63). And since India was interested in checking the growth of communism in Nepal (See footnote 28) Indian Government, he says, in the course of the movement collaborated with Nepali Congress and jailed them and later “managed the Accord”. Then he says, “After the Accord the Communists raised their voices against it, but Indian police and army, suppressed their voices” (Pushpalal, Itihas 63). These incidents, according to Pushpalal, changed the perceptions of political activists in Nepal. It changed their views regarding the class character of the King and how they viewed the policies of Indian leaders towards Nepal. Besides, it revealed to Nepalese revolutionaries and Communists, in particular, that in the politics of Nepal the issues of Nepalese nationalism and democracy are closely linked for he stated:

The hated Delhi Accord introduced to the political activists of the nation the policy of compromise of the Nepali Congress leaders and the class character of the King. Besides, it also revealed that ... The policies of Indian leaders towards Nepal were in no way different from those of the imperialist Britain and were also in the interest of Indian bourgeoisie. If yesterday, the Nepalese revolutionaries considered Indian leaders as their own, today it dawned on them that for the liberation of Nepal they should depend only upon their own strength and a struggle ... From then onwards, there developed in Nepal the consciousness that the issues of Nepalese nationalism and democracy

are closely linked. In developing it, in the forefront, was the Communist Party of Nepal (Pushpalal, Itihas 64).

However, these perceptions remain as perceptions unless a few questions are answered. These are: how did the incident bring to the perceptions of Nepal Communists the changed class character of the King? Why did Pushpalal say the event changed Communist's perception regarding the nature of Indian leaders? And how did they conceive of democracy and nationalism and the link between the two? If one goes through the content of their manifesto then it is clear that they had already conceived the Ranas as forces linked with Nehru and the Anglo-American imperialists (See p.266). Thus, when Pushpalal commented on the changed class character of the King it implied that in the beginning of the movement when the King was aligned with Nepali Congress which professed a complete overhaul of the system then the Communists had not viewed him as feudal force like Ranas. But, after the Accord they began viewing him in the same light i.e., as a feudal aligned to external exploiters. As regards his comment on changes in the Communist's perceptions towards Indian leaders it was not a change but a reinforcement of their views where they had seen an intimate relation between Nehru, the big bourgeoisie of India and the Anglo-American imperialists. In this relation the Anglo-American imperialists' design was to ward off capitalist crisis in their system by countering democratic and anti-colonial movements raging in different parts of the world while inciting Third World War against the Soviet Union and freedom loving socialist countries (See, p.264). Nehru and the Ranas supported them. Both helped them by keeping the recruitments centres open. Besides, Nehru's interest lay in exploiting Nepal both in his capacity as a leader of Indian bourgeoisie and of the Indian Government. In sum, their arguments created a political configuration where the feudal forces of Nepal were aligned with Nehru and with the Anglo-American imperialists. In this relation the feudal forces of Nepal received support from the external forces for their existence. In extending such support Nehru's intent was to exploit the Nepalese resources. And the aims of the imperialist were: a) to check the growth of democratic movement in Nepal; b) to

incite war against freedom loving socialist countries, and c) to recruit youths for their Army. So, Nehru's interest in checking the democratic movement in Nepal, by implication, was guided by two considerations: 1) to ensure the continuity of Indian exploitation by keeping intact the feudal allies, and 2) to serve the imperialists who were also interested in checking the rise of democratic movement in Nepal, which perhaps included their concern stemming from the rise of Communist China. Thus, after the Delhi Accord the Communists began perceiving Indian leaders not only as exploiters, but also as enemies in their struggle against democracy: their changed view regarding the nature of Indian policies towards Nepal. However, documents pertaining to the period do not bring out the meaning which they attached with concepts like democracy and nationalism. But, these ideas, as shall be seen later, inform Communist movement of Nepal throughout, therefore, they are of significance.

#### 1.5. Rana-Congress Ministry: Its Fall in November 1951

To give effect to the Accord, King Tribhuvan issued a proclamation on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1951. The proclamation announced a temporary political structure, which was to be replaced by another structure created according to provisions of a future Constitution framed by elected representatives of the people. However, even the temporary structure contained an ominous trend: in it political power tilted in favour of the King. The King was the real administrator, who administered the kingdom with the aid and advice of a Council of Ministers. These ministers, who were supposed to represent the people, were responsible for their actions to the King and they enjoyed their office during his pleasure (Gupta 51–2). In line with the proclamation the King constituted a Council of Ministers on 18 February 1951. It consisted of 5 Ranas and 5 Nepali Congress representatives, and was headed by Prime Minister Mohan Shamsher. From its inception, the Ministry suffered from an inherent defect: its members represented contradictory values. The Ranas were conservative but the Congress, progressive. Lack of trust among the members was, therefore, its hallmark. So, even on minor issues they clashed (Joshi, et al. 86–7; Gupta 53; Shaha 254). Taking advantage of this situation, Gupta writes:

... the King sought to strengthen his position by gaining access to the traditional instruments of power in the form of army ... At a meeting of army officers ... in March 1951, the King assured the army personnel that their rights and welfare would 'occupy the first place in his mind'... (53).

On 30 March 1951, the Council of Ministers adopted the Interim Government of Nepal Act, 2007. This was the Interim Constitution of Nepal, which lasted until 1959. Its provisions continued the trend visible in the temporary political structure created after the 18 February proclamation. It slashed Prime Minister office's powers, which in past was the preserve of the Ranas. Transferring them to the King, it turned him into the fountainhead of authority. It made him the Supreme Command of the Defence Forces of Nepal. All executive powers were vested in him (Article 21). He could call the Prime Minister for information on any matter decided upon by a minister (Article 25). He could pass ordinances on the advice of the Council of Ministers (Article 29: 1). He appointed the Chief Justice and other judges of the High Court—highest court of the kingdom— which the Constitution sought to establish (Article 30:1) (Agarwal, Constitutional Change 25). But, the provisions contained in Article 21 and 29:1, which sought to project a façade of constitutional monarchy, was diluted by the provision of Article 24 which made the Council of Ministers collectively responsible to the King. And Article 29: 2 (a) which tried to limit his ordinance making power by declaring that it would “expire after three months of the meeting of [a] validly constituted legislative body in accordance with the provisions of the constitution to be framed”, gave him all the reasons to defer the drafting of a Constitution (Agarwal, Constitutional Change 25). And by remaining silent on the method to be followed in creating the Council of Ministers,<sup>34</sup>the Constitution gave him all space to function according to his whims. However, it had some progressive features as well. It directed the State to function as an instrument of welfare and development; gave fundamental

<sup>34</sup> In practice it appeared that the King was expected to consider the strength of the competing parties in the formation of the Council of Minister, but in the absence of a Legislative body such vague understanding introduced a situation of confusion.

rights to the people (24), provided provisions for the creation of a Public Service Commission and an Election Commission to conduct election for a Constituent Assembly (26).

The transfer of power, which the Constitution achieved, seems to have touched the Ranas to the quick for immediately after the promulgation of the Constitution Shaha makes note of the rise of Gorkha Dal. He points out that it was a Party “started by one of the grand sons [Bharat Shamsher] of the Defence Minister, Babar Shamsher ... with tacit ... support of the Rana side ... in the Government” (254). It intended to overthrow the Interim Government by means of a sudden coup which included a preplan to incite the Army. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, informed of the Dal’s plans to incite the troops against the Government, Koirala, the then Home Minister, ordered the arrest of Bharat Shamsher along with other leaders of the Dal. Bharat Shamsher surrendered only to be jailed on April 12, 1951. Next day, a huge mob attacked the jail and freed Shamsher. Then they attacked Koirala’s residence, but were subdued by him when he shot dead one and wounded two of the demonstrators. Immediately after this incident, the King as per Article 21: b of the Interim Constitution, assumed the powers of the Supreme Commander of the armed forces and took charge of the armoury (Joshi, et al. 88; Gupta 62) and banned Gorkha Dal. Besides, the event allowed Nepali Congress the pretext to maintain its *Mukti Sena* “as an auxiliary police force under the name of the Rakshya Dal” (Joshi, et al. 88; Shaha 257). From May 2 the Cabinet was faced with a “deadlock” (Joshi, et al. 88). Nepali Congress, blaming Ranas’ complicity in the event asked for “removal of Mohan Shamsher ... and ... the formation of a homogeneous cabinet” (Gupta 61). In turn, the Ranas asked the matter to be referred to India, the original mediator and creator of the Interim Government (Gupta 62). The Ranas suggestion prevailed: talks began in second week of May in Delhi. The participants agreed to follow Indian advice which favoured “the coalition [to] continue in office with only minor changes in personnel and [the creation of an] Advisory Assembly ... to function as a ‘little parliament’, [to give] the Government a more representative character” (Joshi, et al. 89). In June 10, the King formed a new

Cabinet replacing Babar Shamsheer by Singha Shamsheer and a few others, but Mohan Shamsheer still occupied the post of the Prime Minister. However, the involvement of India in Nepalese affair had its toll: even Congress rank and file began protesting against Indian involvement interpreting them as over interference in the internal affairs of Nepal (Joshi, et al. 131; Gupta 63). And commenting on the nature of oppositional politics then Joshi and Rose point out that after the ban on the Gorkha Dal three political groups namely the Nepali National Congress [Regmi group], the Praja Parishad and the Communist Party, which were left in the field, began targeting B. P Koirala for introducing Indian influence in Nepal (130). In the midst of such environment when Nehru visited Nepal in 15 through 17 June 1951, Pushpalal writes, “We greeted him with black flags, because after the Delhi Accord ... it was clear that the policies of Indian leaders were only in the interests of the Indian capitalists and were in no way different from those of the British imperialists” (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 63–4). However, Joshi and Rose observe that it was a demonstration jointly carried out by the “Praja Parishad and the Communist Party” (Joshi, et al. 131). Then in July, in line with its tactics, the NCP in league with the Praja Parishad formed Jatiya Janatantrik Samyukta Morcha (See p.271) with Tanka Prasad Acharya as its President. Being critical of the then Government, it perceived Nepali Congress in league with outside forces in their bid to exploit Nepal for its manifesto read:

Today the condition of Nepal is critical, on the one hand the country is being exploited more intensely by the Anglo-American Imperialists and the Indian capitalists and on the other hand the reactionary Nepali Congress is hand in glove with the feudal forces of the nation to exploit all the classes of the country. These internal and external reactionary forces are responsible for robbing the country of its peace and progress (Jatiya Janatantrik Samyuktamorcha 61).

And in their usual tone the manifesto explained Anglo-American Imperialists’ interference in Nepal as design aimed at creating a military post against China in the event of a Third World War; an example of NCP’s often repeated campaign against imperialism which paired it with war. As for India the Front had a ready post: she was the exploiter of natural resources of Nepal for it stated:

The Anglo-American Imperialist forces are interested in converting Nepal into a military post against China in case of the Third World War, and they also intend to carry on the recruitment of the youths of Nepal to use them to suppress the independence struggle of the Asian countries. The Indian capitalists are not satisfied even after capturing 75% of the businesses of Nepal by opening mills in Biratnagar. They want to exploit all the natural resources, mines, and jungles of Nepal. Further, by their interference they intend to put a wedge in between the increasing democratic alliance among the people of Nepal, India and China (Jatiya Jananatrik Samyuktamorcha 63–4).

In similar tone, the document of the Party's First Conference (See p. 273) judged the Interim Government incapable of ensuring economic freedom of Nepal for it stated, "In spite of developing our national industries, the present Government is handing over our industries to the imperialists [Anglo-American]... and the remaining factories to the Indian bourgeoisie...." (NCP, "Naya Janabadko Nimti ... Bato" 4–5).

Amplifying the same theme it observed:

A Government which cannot work for the benefit of the workers-peasants; a Government which hands over the national industries to the imperialists, such Government cannot work for the welfare of the people. The country cannot industrialise until it is under the control of the capitalists and the imperialists. Feudalism must end; peasants should be the owner of the land, then production will increase and industries will grow ... But in the hand of the Tribhuvan-Rana-Koirala interim Government the present and the future is dark (6).

Should one strip the statements of their ideological trappings, then only one thing remains: the quest for economic freedom and for ways and means to develop the kingdom's economy. In fact, this quest, as will be seen later, finds its expression in many of the future documents of the Party and in the documents of the many factions which emerged out of the movement in the post-1960 political environment of the kingdom making it one of the undercurrents of the Communist movement of Nepal. This raises a question: what is important in the Communist movement of Nepal? Is it commitment to the ideology or the economic freedom of the kingdom? Besides, during this period, the Party leadership was plagued with tactical confusions (See p. 276). As such, it was simply engaged in venting out its opposition against the feudal forces and the imperialists whom it classified as exploiters of the kingdom. It was perhaps this which precluded it from playing an effective role in the politics of Nepal: it functioned only as an opposition.

On 2nd October, King Tribhuvan announced the formation of a 35 member Advisory Assembly or the Little Parliament. Since it included only Nepali Congress nominees and independents and was created without consulting the Cabinet, Mohan Shamsher publicly aired his disapproval of the exercise. Shaha observes the Nepali Congress interpreted Shamsher's view "as a challenge to the King's constitutional rights" (262). On this pretext they demanded his resignation. Amid these political turmoil, on 6 November, one of the constituents of the Jatiya Janatantrik Morcha, the Aakhil Nepal Vidyarthi Federation, organized a protest procession against Public Security Act<sup>35</sup>. To disperse the protestors "the Raksha Dal indiscriminately fired upon them killing 3 students" (K. C, Nepal Communist 93). Though B.P Koirala, the then Home Minister pleaded "his innocence and non-involvement in the firing incident", yet the Cabinet of 9 October found him culpable (Sharma, G. 177). On the 10<sup>th</sup> he resigned expressing lack of homogeneous Cabinet as the cause behind his inability to control the kingdom's legal problems. By 12 November, 1951 the Government collapsed.

#### 1.6. Matrika Government: Imposition of Ban on the NCP

In the formation of the new Government there were many influences at work. According to Shaha, "the Praja Parishad ... the Nepali Congress ... and the so called independents of Kathmandu ... were against the Congress being given the sole charge of the Government [because of] the Congress' nine month record of arbitrary administration" (263). "The British choice was for a broad based Cabinet", and the Indian preferred a Congress led Government (Shaha 264). As regards the choice for a leader, B.P Koirala states, that "he had fallen from the grace of both the King and the Indian Government that is, Nehru. The former disliked him; because of the wrong feedback given him by the Indian ambassador, and the latter, because of his support to Indian Socialists in the Indian General Election" (Sharma, G. 37-8). As a result, the

<sup>35</sup> See, footnote 13 Chapter III for an understanding about the nature of the Act.

Party Working Committee accepted M.P Koirala, B.P Koirala's elder half-brother as the new Prime Minister. So, on 16 November 1951, M. P Koirala took charge of the Government. It consisted of 8 Nepali Congress members and 6 independents, increasing the original number of 10 members assigned to the Council of Minister. In it the independents acted as "King's men in the cabinet" (Shaha 267).

From the beginning, the new Ministry faced a hurdle: the difference of opinion between M.P Koirala and the Party (Joshi, et al. 96; Gupta 67). According to Shaha, M.P Koirala thought that the function of the "... interim Government was just to carry on the day to day administration of the country smoothly ... [until the creation of] a Constituent Assembly ... [but the Party wanted] ... the immediate implementation of [its] economic and social welfare programmes" (267–8). This intra-Party conflict effected efficient administration of the kingdom. Hence, Gupta says that "Law and order in many districts sank to a state of complete anarchy" (68). In the meantime, Rakshadal members, created by the Nepali Congress, were in search for a strong leader who could ensure regularisation of their services. Their choice ended in Dr. K. I. Singh, who was then interned in Singha Darbar Complex. So, on the night of 20 January 1952 they stormed the complex; freed K. I. Singh, and next day captured important Government offices including the airport (Gupta 68–9). But, according to Pushpalal, their revolt was an expression of dissatisfaction of Mukti Sena turned Rakshadal members towards the misrule of Government established after 1951" (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 81). Whatever their motives were, on being "contacted", Gupta says, Singh "made six demands" of which one was for the formation of an all-Party Government (69). But next day, the Nepalese Army freed most of the establishments. Faced with the possibility of imminent capture, Dr. K.I Singh wriggled out of the scene with a band of trusted followers towards Tibet. From Tibet, Sanwal says, "[he] ... organized dispatch of Chinese Communist literature to Nepal. He left Nepali Congress and became an outstation member of [Jatiya Janatantrik Morcha] the Left United Front" (167). However, on the pretext of the incident, the Government banned Nepal Communist Party. Gupta, does not see links between K. I Singh's activities and

the NCP, but Shaha says the ban was in response to “their quick effort to exploit the mutiny by claiming that they had organized it” (Gupta 70; Shaha 275). The ban came in force on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January 1952. Besides, there was another fall out: Delhi Government sent an Indian Military Training Mission to Nepal on 27 February 1952 without any agreement. It stayed there for six years exceeding the one year time for which it was sent (Shaha 276).

From February onward, the differences between Prime Minister M.P Koirala and Nepali Congress turned into differences between Prime Minister and B.P Koirala, where the latter acted as the voice of the Party. The two indulged in recrimination and counter recrimination. Meanwhile, from May 16 to June 6, 1952, Communists’ Employee Front—the Nyuna Vaitanik Karmachari Sangha organised a successful movement. The Government responded to the demands of the strikers by raising their pay. However, two months later M.P Koirala was forced to resign owing to the continuous intra-Party conflict: The Party wanted him to reduce the Cabinet’s independents, the King’s men and include Ganesh Man Singh and two others hard core members of the Congress, but he did not want to abide by the Party’s decision which he interpreted as interference in the prerogative of the Prime Minister to choose his men. When the matter could not be sorted out he resigned. King accepted Matrika’s resignation on 10 August 1952 (Shaha 270–1). A Government headed by a commoner collapsed. Analysing the political trend of the period, Pushpalal points out that it was mainly focused on stalling the formation of a Constituent Assembly. And the parties representing the trend were the undemocratic elements; the King and the Indian capitalists. Besides, he credits democratic movement led by Ganesh Man, Dilli Raman Regmi and himself for the fall of the Matrika Government for he says:

After 1950–51 revolt the feudal forces converged against the democratic forces with the sole intention of stalling election for the formation of the Constituent Assembly: the call given to Mohan Shamsher to head the first Government was a case in point (193).

After that the King sowed seeds of differences between democratic parties ... took help from International revisionist forces; especially Indian monopoly capitalists ... [and] pulled towards him pro-Indian elements of the Congress such as Matrika Prasad Koirala. However ... the Matrika Government formed with the consent of Indian

Government and Indian monopoly capitalists ... showed signs of cracks under the pressure of the democratic movement led by Pushpalal, Dilli Raman Regmi of Nepali National Congress and Ganesh Man Singh of Nepali Congress. Their demand was for the creation of a Constituent Assembly (Pushpalal, "Nepali ... Ek Samiksha" 194–5).

However, no document supports Pushpalal's claim that there was a democratic movement led by him, Dilli Raman Regmi and Ganesh Man. Perhaps the movement that he was referring to was the one launched by the Nyuna Vaitanik Karmachari Sangha, but whether the leaders named were in the movement is anybody's guess. So, in the absence of evidence nothing conclusive flows out of his claim. As for his other observations regarding the role of the King and India there is nothing concrete to prove that they were interested in deferring the formation of the Constituent Assembly. These claims can, therefore, qualify nothing more than representative opinions of the Communists.

#### 1.7. King in Politics, Communist Strength in the First Municipal Election

The ban on the Communist lasted until April 1956. During this period the nation underwent major political changes. After the fall of M.P Koirala Government the King became a direct participant in the political process of the kingdom. He established a committee of six Royal Councillors and "decided to act as his own Prime Minister" (Joshi, et al. 103). Since such arrangement was not provided by the Interim Constitution, the King, to legalise his action, promulgated Special Emergency Powers Act on September 9, 1952 (Joshi, et al. 104). Commenting on the nature of the Act Gupta notes:

This act suspended the entire provisions of the Interim Constitution ... It clearly stated that the executive authority was vested in the Monarch, which he could exercise either directly or through officers as appointed by him for that purpose. In place of the constitutional provision that the King should act on the advice of his ministers, it was now simply laid down that he could act in everything on his discretion" (76–7)

And since it made the existence of Little Parliament redundant it was dissolved. When the King announced the names of the six councillors, three represented the army and the rest were either Ranas or non-Rana noble families (Joshi, et al. 105). This

reflected his increasing reliance on the army, but there was nothing to explain his new found dependence on the Ranas.

Under the new set up; King Tribhuvan actively participated in the administration of the country, but after four months his health gave way. So, he began exploring ways to establish another broad based Government. During this period two noticeable developments took place. They were the rising influence of India,<sup>36</sup> and the fragmentation of the political parties. The fragmentation was encouraged by change in the Interim arrangement. Under the Interim arrangement; there was at least an understanding that the King should respect Party strength in making his Prime Ministerial choice, but after the Special Emergency Powers Act there was nothing to bind him. This seems to have given a message to the political actors that for forming a Government what mattered were King's nod<sup>37</sup> and a nomenclature to symbolize their independent existence. So, individuals on the pretext of "ideology", exploited even minor differences within their parent organizations to engineer splits and to enjoy a share in power (Shaha 287). Nepali Congress split into four groups<sup>38</sup> and so did the Jatiya Janatantrik Morcha. After the ban on the Communist, the Front's constituent, Praja Parishad seems to have realised the stigma of ban imposed on its partner a load too heavy to lug. To keep the Front intact then, was to keep itself away from the

<sup>36</sup> See, Shaha 286 In every meeting of the Councillors Indian Advisor, Govind Narayan took part and through him the Indian Ambassador saw to it that his wishes were followed.

<sup>37</sup> See, Joshi, et al. 106 B. P Koirala was critical of King's individual approach in the choice of the candidates which kept aside the candidates position in a Party.

<sup>38</sup> See, Gupta 76 By the end of 1952, Nepali Congress fragmented into four groups. M. P Koirala group, the Nepali Jana Congress of Bhadra Kali Mishra, Congress Socialist group [Leftist Nepali Congress] led by Balchandra Sharma and Kedarnath and Nepali Congress of B. P Koirala. See also Joshi, et al. 107 M. P Koirala group turned into National Democratic Party (Rashtriya Praja Parishad) in April 30, 1953. In June 28, 1953 the Nepali Jana Congress aligned with a group of dissident Nepali Congress and formed All Nepal Jana Congress, and with the passage of time the Leftist Nepali Congress faded into oblivion.

possibility of joining the rat race for power. So in “September 1952”, the Praja Parishad officially withdrew its participation from the Front (Shaha 286).

On 15 June 1953, King Tribhuvan terminated the existence of Councillor’s regime and passed on power to M.P Koirala and his Party, the Rastriya Praja Parishad (See footnote 38). He justified his choice as compulsion foisted upon him by circumstances where mechanism to assess relative strength of contending parties was missing (Joshi, et al. 108). But, Gupta points out to the “intimate contact” that he had with M. P Koirala as the criterion for his choice (79). From its start, the Government was faced with Bhim Datta Pant revolt, which had begun from April at Dhangadi, western Nepal. From June, it gathered momentum when peasants organised under Bhim Datta looted rich landlords and Government establishments, the protectors of the rich oppressors, in the region. In the July trip to Delhi, M. P Koirala requested Nehru for Indian support in tackling the revolt: India supplied her “Uttar Pradesh Provincial Armed Constabulary” and Bhim Datta was accidentally killed on 23 August, but the involvement of Indian troops in the event had its fall out (Joshi, et al. 111). Gupta says, “every political party ... condemned the move and the anti-India campaign was intensified” (81). During this period Government sometimes described the rebellion as a form of “pure, unmitigated brigandage” (Joshi, et al. 110). And, at times, “Radio Nepal blamed Communists for it”. However, Man Mohan Adhikari, the then General Secretary of the NCP contradicted the allegation by pointing out that “the Radio news was simply aired to disillusion the Nepalese masses against Communists” (K. C, Nepal Communist 96). Amid these turmoil, M. P Koirala’s plan to convert *Birta* land to *Raikar* and to ensure security to the tillers of land received little attention (Shaha 205).

Besides, the most important event during the period was the holding of the Municipal election in Kathmandu. It was an important event not only because the election was interpreted in many quarters as “a political barometer” (Joshi, et al. 112), but also because it was believed to have brought “into limelight the forces of the banned Communist Party” (K. C, Nepal Communist 97). According to

Government orders, the election was held on 2 September 1953. Out of the 18 wards of the valley 17 went to polls since candidate of ward 5 was elected unopposed. The results were published in 5 September. It recorded no win for the Rastriya Praja Party—the Party in the Government. The Nepal Communist Party won 6 seats; the Nepal Praja Parishad, 6; the Nepali Congress, 3; Gorkha Parishad, 2 and independent 1. Commenting on the outcome of the election both Vim Rawal (37) and Surendra K.C (99) state, that the election reflected the wide spread influence of the Communists in Kathmandu. And commenting on the causes behind the Communists win of 6 seats Surendra K.C writes, “Communist victory in 6 wards was owing to their superior organizational ability, infighting among the Congress, and peoples’ emotional reaction against Government’s decision that had banned the Party” (98). But, considering the intra-Party feud (See p. 278) among the Communists during this phase the role of people’s emotional reaction seems to explain their success. Later, two of the elected representatives from ward no 16 and 17 decided to support the Communist along with the 3 representatives of the Nepali Congress. As such in the Municipal Board, Janakman Shrestha (NCP) was elected the President and Prayagraj Sunwal (Nepali Congress), the Vice-President. However, the Government headed by M.P Koirala tried its level best to cripple the functioning of the Communist dominated Municipal Board. When it failed, it jailed, without any rhyme or reason, both Janakman and Prayagraj bringing an early end to the life of the Municipal Board. The event lost importance when the parties involved did not raise the issue further (K. C, Nepal Communist 100–1). Nonetheless, the success of the Communists in the election was not without political fallout. Their win of 6 seats and the subsequent election of President, Janakman Shrestha in the Municipal Board gave “All the democratic parties ... [the opportunity to point out the] increase in the popularity of the Communists in Kathmandu [and] a pretext ... for applying ... pressure on the King and M.P Koirala to reconstitute the Government ...” (Joshi, et al. 113; Shaha, An Introduction to Nepal 296). According to Gupta, they even claimed that it was “a vote of no-confidence in the Government” (81). Meanwhile, B. P Koirala was arrested “on

charges of having fomented disaffection among Government civil servants” (Joshi, et al. 152) and was served with an “internment order” on 21 September (Gupta 81). The very day, without responding to pressures for the release of Koirala the King left for Europe. He returned home in January 1954 and in February there was again a new Proclamation and the formation of a new Government.

#### 1.8. More Power to the King and Second M. P Koirala Government

B.P Koirala’s internment and events following it affected profoundly the power position of the Nepalese Judiciary and the Executive. In November 1953, B.P Koirala’s appeal against the internment order came up for hearing in the Nepalese High Court/Supreme Court. “After initial differences among the judges, the *Pradhan Nyayalaya* (the High Court) held that the order was ultra-virus under Article 18” of the Interim Constitution.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, it ordered “the release of B.P Koirala” (Gupta 83). Though this Act of the High Court/Supreme Court was in conformity with the powers given it by the 1951 Interim Constitution, yet the exercise of its powers posited the Court against the executive powers of the King. The reason being, the same Constitution: it had made the “King’s decisions and actions ... above law” (Gupta 83). The decision of the High Court exposed the King to a new challenge: he could either accept the decision as judicial precedence, or, dismiss the judgment making Judiciary subservient to the Executive. The King chose the latter course. In January 1954, he issued a Proclamation which gave him supreme rights over legislative field; transferred all powers not given to the High Court/Supreme Court to him, and made all powers exercised by his Ministers in accordance with rules enforced by him immune to questioning (Joshi, et al. 153). So, by this act he turned himself into supreme legislative, executive and judicial authority of the kingdom. This was followed in February by the passing of Interim Government of Nepal Act 1954 which reinforced the content of the January Proclamation.

<sup>39</sup> See, Joshi, et al. 153 the Article forbade deprivation of personal liberty except according to established procedure of law.

Together with the proclamation the King also announced the formation of a new Government. The new Government was composed of a coalition of four parties under Prime Minister M. P Koirala. Its team of seven members consisted of two drawn from Rastriya Praja Party (M.P Koirala), one each from Nepali National Congress (Regmi), the Praja Parishad, the All Jana Congress (Bhadrakali Mishra) and two independents. Nepali Congress ridiculed the National character of the Cabinet and the 20<sup>th</sup> February resolution of the Politburo of the NCP declared: “it is clear that this Cabinet will only pave the path for the military dictatorship of the King and it will meet the demands of the people with brutal repression” (Gupta 86). Naturally, such a Cabinet representing a variety of political interests was doomed to function inefficiently: from the very beginning its members began quarrelling. The same situation prevailed in the expanded Advisory Assembly. Created after April 13, the body consisted of 113 members arbitrarily chosen by the King (Joshi, et al. 116–17). However, the Nepali Congress declined “to participate in [it] on the grounds that it was under represented, while the National Democratic Party over represented” (Joshi, et al. 117).

When it began functioning from 25 May, it offered to the parties a playground vaster than the Cabinet to denigrate each other. It turned into a forum, where, in “the fast growing power of the King”, “the rightists ... [saw India’s encroachment] ... on their country’s freedom, the Leftist group, [on the other hand] suspected, that India was behind the royalist scheme of throttling the gains of revolution” (Gupta 87). Thus, they opposed every political parley where they felt the involvement of India. The 26 April 1954 eighteen point agreement between India and Nepal on the Kosi River Project was “criticized [and opposed as] a surrender of [Nepalese] territorial rights to India” (Shaha 305). On September 25, King Tribhuvan left for Europe for medical treatment. Before leaving, he formed a Regency Council under the chairmanship of Crown Prince Mahendra. When 1955 came the Nepali Congress dissatisfaction against its non-inclusion in the so called National Cabinet took the form of a *Satyagraha* movement. The movement was led as a stir for

safeguarding the interest of democracy, and it aimed at securing a six-point demands. Of these, the most important ones were those which demanded “protection of civil rights and independence of judiciary; abolition of the farcical Advisory Assembly and the holding of early general elections and the protection of national independence and preservation of the prestige of the nation” (Shaha 316–17).

Though the pro-Communist *Jana Adhikar Suraksha Samity* alleged that the Nepali Congress movement was motivated simply by a desire “to strengthen its bargaining position with M.P Koirala ... [yet it took active part in the movement, when it was launched] ... from 10 January 1955” (Shaha 317). However, the movement was short lived, because the Crown Prince readily accepted the demands of the agitators and promised them the implementation of their demands. On such assurance, B.P Koirala, the President of the NC called off the movement, but the Communists, Shaha says, pointed out that by calling off the movement “the Congress had (again) betrayed the peoples’ movement” (317). So, they thought of continuing the movement only to invite the arrest of 26 persons on 17 January. With the arrest, the sequel of events came to an end. In February 1955, King Tribhuvan delegated full power to Crown Prince Mahendra. Using the position the Prince assumed personal charges over all the major departments like Anti-Corruption Department, Public Service Commission, Central Intelligence Bureau, and the Civil Servants’ Registration Office. The Government mutely watched the Prince’s activities and M.P Koirala resigned on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1955 when he progressively failed to leash the activities of his Cabinet colleagues (Shaha 317–18). With it, the second M.P Koirala led Government came to an end. And on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1955 the death of King Tribhuvan in Zürich signalled the end of the Tribhuvan era: an era which, according to Communists was characterised by royal machination to concentrate power in the King. A representative view of this perception is contained in one of the Party documents written by Tulsilal Amatya, the third general Secretary of the NCP. In sum he argues:

In Nepal power flows from the Army and the armoury. After the 1950–51 revolt power was transferred from the Ranas to the Shah kings. Thereafter, King Tribhuvan slowly transferred the Army and armoury under him: in March 1951, he made himself the supreme commander of the armed forces and restored all arms in the Narayan Hiti palace under his control. When army and the armoury were not under his control, then he was ready even for a Republican State, but after assuming control over them, he amended the Interim Constitution and robbed it off of its spirit. By 1955, he established himself as an all powerful monarch. So, even if a Constituent Assembly is formed and the constitution is framed, they will be of no use because with power of the army behind, the King can destroy the Assembly at the wink of his eyes (Amatya 17–24).

However, Shaha blamed India for such situation. He contended that a more decisive India could have saved the country from lapsing into “royal absolutism” (319).

#### 1.9. Mahendra in Power: Announcement of General Election

The coming of the King Mahendra to power did not change the tenor of political process in Nepal, rather his avowed dislike towards democracy, added an element of insecurity among the leaders of political parties. The leaders perceived in his dislike a dash of enmity towards democracy. B. P. Koirala called him an “out and out enemy of democracy” (196). Their worst fears came true on April 14 when King Mahendra announced the formation of a Council of Royal Advisers which consisted of five members. Commenting on this formation, Joshi and Rose wrote, “... this use of royal advisers was a throwback to the days of the Rana autocracy ... The only conceivable reason for the selection of these persons was the King’s confidence in them as instruments through whom he could implement his own program” (182). The appointment was criticised by all and sundry involved in Nepalese politics. The subsequent moves of the King, it appears, were meant to douse the general disagreement that prevailed among the politicians against his initiative. On May 8, 1955, Gupta says, “he called a conference of about 129 clubs and associations of various categories, ranging from an undertakers’ society to purely political bodies, at Narayan Hiti Darbar” (98). The conference was called to get their views on administrative matters. But, three major political parties the Nepali Congress, the National Congress and the Rastriya Praja Party boycotted the conference. Explaining the reasons behind the boycott, B. P. Koirala states, “We did not participate in the

conference, because the agendas of the conference were derogatory, one of the agendas was for founding out ways to dispose off unidentified dead bodies” (196). However, despite the boycott, Gupta points out, the conference succeeded in making four suggestions. They were; (1) that direct rule should be terminated (2) that the democratic system should be followed (3) that the General Election should be held as early as possible (4) that the Advisory Assembly should be dissolved (99). Based on these suggestions, the King dissolved the Advisory Assembly on 10 June, 1955, and in August 1955 he announced the date of the General Election. It was to be held “on the full moon day of October, 1957” (Joshi, et al. 185). He spent the rest of the period in seeking political parties; namely, the Nepali Congress, the Praja Parishad and the National Congress’s suggestions, and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1955 he brought them round to accept his formula. According to Gupta, the understanding reached was “to form a ministry consisting of 2 representatives from each of the parties and two to four Independents”. The ministries were not to be headed by “a Prime Minister”, but by the King himself (102). In accepting such proposal Gupta says, that the parties intended just “to enter the Government” (102). However, when the King tried to force upon the parties to accept his choice even in the selection of candidates for the Ministry he alienated them. Hence, from the beginning of 1956 the King began appointing Cabinets on his own.

From 1956 to 1958, King Mahendra, as per his whims and fancies, appointed and dissolved two Cabinets. The first was the Cabinet under Tanka Prasad Acharya, the man under whom the Communist Party became legal (See p. 283). It started functioning from January 27, 1956 and lasted until July 5, 1957. The other, under K. I. Singh<sup>40</sup> was formed in July 26, 1957 and it lasted up to November 14, 1958. In creating Governments under such personalities if Gupta viewed the desire of the King

<sup>40</sup> See, Joshi, et al. 258 After his violent activities of January 21, 1952 Singh had left for Tibet. He returned after three and half years and on reaching Nepal-Tibet border he requested King Mahendra that if he is pardoned for his past activities then he would be King’s loyal follower throughout his life time. The King pardoned him.

to concentrate power in himself (103), Joshi and Rose perceived a tendency to form amenable weak governments (187–203). As such, the characteristic feature of the period was that the Government and the political parties, who were opposed to such move of the King, were found at loggerheads on multiple issues. Chief among them were issues concerning election and Gandaki project.

A few months after the formation of Acharya Ministry, a pall of doubt descended over King Mahendra's announcement of June 1955 which had declared the date of the General Election. The reason behind the doubt was Tanka Prasad's June 1956 statement at a Praja Parishad Party Congress in Birganj. In the Congress, Gupta says, Tanka Prasad, probably to "please Mahendra" stated that "he would not tolerate any move which aimed at lowering the status of the monarchy" and that "his Government was not sure about the objectives of the general election" (105). Such views, coming from a Prime Minister, lent credence to the Communists' belief that the Palace was opposed to the idea of holding election, and more so to the idea of holding elections for the creation of a Constituent Assembly. By the end of 1956, Gupta says, his "controversial stand on the general election alienated a large section of his partymen [party men]" (110), which according to Joshi and Rose was projected as a controversy arising out of the presence of independents, the King's nominee, in the Cabinet, along with popular element (193). As such, he was torn between the demands of his party men and his desire to keep the King happy. Unable to tackle such situation, he, therefore, resigned on July 5, 1957 demanding a homogeneous Cabinet in future. It was accepted on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July. The July 15, 1957 Proclamation, then installed K. I. Singh as the new Prime Minister. He was a "controversial figure," (Gupta 113) a man, whom Koirala knew for his "mercurial behaviour" (202) with a past, which qualified him more as a rebel than as a political manager. Moreover, Gupta points out that his hostility towards Interim Constitution,<sup>41</sup> the insignificance of

<sup>41</sup> See, Gupta 113 He had made a vain remark that the Interim Constitution which had promised to give to the people an elected Constituent Assembly was fit to

his recently launched Party, and his unqualified support to the King were well known facts in the political circle (113). Hence, he says, the Communist Politburo viewed in his appointment a “reactionary conspiracy” (114). As such, when he was brought in, Surendra says, the parties began believing that King Mahendra was planning to postpone the General Election with the help of K. I. Singh (113). Thus, it was a Ministry formed under a miasmatic condition. The condition, therefore, evoked negative responses. August 8, 1957 witnessed the rise of a Front—the Democratic Front. It brought together three forces: the Nepali Congress, the Nepali Praja Parishad and the Rastriya Congress (K. C, Nepalma Communist 113). Gupta says, its objectives were: (1) to strengthen democratic forces and to meet the impending threat to democracy, and (2) to safeguard the fundamental civic rights of the people (116). However, the Communists were not included in the Front. Explaining their exclusion, one of Front’s members was reported to have portrayed the Party’s “ultra revolutionary character” as the cause (K. C, Nepalma Communist 113). According to Surendra K. C., “The Communists vehemently objected the characterisation ... welcomed the Front as fruit of changing consciousness of political parties ... while pointing out that substantial change could not be expected from a Front, that excluded the Communist Party, and its many related organisations” (113). However, the Front just ignored the Communists’ views.

The other significant issue during the K. I. Singh Ministry was the Gandaki Project. The project envisaged the construction of a barrage near “Bhainsalotan in southwestern Nepal” (Joshi, et al. 203). Because of India’s involvement in it, Joshi and Rose write, that political parties “accused the Cabinet of an excessive generosity ... towards India” (203). And, a representative Communist view on the issue is available in an article titled “Bharat-Nepal” by Pushpalal where he writes, “Kosi and

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be thrown into a waste paper basket.

Gandaki agreements consists of many clauses, which are detrimental to the national interest of Nepal” (327). Later, in the same article he quotes Smt. Lakshmi Menon, the Deputy Minister of Indian External Affairs, who is said to have stated in February 1960 that “India is helping Nepal in many of its river projects for its own interest, that is, to save India from the frequent ravages of flood” meaning, thereby, that such projects were in the interest of India and not in the interest of Nepal (330).

In October 1957, the King, Gupta says, announced that “owing to ... practical difficulties it would not be possible for the Government to hold the general election in time” (118). Hikmat Singh interpreted the announcement as a “deliberate attempt of the King and his puppet Governments to confuse an already settled question—a question already settled by the Act of the Interim Constitution” (Singh, H. 3). This brought the Democratic Front into action, for Surendra says, that following the announcement the Democratic Front threatened the Government that it would “launch a civil disobedience movement from December 7, 1957” if election date was not announced within two months (113). On November 14, 1957 the King abruptly dismissed the K. I. Singh’s Government. And when nothing transpired, the Democratic Front launched its civil disobedience movement from the declared date. Though the Front did not allow the Communists to be a part of its movement, yet, according to Surendra K. C, “the Front and the Communist Party reached an understanding for the formation of a joint committee” (114). However, why was the joint committee formed is not clear. The Communists participated in the movement on its own (See p. 287). As a sequel to it, on 15 December the King announced February 18, 1959 as the date of the General Election. Joshi and Rose cite an article of B. P Koirala where he argued the proposal acceptable, because it provided a better deal compared to the then “intolerable” situation of Nepal (273). However, pointing at the postponement Communist leader and a close friend of Pushpalal like Hikmat Singh said, “these are royal ploys to do away with the need for election ... and to douse the idea of election for a Constituent Assembly” (Singh, H. 3). After that the Democratic Front melted away and when, in the horizon, there was no opposing force

like the Front the King on February 1, 1958 issued a Royal Proclamation. The Proclamation, according to Joshi and Rose, proposed three measures: Establishment of a Constitution Drafting Commission; a nominated Advisory Assembly for the interim period, and a Ministry without Prime Minister to implement development programmes to assist the drafting of the Constitution and to run the day to day administration (Joshi, et al. 212–13). However, what remained a mystery was the need for the Advisory Assembly when election was in the offing. Nothing explained the move. This was followed by the formation of a Constitution Drafting Commission, where at one point Sir Ivor Jennings was a consultant. Then in line with the Proclamation, a Council of Ministers was created on May 15. However, in none of these pre-election structures the Communists were a participant except in the Advisory Assembly which began functioning in October.

#### 1.10. First Elected Government under B. P Koirala

On 12 February 1959, the King declared the Constitution. Gupta says it had an ominous trend: it did not declare that it was for strengthening democracy rather it set before it the goal of uniting the nation (129). It created a bicameral legislature, where the Upper House was the *Maha Sabha* and the Lower House, the *Pratinidhi Sabha*. The Lower House provided a house of 109 representatives elected directly for a period of 5 years by the adult population, those above 21 years. The Upper House provided a house of 36 representatives. The King nominated half of them and the *Pratinidhi Sabha*, the other half on the basis of proportional representation. The members were elected for a period of 6 years and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> retired every two years; it was a continuous house. However, many of the constitutional provisions clipped its law-making powers. Article 40 barred the Parliament from introducing money bill without King's approval; Article 42 made it mandatory for the Parliament to seek King's assent for a bill to become law, and the King could withhold his assent perpetually; Article 56 gave King discretionary powers to suspend or dismiss the Parliament. And though the Cabinet was responsible to the *Pratinidhi Sabha* (Art. 12), yet the executive powers were vested in the King who could exercise them either directly or

through the Ministers (Agarwal, Constitutional Change 36–7). Similarly, the document impaired independence of Judiciary. Article 57 gave the King discretionary power to appoint and dismiss the Chief Justice and other Judges of the Supreme Court (Agarwal, Constitutional Change 42). And a long list of fundamental rights, which glossed the structure, as Gupta puts it, “remained totally dependent on the discretion of the Monarch” for their implementation (Gupta 131). Thus, in sum, the Constitution created a political arrangement where powers were concentrated in the King. Hence, Joshi and Rose aptly said: “The 1959 Constitution emphasised the inherent powers of the King ... to such an extent that it raised questions as to whether it was a genuinely democratic document” (291). And commenting on the reactions that the document evoked, they further wrote, “Several parties, and notably the Communist Party, criticized ... its feudal character, but, like the others, they continued to contest the election in a spirit of political resignation” (292).

In the fray there were 9 parties, whose manifestos, Gupta says, “appeared so similar<sup>42</sup>that ... they left little choice before the voters” (143). Hence, under the circumstances what counted most in the election outcome was the strength of their organizations. The election, as scheduled, began in phases on 18 February 1959 and the last results were out by 10 May. It placed Nepali Congress in the first place with 74 seats to its credit. The Communists won only 4. Later, on July 11, election for the Upper House—the *Maha Sabha*—was held. Out of the 18 representatives elected by the *Pratinidhi Sabha*, 14 went to the Nepali Congress; 2 to Gorkha Parishad and 1 each to the Communist Party and the United Democratic Party. On July 13, the King nominated 18 others completing the creation of the Upper House and of the Parliament. However, the overwhelming victory of Nepali Congress, Joshi and Rose

<sup>42</sup> See, Gupta 143 All of the parties supported the establishment of popular government under the King’s constitutional leadership; stood for abolition of Birtas and urgent land reforms, non-involvement with military camps and friendship with all powers. See also (Joshi, et al. 309–11). The Nepali Congress advocated socialist ideas.

say, “instilled a sense of fatalistic desperation in the ranks of its opponents” (317). In view of their inability to provide a credible opposition in the *Pratinidhi Sabha*, they point out, the opposing parties decided on a strategy “to resort to direct agitation” (318). The NCP’s survey of election results echoed similar views. The concluding remark of Communist’s election survey, as Surendra K. C puts it, said, “In the Parliament ... the Gorkha Parishad ... has no capacity to lead the revolutionary forces. So when the Party in power will implement anti-people policies ... the Communists should expose them by leading the revolutionary forces of the society” (128). The stage was, therefore, set for extra-parliamentary movements and its manifestation in June was the coming together of three parties namely, the Praja Parishad, the Samyukta Prajatantrik Party and the Prajatantrik Mahashabha. Together they formed the National Democratic Front. Their goal, Joshi and Rose say, was “to arouse public opposition to the Nepali Congress Government through extra-parliamentary methods” (Joshi, et al. 318) where, the Communists “decided to line up with the Front” (Gupta 151). Besides, Gupta makes note of yet another force: “the landowning groups”. He says, they “feared” Nepali Congress’s reform proposals, so they aligned with “frustrated politicians” in their bid “to attack the Government” (151). It was indeed a portrayal of a political configuration which conformed with NCP [Pushpalal]’s observation when its document stated, “Working under the King, the feudal and the so-called democratic forces were out there to overthrow the Legislative Assembly ... And because of the leadership ... the Communists were also a party to it” (NCP (Pushpalal), “Janabadi Karyakram” 249–50). The statements, were perhaps on the nail in revealing the parties’ intent for B. P Koirala also says, “The King attacked our Ministry in public; pacified us in private ... and whenever possible spread rumours of corruption against us” (229–30). Thus, taken as it is, these statements portray a situation where the Government was exposed to the broadside of the opposing forces. Even then it survived for 18 months that is, until December 1960 facing a series of political and economic problems.

On 9 August 1959, it placed its first annual budget in the Parliament. With a view to implement its “socialist” (Gupta 152) programme, it imposed “progressive taxes ... On Birta land, urban property, foreign investment, trade profits, water taps and radio receivers” (Joshi, et al. 342). Then it lifted the ban imposed on the import of *Dalda* (a type of vegetable oil) from India. In September, it amended the 1950 Trade and Transit Treaty; on 1 October 1959, the Parliament passed Birta Abolition Bill and with the coming of December it took yet another decision. On 4 December 1959, it signed the Gandaki agreement with India. However, Joshi and Rose point out that the Communist criticised its budget on grounds that it “had allowed disparities in the pay scales of Government employees, had proposed no concrete plans to promote cottage industries, had shown no real interest in solving the problems of unemployment, had not advanced a nationalistic trade and commerce policy, and had imposed inequitable import and export duties” (Joshi, et al. 330). In September, *Dalda* issue caught flame. Disregarding earlier Government’s stand that the product was harmful to public health when Koirala Ministry lifted the ban, the opposition opposed the decision. The Communists, in particular, as Surendra K. C puts it, opposed the decision on three grounds: “the ghee is harmful to public health, owing to its imports Nepal will lose foreign exchange, its entry into Nepal will undermine not only the production of national ghee, but also its price in the national market” (133). Joshi and Rose point out, in particular, to the nationalistic overtone that coloured the Communists’ criticisms of the Government decision. They say, that the Party argued that by the decision “the Nepali Congress was promoting the interest of foreign capitalist at the expense of Nepali Ghee Merchants” (331). Succumbing to pressure the Government reimposed the ban in June 1960.

On 11 September, 1960 the Government successfully revised the 1950 Trade and Transit Treaty. According to Joshi and Rose, the treaty in its earlier form barred “Nepali merchants” from exporting to or importing “from countries other than India without the later’s consent” (352). Besides, it did not allow Nepal to “establish a separate foreign exchange account of its own”. So, they say, “politicians had often

alleged ... [its provisions as] an affront to Nepal's ... sovereign status" (352). Hence, they point out that in 1960 "the ... Government ... gave clear indications that it intended to amend it in a way that would be consonant with Nepal's national honor" (352). In its revised form, they point out, that Nepal could "continue to levy import and export duties on goods imported from or exported to India, she could now permit imports from a third country by using her own exchange resources" (352). However, the amendments they say were not thorough because "some unpopular features", which were against the "commercial interests" of Nepal still remained intact in the Treaty. Surprisingly Communist reaction against the result of the amendment did not evoke opposition as ostensive as in case of the *Dalda* issue. But, Pushpalal writing as far back as in 1970 wrote that the amendments still maintained Indian control over Nepal's national and international trade, because the amended version "forced Nepal into levying taxes on imports and exports of Nepal at rates not lower than those leviable for the time being in India" (Pushpalal 3). Besides, he rebuts Joshi and Rose's claim that the amended version allowed Nepal to use her foreign exchange resources. He says, "Nepal's one crore eleven lakh sixty three thousand pounds, which the British provide her in lieu of the Gorkha soldiers are deposited in the Reserve Bank of India with foreign exchange earned from other sources. So to conduct trade outside, Nepal needs to get foreign exchange from India" (5). Moreover, he says, "The Trade and Transit Treaty was an acceptance of the principle of common market. The two countries agreed to carry on free trade between them. It allowed Nepalese Government to keep its own account [this seems to be what Joshi and Rose referring to] of foreign exchange earnings ... but in the name of preventing leaks in the transit process, it forced Nepal to deposit money in the customs office of India to control her trade practices" (5-6). As for the reason behind the amendments he points out that they were carried out in the interest of the feudal forces of Nepal and the Indian monopoly capitalists for he says:

On 2 September 1956 a Treaty was signed between Nepal and China. It sought to open traditional trade link between the two countries ... In such arrangements the feudal-capitalist ruler of Nepal and the

monopoly capitalist of India sensed a danger. They feared that the arrangement would undermine their trade interests. So they amended the Treaty. The September 1960 Trade and Transit Treaty was the result (Pushpalal 5).

Notwithstanding the nuts and bolts of trade practices involved in between the two countries, the importance of the above statements lies in revealing the usual Communist perception regarding the nature of Indo-Nepal relation: a perception running deep in every document of Nepal Communist factions save in the documents of NCP (Rayamajhi), NCP (Manandhar) and NCP (Verma). Similarly, the passing of the Birta Abolition Bill did not evoke demonstrations against its weaknesses except comments. The Bill, as Surendra K. C puts it, divided Birta land into two categories “*Ka* and *Kha*”. Of these, the *Ka* category was turned into “Raikar land and the *Kha*, was registered in the name of Birta holders” (133). Against it Pushpalal, as quoted by Surendra, is said to have stated, “Despite many of its good features the registration of *Kha* category Birta land in the name of the Birta holders has increased the possibility of peasants’ exploitation in those land ... and the registration reflects the motive of the Government to create lackeys of capitalists” (134). These examples, however, reflect a trend in Communists’ method of reaction: if turn of events or actions, even to a little extent, are in accordance with their views then they seem to avoid direct actions. However, in Navyug, the Party organ, as Surendra K. C quotes, viewed Gandak agreement of December 27, 1959 detrimental to the national interest of Nepal foreshadowing similar treaties, which would take care of India’s plan to integrate Nepal’s rivers in her development scheme. It asked for its amendment after a parliamentary debate for it maintained that the Government had signed it without the knowledge of the legislative body. Clarifying its views the Party said:

Without considering the bitter experience connected with Kosi agreement, the Government has signed the Gandak agreement ... it has failed to extract benefits: it has just settled for 1, 43,500 acre irrigation facility and 10, 000 KW electricity. This is against our nation’s interest. Today questions are confined not only with the Gandak agreement, but with all rivers originating and flowing to India, because India has integrated in its national plan the scheme to use our rivers. While entering into such treaties Nepal should look after her future plan interests. The present agreement fails to do so, hence it should be amended. Because of the presence of such provisions the agreement

was facing opposition from the beginning, but the Government did not take into cognisance the counter voices and passed the agreement secretly. The political committee of our Party demands parliamentary debate to amend the agreement (K. C, Nepal Communist 134–5).

However, if Koirala is to be believed, then the Government, considering the geographical location of the project, had extracted maximum benefits for he says, “Our main concern in the project was water and power so I asked my engineers to ask for more water for irrigating additional 1 lakh bigha but then they said, there is no land above the site of the project, there is hilly terrain” (232). But, the undercurrent of Communist reaction against the agreement was more in exposing the Government as a barterer of Nepal’s national interest. India was funding the project and Nepal had given its land, but the Communists could not see gains in it rather it focused in pointing out that it was an agreement against the territorial integrity of the kingdom.

Besides, the period put Nepalese diplomatic resources under strain. Traditional wisdom compares Nepal with a tuber growing between two boulders: India and China. It prescribes that for its existence Nepal must maintain its neutrality. But, the turn of events during 1959–60 increasingly put to test the Nepalese wisdom. During this period, border problems between China and India embittered their relations (Gupta 154). In such context, as Gupta puts it, Nehru declared, in Indian Parliament in November 1959, that “any aggression against Bhutan and Nepal would be regarded as aggression against India” (Gupta 155). Meanwhile, according to Gupta the oppositions, Praja Parishad and the Communist, were charging Koirala for tilting towards India. Therefore, Koirala was in a fix: had he remained silent, then it would have justified opposition’s claim. And had he joined them then it would have been against his understanding of Indian position which was not at all inimical to Nepalese interest (Gupta 155–6). So, Gupta says, to come out of the situation he “welcomed Nehru’s statements as ‘an expression of friendship’ and added ... that there ‘is no occasion for Nepal to seek anybody’s help and in the event of any aggression on Nepal, it is Nepal who will decide if there has been any aggression’” (Gupta 155). However, Gupta’s description of the situation fails to bring out another side of the

opposition's demand. According to Joshi and Rose, at that moment the Communist, in particular, were demanding "the Government [to] pursue a neutral policy on developments in Tibet and on deteriorating Sino-Indian relations" (352). Koirala's statements perhaps were for defending Nepal's commitment to neutrality. But, the fact was that the Communists were no respecter of the traditional wisdom of Nepal. Earlier as Gupta says, they had judged Nehru's statements as Indian indulgence "in cold war tactics" (156) and later events proved their tilt towards China. In April 1960, B. P Koirala made public the Chinese claim over the Mount Everest. As a result, the Nepali Congress and the Gorkha Parishad held anti-Chinese processions but the Communist reaction against Chinese claim was lukewarm. According to Joshi and Rose, they simply stated that "no Nepali territory should be surrendered to any foreign country, including China ... the dispute should be settled on the basis of sound historical research and not on emotional nationalism" (332). Further, they characterised Koirala's declaration as "'anti-Chinese' machination" (Joshi, et al. 332). The issue finally came to an end on April 29, 1960. On that day, the visiting Chinese Premier, Chou-En-Lai declared in Kathmandu that China accepted the map prepared by Nepal according to which the southern side of the mount belonged to Nepal and the northern side to China. Thus, by not respecting Nepal's traditional wisdom the Communists revealed their preference for China. The Mustang event on June 28, 1960 confirmed their predilection. On that day, Chinese soldier in the northern Nepal-China border of Mustang district opened fire on Nepali border guards. They killed one of them and took ten others as prisoners. At the Governmental level both the countries claimed that the incident occurred within their area, but the Communist interpretation of the event favoured China. The Party organ, *Navyug* stated, "When the Chinese prime minister has apologetically written a letter, then there is no need to discuss the issue, because the letter reflects Chinese desire to solve the issue peacefully" (K. C, Nepal Communist 137-38). The issue came to an end when China announced its intent to compensate the death of the Nepali guard and to pull out its soldiers 10 km within its territory. In the later half of 1960 the Government was engaged in grappling

with the problems of the home front. Among them the most important was the one which erupted in Gorkha towards the end of the year. There, Narhari Nath Yogi of Karmavir Mahamandal, a socio-religious organisation, spread false information regarding the Congress Government. He informed the people that the Government wished to tax all their goods even their cattle. As a result, the people, to express their anger, looted and destroyed public property. To quell these, the Government sent its troops. The revolt was quashed on December 3 and the Yogi was sent to Gorkha to face trial. But soon after, on 15 December 1960 the King struck against the Government. He ordered the arrest of the Prime Minister and his colleagues and dismissed the Government. The Royal proclamation of 15 December 1960 accused B. P Koirala Government of “1) misusing authority in a manner designed to fulfil the Party interest only, 2) paralysing the administrative machinery, 3) incapacity, 4) imperilling national unity 5) pursuing economic measures undertaken on the basis not of scientific and factual analysis by [in] pursuance of purely theoretical principles...” (Gupta 159). Thus, the 18 month-old experiment in parliamentary democracy in Nepal came to an end. Analysing why the King succeeded in carrying out the coup, Pushpalal blamed “the democratic forces, who failed in coming together to weaken the feudal bases and in stalling the gradual shift of democratic rights in the hand of the King”. He blamed the parties for “taking part in agitprops which sought to portray the monarchy as a benevolent institution”. The Communists, he said, “under the leadership of Rayamajhi were a party in the agitprops which weakened the Party’s anti-feudal stance, and helped people in supporting traditional beliefs ... the lack of new ideology eased the task of the King” (Pushpalal, “Nepali ... Ek Samiksha” 206). In similar vein, another Communist leader, Mohan Bikram Singh stated:

After the Second Congress, the majority group within the Party [Rayamajhi and others] not only diluted the revolutionary character of the Party, but also bowed before the increasing power of the King ... The Second Congress had decided to bring to the open the relationship that existed between the bourgeois parties and the palace, but contrary to the decision the group towed the line of the bourgeois parties ... As a result there was only one difference between us and the bourgeois parties: the latter openly supported the King and our Party stood as silent witness. The leadership of our Party disregarded the decision to

use organised peasants as sentinels of democracy ... Whenever, the Party led any movement its participation was confined to accepting bourgeois leadership ... Because of the majority group's left opportunistic, pro-King policies the King ... could strengthen his power and carry on the coup... (Singh, M. B. 94–5).

After the coup on 5 January 1961 the King banned all party activities within the kingdom. Under such context, the Communists held a meeting in Darbangha to assess the situation and to decide upon its tactical position in the days ahead (See p. 294)

#### 1.11. Birth of Panchayat System: 15 December 1960–December 1962

After the coup, the country functioned without a Constitution until December 16, 1962. During this period, the King busied himself in weeding out his opponents. Immediately after the coup, he banned political parties; arrested B.P Koirala and his colleagues and sanitised,<sup>43</sup> in phases, the administration of the country. Thereafter, he placed himself in the helm of administration by creating, in February 1961, the “Ministry of Supervision and Inspection ... to personally supervise the various branches of administration” (Agarwal, Constitutional Change 52). Thus placed, he launched the process for creating the future political system of the nation. In the system, the Panchayat system, the *Daudahas* (Tour Commissions),<sup>44</sup> the Ministry of National Guidance, the class organisations, the various Panchayat bodies and the Raj Sabha occupied integral positions. So, in February 1961 the King created 14 Tour Commissions. These mobile Commissions, according to Joshi and Rose, appeared to have been created as substitutes for the personal visit of the King. Composed of a Chairman, Army and judicial representatives and a Secretary, each of the Commission was vested with authority to function as an on-the-spot investigative, judicial and development fund channelising body (415–16). Then on the 18<sup>th</sup> of the same month

<sup>43</sup> See, Agarwal, Constitutional Change 47–52 The King after taking charge of the administration of the kingdom replaced many of the gazetted and non-gazetted officers with Army personnel. The process was carried out in phases affecting the Central, the District and the Valley administrations.

<sup>44</sup> See, Agarwal, Administrative System 19 The *daudahas* or tour Commissions were not novel institution they were the flashback of the Rana period.

the King formed the Ministry of National Guidance and entrusted it with the task of “organising different sections of the society on ‘non-political’ line” that is, as class organisations (Agarwal, Constitutional Change 53). The purpose behind the creation of class organisations as assumed by Joshi and Rose was to “channel political activists ... to deter their participation in other forms of politics” (408). However, their purpose, as expressed in the statements of Viswabandhu Thapa, the Minister who headed the Ministry from March 7, 1961 was to keep the classes away from the influences of the parties to unleash their potential<sup>45</sup> in the progress of the nation (Joshi, et al. 406). Thus, for the Government the class organisations were expected to fulfil a progressive role in the future political system of the nation. Hence, after March 7, the Ministry established six class organisations.<sup>46</sup> Finally, even “before the promulgation” of the Constitution the King enacted “legislations” for the establishment of the village, town and district Panchayats (Joshi, et al. 399). Thereafter in “April 1962” he formed a “Constitution Drafting Committee” with “Rishikesh Shah[a] as [its] Chairman”. This was followed by the holding of the “Conference of Intellectuals” in June 1962. According to Agarwal, it was a “forum” to woo “political leaders who were prepared to play politics within the confines of the existing political structure”. However, many of the 139 members of the Conference, he states, “expressed discontent with the panchayat system being introduced and doubted if this system was superior to the parliamentary system” (Agarwal, Constitutional Change 54). Amid these developments the King was manoeuvring his

<sup>45</sup> See, HMG, M. o. L. a. J., The Constitution of Nepal ... 1967 33 Article 67A:1 points out that the class organisations were formed not only to protect and promote the interest of the various classes, but also to integrate and utilise their strength for the development of the Nation.

<sup>46</sup> See, HMG, M. o. L. a. J., Constitution, 1963 63 In Schedule 5 of the document these class organisations were named as Nepal Peasants Organisation, The Nepal Youth Organisation, The Nepal Women’s Organisation, The Nepal Labour Organisation, The Nepal Ex-Servicemen’s Organisation. for peasants, labourers, women, students, young persons and children. Later, “association of former servicemen were also added to the list”(Joshi & Rose, 406-7).

Council of Ministers (See, footnote 53) to stall the cross-border rebellion launched by the Nepali Congress from October 1961(See p. 91). And when the raids were terminated in December 1962 King Mahendra was placed in an position where there were no political parties to contend with and no external pressures to handle. So, he set himself to legalise the remaining structures of the Panchayat system, the system which he felt was ‘Nepali’<sup>47</sup>in its nature and which, he thought, was necessary to keep the Nepalese away from the destructive activities of the political parties (Shaha, Three Decades 6). As such he promulgated the Constitution in December 16, 1962. On its promulgation, the Constitution legalised yet another structure of the Panchayat system—the *Raj Sabha*. As per the Constitution<sup>48</sup>,it was a permanent body composed of a number of high officials and persons of renown appointed by the King (Art.23:2). Its primary functions were: (1) “to proclaim the accession to the Throne of the heir-apparent to His Majesty” (Art.23:6: a) in the event of his “demise” or in the event of his “abdication” of the throne (Art.23:5: a), and (2) To proclaim a “Regent or a Council of Regency ... in case His Majesty [was] below the age of eighteen years” (Art.23:6: b). Moreover, considering the several occasions,<sup>49</sup>where the King on his

<sup>47</sup> See, Joshi, et al. 397 The authors quote an address delivered by the King on a ceremonial occasion on April 13, 1962. Here the King says: we have confidently moved towards panchayat democracy by beginning the New Year [Nepali calendar] with the initiation of the panchayat system. This Nepali plant ... is suited to the climate of our country. There is no Nepali who does not know what a pancha and a panchayat is. The development of culture and civilisation in our country... has taken place under the panchayat system. Parliamentary democracy has proved unsuitable because it lacks the Nepali qualities which are found in the panchayat system. The nationalistic feelings associated with the awakening are not as possible under any other system as they are under the panchayat system. See also HMG, M. o. L. a. J., Constitution, 1963 1. The Preamble to the Document points out that the Panchayat system is rooted in the life of the people; it is in keeping with the national genius, and it originates from the very base of the society.

<sup>48</sup> See, HMG, M. o. L. a. J., Constitution, 1963 11–13

<sup>49</sup> The King could take the advice of the Raj Sabha (or its Standing Committee consisting of 7 to 15 members of the Raj Sabha) before allowing introduction of Bill in the Rastriya Panchayat if the Bill dealt with matters laid down in Article 17

volition could take the advice of the Raj Sabha, it was a consultative body as well.

Besides, the 97 Articles and 6 Schedules of the Constitution provided the legal framework for such commonplace constitutional structures as the Judicial Service Commission, the Public Service Commission etc. However, the legal framework, on one count proved to be deficient: it did not explain as to how the different structures, especially the class organisations created after the coup welded with the core of the system—the Panchayat bodies. Therefore, to understand the 1962 structure of the Panchayat system, which governed the power play in the State until its dissolution in 1990, one needs to pair the readings on the Constitution with scholarly commentaries.

Structurally, the base of the Panchayat system was the *Gaun Sabha* (village Assembly). According to the notification of an Act, it could include either a village or a number of villages (Article 30:1). This *Sabha* elected the *Gaun Panchayat* (village Panchayat, the executive body). However, there was no provision for the creation of *Nagar Sabha* (town Assembly).<sup>50</sup> At the district level, the representatives elected and sent by the *Gaun* and *Nagar Panchayats* of the district (Article 32: 1) formed the *Zilla Sabha* (District Assembly), which in turn formed the *Zilla Panchayat* (District Panchayat). At the *Anchal* (Zonal) level, there was the Zonal Assembly (Article 33:1) which included all the members of the *Zilla Panchayats* of the Zone. The Zonal Assembly elected from among them the Zonal Panchayat (33:2). However, Article 33 was amended in 1967 and at the Zonal level, the Zonal Panchayats were replaced by a

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(Art.55:b). The other occasions where he could take its advice was while passing ordinances (Art.57: 1), while appointing Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (Art.69:1), while appointing members of the Public Service Commission (Art.7), while considering the revocation or alteration of the proclamation of Emergency (Art.81:2) and while extending pardon to suspend or commute any judicial sentence passed by a court (Art.84).

<sup>50</sup> See, HMG of Nepal Ministry of Law and Justice 24 The provision for Nagar Sabha, in the towns, was inserted only after the second amendment of the Constitution on 12 December 1975. However, there was Nagar Panchayat from the very beginning (Art. 31: 1).

nominated body— the *Anchal Samiti* (Zonal Committee) and only the Zonal *Sabha*, which included all the members of the District Panchayats,<sup>51</sup> was kept intact. At the top was the *Rastriya Panchayat* (National Panchayat), where the 14 *Anchal Sabhas* (Zonal Assemblies) sent 90 members (for the break-up of the members sent see p. 87) for a period of 6 years (Schedule 4) and the 5 class organisations mentioned in Schedule 5 sent 15 members. With 4 members coming from the Graduate constituency (Schedule 6), the elected members of the National Panchayat equalled 109. Finally, the King was empowered to nominate 15% of the 109 members (34: d) as his nominee to the body. As the representatives from the *Anchal Sabhas* were sent for a period of 6 years and as the representatives from the class organisations, the Graduate constituency and those nominated by the King were sent for a period of 4 years (37: b), the National Panchayat was a continuous unicameral body. The system, aptly described as “a system of tiers or layer of assemblies (*Sabhas*) and Executive Committees”, was hinged with a system of Class organisations and Councils (Shaha, Three Decades 5). According to Joshi and Rose, the “class organisations [had] a four-tier structure<sup>52</sup> directly paralleling the panchayat system” (407). When the Panchayat system, as provided by the constitution, was linked with the four tier class organisations as described by Joshi and Rose (See p.87) then there evolved a complex system. For implementing the system, the Government identified around 3700 villages/grams and towns. In the northern Himalayan belt an area with around 1000 population was demarcated as a village, and in the Terai regions, an area with 2000 population formed a gram (HMG Sanchar Mantralaya 16). And a town meant an area “with a population exceeding 10,000 (fourteen ... according to the 1961 census)” (Joshi, et al. 399–400).

<sup>51</sup> See, HMG, M. o. L. a. J., The Constitution of Nepal ... 1967 17

<sup>52</sup> See, The constitution of Nepal: (as amended by the first, second and third amendments of the constitution) It is silent about these structures.

Each village/villages forming the *Gaun Sabha* was divided into nine *Badas* (wards). The adult population aged 21 and above of each of these *Badas* elected four members and one chairman. As such, a village elected 45 such members. These 45 members sent the nine chairmen along with one Pradhan Pancha and one Up-Pradhan Pancha to the Gram Panchayat (HMG Sanchar Mantralaya 16–7). In the towns, according to their sizes, there were either 9 *Badas* or up to 33 *Badas*. Each of these *Badas* elected five members for the town *Sabha* and from these five members, one member representing their respective *Bada* was sent to the town Panchayat. From each of these villages and town Panchayats falling within a district, one member was sent to the District Assembly. This District Assembly then elected an 11-member District Panchayat. All the members of all the District Panchayats in a zone formed the Zonal Assembly. From the Zonal Assembly the members of the Zonal Panchayat were elected. Besides, the Zonal Assemblies also elected the members of the Rastriya Panchayat / National Assembly. While sending the 90 members to the National Assembly, the Zonal Assemblies of the respective zones elected one member from each of the district falling within a zone (34:3). Since there were 75 districts this meant that the Zonal Assembly elected 75 members to the Rastriya Panchayat. However, the Assembly elected one additional member from each of the 15 districts whose population exceeded one lakh mark. With these 15 representatives, the representatives elected from the Zonal Assembly to the Rastriya Panchayat formed a block of 90 members. The 15 members representing the class organisations were elected by the Zonal committees formed for channelising the classes. To this total of hundred and nine elected members, the King added 16 (15% of 109) nominees raising the number of Rastriya Panchayat membership to 125.

Running parallel to this system was the system for channelising the classes. In a village or town area, each of these classes elected their respective committees. In turn, each of these committees formed within a district, sent one delegate to the District Council. Each of these District Councils elected five-man District Committees from among its members. The total members of these District

Committees further elected the Zonal committee. The members of the Zonal committees and the District Committees further formed the National Congress, which elected the President and 14 members of the Central Committee. The Government appointed the Secretary and Treasurer of the Central Committee, and the President had the power to nominate two more members to the committee. This structure was linked with the Rastriya Panchayat through the Zonal Committee, which sent 15 representatives of the class organisations to the Rastriya Panchayat (Joshi, et al. 402).

To coordinate the activities of the class organisations *inter se* and that of the class organisations with the Panchayat bodies, there was the Ministry of National Guidance created in February 18, 1961. However, the Ministry was dissolved in 1963 and was replaced by the National Guidance Council. As already stated, the King rationalised the creation of these structures, especially the Panchayat system, by pointing out to its “Nepali” flavour. Further, in his many assertions, he pointed out that behind the implementation of the system lay his desire to encourage integration among the various divisions of the Nepalese society. But a closer look at the system reveals that he had something else in mind. Wrapped in all these creation, his intention was to create a National Assembly with feeble candidates: candidates without mass political support, because as Shaha observes, “the actual number of votes that could ... send a candidate to a seat in the Rastriya Panchayat was ludicrously small ...” (Shaha, Three Decades 5). Compounded to it, the system allowed the King to nominate members to the Rastriya Panchayat. The tiers of class organisations, which elected 15 members to the Rastriya Panchayat, were also officially recognised and controlled bodies. So, the King enjoyed enough space to manipulate his whims in creating the Council of Ministers, and even if he were forced to include the elected members of the National Panchayat in the Council, he had a ready store of enfeebled members. Moreover, the National Panchayat did not have any say in the creation of the Ministry because the “Chairman” (A post probably equivalent to that of a Prime Minister) and all the “Ministers” were “responsible” to the King (26:2), and if the King desired he could remove them (26:3:e). Thus

conceived it was a democratic system, in the sense that it provided for elective bodies, but it was so without being democratic, and the Communists perceived it as a “system ... which deprived the people of all political rights, and provided for a Rastriya Panchayat without any power.” In it, they observed “the power concentrated in the hands of the King, and a [system] tailored to keep intact the dictatorial rule of the King” (NCP, Rajnaitik Prastao 1963 8). For them it was a “four tiered structure where opportunists and feudal forces were organised from the ground to the centre“ (21), and its officially recognised class organisations reflected the regal tactics of “class conciliation” (NCP (Rayamajhi) 7). Commenting on the role of the National Guidance Committee vis-à-vis the National Panchayat the NCP found the latter less powerful, and considering its method of functioning it adjudged the institution as an advisory body for it stated:

The National Panchayat ... is supposed to be a legislative body of the country. But it is not free in all its deliberations. A National Guidance Committee of 21 persons is to be constituted to guide it in all its work. The members of the National Panchayat have to seek permission from the King, either through ministers or deputy ministers, prior to moving any important bill in the House. There is no system of Treasury and opposition benches in the House. In reality, it is no more than an advisory body. It is open neither to the press nor to the public. It is always within the reach of the Royal Palace (NCP, Report of Third Executive ... Committee 10)

And if the various Articles of the 1962 Constitution are considered then the above comment of the NCP, especially the one which denigrates the system as tailor made to concentrate power in the hands of the King, was not off the mark. According to the Constitution, the King was the fountain head of the executive, legislative and judicial (20:2) powers, which hung like a Damocles sword threatening both the Judges of the Supreme Court and the members of the National Assembly. If the King wished, he could remove the judges on the basis of a report from a commission formed at his behest (69:4). Similarly exposed were the members of the Rastriya Panchayat (38:2). In fact, in the Constitution there was no area which was free from the control of the King; therefore, the NCP was right in pointing out that it centred power in him.

### 1.12. First Amendment of Panchayat Constitution: Tightening of Feudal Control

The 15 December 1960 coup drastically changed the political environment. Before the coup, the environment was uncertain: the King, who shuttled between direct and indirect rule, changed off and on the rules governing power politics. Amid such confusion the political actors somehow believed that, in the end, the King would give way to Parliamentary democracy. But, after the coup the message was loud and clear: the direct rule of the King was there to stay. In a moment, his action dashed the hope of the parliamentarians of Nepal. Explaining the reasons behind the coup, the NCP document stated:

In the parliamentary system, the Communist Party was progressing rapidly ... It was becoming popular among the working classes. So, the Party could have turned the instruments of Capitalist democracy—the Parliament—into ... an instrument of revolutionary proletariats, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals, middle class town people and National Capitalists....

Because of such possibility in future, the imperialists, reactionary feudal forces and the King himself were jittery. The King was never for people's Government ... To end such possibility, the King destroyed the democratic system. He blamed the Congress, but attacked the democratic system, destroyed the rights of the people and banned the Communist Party... (Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 12–3).

However, the claim that the Communist Party was progressing rapidly should be taken with a pinch of salt, because earlier description has already shown dissension within the Party. How could such dissension-ridden organisation progress rapidly? Therefore, the claim holds no water, and by the same token, the other claims that follow stand unsubstantiated except for the bare fact, that the King did destroy democracy and ban political parties. Why could he take such action? He could take such action not only because of the poor organisational strength of the Communists, but also because of the prevailing attitude among the educated elites and the Congress' Party MPs. When the coup was executed, Whelpton observes, “there was no protests in the streets of Kathmandu and many of the educated elites swung behind Mahendra, including fifty-five of the Congress Party's own seventy-four MPs” (99). However, the NCP saw in it the culmination of the politics prevalent in the kingdom after 1950–51, which was characterised by the attrition of democratic forces for it stated:

After the 1950-51 revolution ... on the one hand, the King was engaged in snatching one by one the democratic rights of the people ... On the other hand, the democratic forces, which should have united on the basis of political programmes aimed at resolving the fundamental issues of the society and for preserving the gains of the 1950 revolt, were running after the palace driven by their greed for their inclusion in the Ministries. As a result, they distanced themselves from the people ... After the General Election, the Nepali Congress enacted certain laws [land reform laws] which hurt the feudal class, but did nothing to ease the life of the common people ... the people; therefore, carried out democratic movement against it and the King dissolved it within a span of 18 months (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao 1963 2-3).

After the 1960 coup, one of the Nepali Congress's ministers, Subarna Shamsher, who was in Calcutta (Kolkata), engaged himself in devising military solution to counter the King. Later, when he was joined by Bharat Shamsher, the leader of Gorkha Parishad, he put his plans into action. After mobilising a guerrilla force, he executed raids across the border from October 1961; the very month when the Sino-Nepalese agreement for the construction of a road between Kathmandu and Tibet border was signed. The raids lingered on, and the crisis peaked in September 1962 when India imposed an unofficial economic blockade on Nepal (Whelpton, History 99). The NCP did not approve of these raids, because it felt that they were not intended "to trigger a nationwide movement for the establishment of democracy" (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao 1963 5). They felt that the raids were tactically wrong, because it excluded the participation of the peasants, and they hinted at the failure of the Congress in gauging the implications of the activities of the King. The King by entering into an agreement with the Chinese for the construction of the Kathmandu-Kodar road had spread the delusion of his being a nationalist (See p.308 for understanding their views on nationalism). So, their statement implied that in the eyes of the people the Congress's action was anti-nationalist as it was against the nationalist King. Besides, the Party felt that the raids were being carried out just to embarrass the King financially and administratively to eke out concessions for it stated:

The Congress while following such a policy of armed struggle should have taken into cognizance the delusions that the people had regarding the institution of the King and their feeling concerning nationalism and sovereignty. But the Congress did not pay attention to such important issues and launched armed struggle, a struggle of the highest degree. In the context of our country, such struggle should have taken the

peasantry into its fold. But, in place of raising the level of the movement by the inclusion of the peasantry, the Congress took the path of armed struggle just to disturb the administration and to put the King under financial pressure with a view to end the struggle in a compromise (NCP, Rastriya Parisadko Baithakma ... Pratibedan 2).

Therefore, it was obvious that the Communists did not favour the activities of the Nepali Congress. But, this did not mean that the Congress did not have any support. The 9<sup>th</sup> September statement of Nehru to a journalist in London where he is said to have stated that “India [would] not prohibit Nepali refugees from expressing their views in India peacefully— i.e., the Indian Government would not impose further restrictions [on] their activities and movements—and that he had advised King Mahendra to improve the situation by conducting friendly negotiations with the rebels” implied that India supported the Congress rebels (Joshi, et al. 432). However, the raids did not last long. After the outbreak of the Sino-Indian border clash in 20 October 1962, the Nepali Congress suspended the raids in November and when Nehru requested Subarna Shamsher to call off the raid it was terminated in December (Whelpton, History 99) .

During this period, the country functioned under an interim arrangement, where the King created two Councils of Ministries<sup>53</sup>one on December 26, 1960 and the other in the first week of July 1962. After the promulgation of the Panchayat Constitution on December 16, 1962 “elections were held throughout Nepal in the first quarter of 1963 for district and Zonal panchayats and, finally, the National Panchayat” (Joshi, et al. 434). Following it, the *Raj Sabha* (Council of State) with its ex-officio

<sup>53</sup> See, Joshi, et al. 425–33 After the beginning of the Nepali Congress’s cross-border rebellion the foreign policy of Nepal vis-à-vis India was aimed at securing New Delhi’s agreement to keep the Nepali Congress leaders under strict supervision and if possible to arrange their repatriation to Nepal. To secure such agreement the first Council of Ministry under the chairmanship of Dr. Tulsi Giri, who favoured a pro-Chinese policy and who was used to giving anti-Indian statement, was favoured with the foreign policy portfolio. But when India did not yield to his tactics the foreign policy portfolio was given to Rishikesh Shaha in the July 1962 Council of Ministry. He believed not in strident postures but in quiet diplomatic approach in Nepal’s relation with India.

members and the appointee of the King came into existence. In the latter category, the King appointed a number of personalities representing different backgrounds. One of such personalities was Dr Keshar Jung Rayamajhi. The inclusion of Rayamajhi in the body was interpreted by the NCP as signals of his complete “walk over to the camp of the King against democracy in Nepal” (NCP, “More ... Raimajhi’s Anti-Party Activities” 19).

The National Panchayat which was inaugurated on 14 April elected Viswabandhu Thapa as its Speaker and Basudeva Dhungana, “a member from Kathmandu with past Communist affiliations” as the Deputy Speaker (Joshi, et al. 438). Further, they write that even in its opening phase the National Panchayat proved “to be... [a] docile body” with no role to play in the passing of important legislations: the “new land reform<sup>54</sup> legislation and the new social code, were promulgated just before the opening session” (438). Commenting on the land reform legislation the NCP stated that it contained “land ceiling of 650 ropanies [1 Ropani=.13acres]<sup>55</sup> of land in Terai, 50 ropanies in Kathmandu valley and 80 ropanies in the hills...[with] fixation of land rent at 50% of the produce” and its main objection to the promulgation lay in pointing out that it was couched in such a language that it allowed “each member of a family [to] possess land up to the ceiling limit” which the Party felt would help the “feudal families” to conceal “even thousands of ropanies of land” (NCP, “Land Hoax” 14). Further, it commented that as “nobody” knew as to when it would “be implemented” it had “alerted” the feudal forces and given “them enough time to conceal land among the members of their families” (15). In its judgement of the promulgation it noted, the promulgation has “not ... [been made] in

<sup>54</sup> See, Shaha, Three Decades 6 The legislation was never implemented.

<sup>55</sup> In passing these ceilings the Government perhaps had some other intentions, because in 1964 it passed another Act, the Land Act 1964 which fixed the ceiling at a much lower level. See, Table 7 in the Economy section of the present Chapter.

the interests<sup>56</sup>of the toiling peasantry” (14). Such measures which could not be explained except as moves to keep the feudal class happy were perhaps what influenced NCP (Pushpalal) to characterise the King as the feudal forces’ wily leader, who adjusted himself to the changing times; brought about minor changes, but acted only in the feudal interest for its document said:

The history of Nepal ... shows that the King has proved himself as a wily leader of the feudal class who adjusts himself with the changing times. Though, at times, his activities are aimed at bringing about minor changes in the feudal system, yet in totality his activities always favour the interest of the feudal class (NCP (Pushpalal), “Janabadi Karyakram” 255).

During this period, the other developments were the abolition of the National Guidance Ministry in April and the extensive tours abroad, from August to October, carried out both by the King and the Chairman of the 1963 Council of Minister, Dr Tulsi Giri. The tour of the latter was especially fruitful in eliciting “promises of additional economic assistance from the United States and the Soviet Union and expression of interest in investment from the West Germans” (Joshi, et al. 439). However, in such engagements the Communists perceived the increasing control of foreign capital in Nepal’s economy. It viewed them as understanding beneficial to the interest of foreigners and the feudal elites. And its comments were especially targeted against America<sup>57</sup> for it opposed an economic agreement,<sup>58</sup>which was signed, in the

<sup>56</sup> See also, NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Krantī Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu” 48 Most of the Communist factions felt that the Land Reform measures or Acts passed during the Panchayat regime were meant for obfuscating the masses. This was another faction which was making similar comments on the Reform measures of the Government in 1974.

<sup>57</sup> Similar expression targeting America is found in a document of one of the later factions of the movement. See, provided a chance especially to the American imperialists to play freely in Nepalese soil for it document said: another faction of the movement later observed: “the economy of this country is being captured by foreign capital ... under the dictatorial rule of the King the most virulent imperialist, the American imperialist, have the opportunity to play freely in our country” (NCP, Rastriya Prajatantrik Karyakram; 18).

<sup>58</sup> See, NCP, “Nepal-USA Agreement” 17–8 The party explains that the

second quarter of 1963 between Dr. Tulsi Giri and Mr. Stebline, the American ambassador to Nepal by stating, “The Agreement, under the cover of equality, will give freedom to American capital to enter Nepal and dominate Nepal’s economic and political life” (NCP, “Nepal-USA Agreement” 17–8). However, the Party did not express reaction against the interest shown by the USSR in such investments probably, because it perceived investments from Communist countries devoid of imperialist design even when it perceived the country under revisionist leadership (See, p. 98).

In January 1965, though Nepal was “opposed to any formal alliance” with India, yet the Indian concern for her security was reciprocated by Mahendra when he entered into a “secret agreement”, which prohibited Nepal from purchasing “military equipment” from third parties, if India could supply them. But in 1969, contrary to such bonhomie, the Nepalese Government asked India to remove its monitors stationed in northern Nepal; almost veered on rejecting the 1950 Treaty of Friendship and even the 1965 agreement. According to Whelpton, such seesaw movement in Indo-Nepal relation then was owing to the clash of interest between them: If India wanted Nepal to recognise that it was under the area of its influence, Mahendra wanted to boost his popularity within by standing “up to Indian pressure” (102). Communists’ comments specific to these events are hard to come by, perhaps because

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Agreement which was signed for a period of 20 years and which guaranteed the free inflow of private capital between the two nations was protected from the changes in the legal, political and economic sphere for it allowed recourse to legal procedures in disputes arising out of such changes. Further Nepal provided facilities such as tax holiday and arrangement of foreign exchange for a period of ten years to the American investment. In the view of the party, the agreement was based upon a false premise of equality between the investment capacities of the two countries. The party argues that the Nepalese who are unable to finance even their Plan can never invest in America, so the agreement will only help the ruling elites of Nepal to hoard their ill- gotten money in America in the name of private investment. In the assessment of the party such foreign investment was not helpful in the development of independent national economy of Nepal.

they never felt it necessary to comment upon them. For given their understanding of nationalism, even if they had commented then they would have, in all probability, described Mahendra's acts as tactics deployed to disillusion the masses of his being a nationalist and Indian action as that of an imperialist.

In January 27, 1967 the Constitution was amended. The amendments were not significant: there were minor changes except the fact that it inserted sub-clause 2:(a) under Article 11 to declare the continuation of the ban<sup>59</sup> on the political parties. However, the changes, in a few of the Constitutional provisions, tightened feudal control over the Rastriya Panchayat<sup>60</sup>. Thus, if this period in the history of Nepal marked the tightening of the feudal control; in the history of Nepal Communist movement, the period, beginning from 1965 was particularly stressing. The Jhapa Committee, (See, Ch. 3 footnote 63) the forerunner of NCP (ML), since 1965 was actively engaged in denouncing the entire Communist movement of Nepal; Pushpalal having parted with Tulsilal, launched the NCP under him in 15 May 1968, (See, p. and with the release of Man Mohan Adhikari in 1968 from jail, the movement was faced with enemies within. And when Mohan Bikram Singh (alias Dumdum) was released from jail in 1971, the movement was again pushed towards the throes of yet another fragmentation (See, p. 359 ).

<sup>59</sup> See, HMG, M. o. L. a. J., The Constitution of Nepal ... 1967 5

<sup>60</sup> Art.25:2 provided for the designation of Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and the term of office for the Prime Minister was fixed for a period of 5 years (26:3) though he could be removed at any moment by the king; the Zonal Panchayats were removed and only the Zonal Assembly was kept (33:1); the king enjoyed greater freedom in the formation of the commission whose report could be used to remove the Rastriya Panchayat members (38:2:a) and the ban on the holding of open proceedings of the House continued (42:6); Part 10 A and Part 10 B were inserted making it compulsory for an aspirant of the office of the Panchayat to be a member of one of the class organisations and the office of the Zonal Commissioner was opened in every zone. He was to be advised by a Zonal Committee composed of Chairmen of District Panchayats within the zone, the chairmen of class organisations and 5 members nominated by the king (86A and 86B).

### 1.13. Second Constitutional Amendment and Struggle for Multi-Party System

With the dawn of 70s, events like signing of Indo-Soviet Peace and Friendship Treaty in August 1971, Indian attack on East Pakistan in December the same year, and absorption of Sikkim within the Indian union in 1973–75, were perceived by the NCP (ML)<sup>61</sup> as incidents of India turning into an expansionist with the help of the Socialist-imperialist Soviet Union for it stated:

After signing a military Treaty (the so-called 20 years ‘Peace and Friendship Treaty’ of August 1971) with the revisionist, Socialist-imperialist Soviet Union, the reactionary Indian Government is rapidly following a policy of expansionism. With the support of Brezhnev, the number one traitor of ... the world, India has attacked its neighbour Pakistan; maimed it, and by destroying the sovereignty of Sikkim, it has absorbed it within itself (NCP (ML), “Soviet Sansodhanbadi ... Taiyari Garnos” 49).

In the same vein, but clarifying the birth of exploitative Socialist-imperialist Soviet Union, the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) observed:

Khrushchev, after opposing Stalin’s so-called policy of personality cult, sowed the seed of capitalism ... and thereafter Breznev-Kosigin group, after holding the 23rd and the 24 Congress, converted Soviet Union into a Capitalist nation ... After conquering Czechoslovakia it has turned into an imperialist State. In many of the East-European countries it is carrying on its colonial exploitation ... Presently, Soviet Union has entered into a military alliance with the expansionist Indian Government. By aligning with India it has successfully maimed Pakistan and is exploiting the people of India. It has plans to encircle socialist China with the help of India. Jointly, they are planning to establish their control over the whole of South Asia (NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) 14).

But, the NCP (Pushpalal) faction’s analysis of the Pakistan event and the creation of Bangladesh were somewhat different: it did not see in the event the expansionist character of India and the imperialist<sup>62</sup> nature of the Soviet Union. To it the creation of Bangladesh was a joyous moment for it had freed the people there from the military regime of Pakistan. However, it was critical of the policy of the Indian Government,

<sup>61</sup> The Party was formed in June 1978 evolving out of Jhapa Zilla Committee (See, p.352 ).

<sup>62</sup> There is no document which clarifies why the NCP (Pushpalal) did not categorise India as an expansionist and the Soviet Union as an imperialist.

which had interfered in the internal politics of Pakistan when the relation of the nation with its eastern part had weakened. Such policy of the Indian Government, in the assessment of the Party was responsible for creating an environment of fear and doubt among the member states of the sub-continent. However, in such Indian policy it did not fail in underlining the influence of Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty for it stated:

In the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, Bangladesh has come into being after snapping its relation with the military autocratic rule of Pakistan. Because of this event; on the one hand, the people of the world under the grist of military rule, Nepalese in particular, are overjoyed; on the other hand, the policy of the Indian ruling Government, which sought to extend its influence among its neighbouring states by taking advantage of the weaknesses in the Pakistan-Bangladesh internal relation has created an environment of fear and doubt among the member states of the region. With the help of the so called Indo-Soviet Treaty of friendship, the Indian Government is ... interfering, under different pretexts, in the affairs of Bangladesh (NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnaitik Report Sept/Oct 1972 8).

Thus, vindicating its position the Party in its other document viewed the Bangladesh movement as a “freedom movement” where the participants were: “the working class, peasants, intellectuals, students, petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie”. It viewed it as the triumph of the Bengali nationalities over the “autocratic rulers of West Pakistan” (11–12). And since it equated “the plight of the Nepalese under the autocratic rule of Mahendra with those of the people of Bangladesh”, it felt that their triumph was an “encouragement” for “the Communist revolutionaries” of Nepal (NCP (Pushpalal), “Swatantra ... Bangla Deshko ... Swagat” 13). This perhaps explained as to why the Party did not categorise the event as an expression of Indian expansionism: it must have viewed Indian help to the Bengalese of East Pakistan as an Indian support to the subjugated nationalities in their fight against the autocratic rulers of West Pakistan. However, while commenting on the nature of leadership within Sikkim, it did categorised the policies of “Kazi Dorjee, [sic] the leader of Sikkim State Congress, as subservient to the policies of Indian expansionist capitalism” (NCP (Pushpalal), “Sikkimma Prajatantrako ... Bhayeko Cha” 175). But, like others it did not categorise the Soviet Union as a Socialist-imperialist, but stuck to its position of categorising the USSR as a socialist country under revisionist leadership, perhaps

because it did not see in the Soviet activities and in the Soviet-Nepal relation, the kind of economic relation characteristic of an imperial State.

In January 31, 1972 when King Mahendra died in Chitwan, King Birendra Bikram Shah Dev ascended the throne. On his ascension to the throne Rishikesh Shaha points out that he “expressed his ... resolve to continue his father's foreign and domestic policies” and within the country, as Shaha concludes, he believed himself to be the “ultimate source of political authority in Nepal”, a person “above the Government and the Constitution”, indicating, thereby, that his regime was not expected to be different from that of his father’s dictatorial era (Shaha, Three Decades 9).

As he ascended the throne he was faced with a nation in trouble: there were unrest all around. The “Kampa” [Khampa] guerrilla “raids into Tibet;” which had begun in 1967 and which was rumoured to have been “supported by India and ... the CIA”, was continuing (Whelpton, History 103). Commenting on it, the NCP (ML) identified the Khampas as “anti-Chinese Dalai Lama force” working against China with the support of the Panchayat system, which was in league with “the Indians, the Russian and the American spies” (NCP (ML), “Sampurna Bhrmharu Milkau ... Gara!” 27, 26).<sup>63</sup> From 1971, the eastern flank of the country, Jhapa, under the influence of the Jhapa *Zilla Committee*, was up in arms to capture the power centre. As a scion of the Communist movement it advocated the tactics of class annihilation and guerrilla action inviting remarks from Communists which at times were derogatory. Rawal quotes Pushpalal as having said that “the movement indicated a ‘rebellion’ against the feudal Panchayat system, a movement of ‘annihilation

<sup>63</sup> See, NCP (ML), “Sampurna Bhrmharu Milkau ... Gara!” 26 According to the NCP (ML), India and its imperialist, expansionist friends were indulging in such actions against China because they did not want improvement in Nepal-China relation, which, according to the party, was responsible for opening the eye of the Nepalese people against the exploitation being carried out by the feudal class of Nepal in league with the imperialists and the expansionists.

incapable of destroying the Panchayat system” (82). In the later document of the Party, while characterising Man Mohan Adhikari, the NCP (ML) activities were likened to those of dacoits when the Party said, “[the] Jhapali ... group bearing the name of Ma. Lay. [Nepali term for NCP (ML)] under the protection of Man Mohan turned into an organisation for dacoity<sup>64</sup>, murder and oppression” (NCP (Pushpalal), Report on Current Situation in Nepal, 1984 14). And equally scathing was the comment of NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), which categorised the NCP (ML) activities as instances of “ultra-left terrorism” (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu” 56). Besides, from 1972, the kingdom was witnessing a number of “incidents of popular violence”<sup>65</sup>, which were “allegedly” carried out by the Nepali Congress activists (Shaha, Three Decades 10). In these incidents Whelpton does not implicate India, but B.P Koirala by saying, “B. P. Opted for military action,<sup>66</sup>[but] in contrast to both 1950 and 1961, the campaign [was] not [to] have the covert backing of India” (105). However, the NCP (ML) viewed these Congress’s activities as activities “supported by India” with a view to “strengthen the position of the imperialists and the expansionists” and it observed them “as incidents with the potentiality of creating another East Pakistan like situation in Nepal” (NCP (ML), “Sampurna Bhramharu

<sup>64</sup> No such comments are found in the party documents of the NCP when Pushpalal was at its helm.

<sup>65</sup> See, Shaha, Three Decades 10–1 The Nepali Congress led cross-border activities carried from the Indian side into Nepal southern border started from August 1972. These activities involved the hijacking of Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation plane on June 10, 1973; burning of Singh Darbar, the Secretariat building in Kathmandu on 9 July 1973, the explosion of a hand grenade a few yards away from king Birendra when he was inspecting local government offices in Biratnagar on March 16, 1974, and similar explosion in Kathmandu on 5 May 1974 before the car of P.R.S Sunwal, the then transport Minister.

<sup>66</sup> See, Whelpton, History 105 B.P Koirala opted for such military action when Birendra, in the initial phase of his ascension to power, preferred to retain his father’s old system unaltered.

Milkau ... Gara!" 22, 29 and 30). In somewhat different line the NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), which "equated the interest of the Nepali Congress with that of the Indian Government", characterised their activities as "terrorist" activities (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu" 55). However, in these activities the Chautho Mahadhiwayshun perceived "the Nepali Congress's intention to force the Government into compromises and to keep the masses away from people's movement" (55). Pointing out the reasons behind such tactics the Party stated, "They [the Nepali Congress] fear wider peoples' movement because of the possibility of such movement turning into a revolutionary surge ... hence they indulge in terrorist activities which involves limited individuals but keeps the masses away from the activities" (55–6). Meanwhile, King Birendra created a body—the National Development Council, on 9 June 1972 and amended the Back to the Village National Campaign Programme on 26 August 1973. According to Shaha, the National Development Council was "an extra-constitutional body" (16), which functioned under the King to ensure the development of the kingdom. However, the Back to the Village National Campaign Programme (BVNC), whose Central Committee was organised as an "eight-member" Committee on 26 August 1973, was basically a Committee tasked to identify and to certify candidates for the Panchayat bodies. Under the Programme, the King could seek the advice of the Central Committee of the BVNC even before appointing the Prime Minister and other ministers (Shaha, Three Decades 18). In short, it was his party to mobilise his henchmen.

Following these developments, the "autumn of 1974" witnessed RNA's "three-month long military operation" which was reported to have disarmed the Khampas (Shaha, Three Decades 11; Whelpton, History 103). Thereafter, Shaha reports that violence "peaked" in the middle of December 1974 and in the same month the King set up a Constitution Reform Commission (10). However, the reasons behind the formation of the Commission are documented neither in the work of Shaha, nor in the work of Whelpton.

On “24 February 1975”, an auspicious day as identified by the Royal astrologers, the King was crowned. A day after, Shaha reports that he expressed his wish that “Nepal be accepted as a Zone of Peace” by “all friendly powers, and the neighbouring states in particular” (Shaha, Three Decades 14). Then on 12 December 1975 the Constitution was amended. The amendments besides incorporating the BVNC in the main body of the Constitution created a Commission for the Prevention of the Abuse of Power. Commenting on the Commission Shaha states, “Superficially, it looked like the institution of the ombudsman” but “in essence” it “was expected to serve ... as the King’s watchdog committee to see whether the people in various elective and appointive positions ... [functioned] in a manner prejudicial to the accepted practice and traditions of the monarch’s rule by peremptory command” (Shaha, Three Decades 18). For, him it was just a structure over and above the “patrimonial elitist political structures”<sup>67</sup> of Nepal.

If these activities portrayed the creative function of the 1975 amendments, the abolition of the “ban on public reporting of Rastriya panchayat proceedings”, and the abolition of the “representation of the Graduate constituency in the Rastriya panchayat” reflected its reformatory aspects (Whelpton, History 109). But, there was a difference in the motive behind such abolition: the former abolition was perhaps carried out to sop the critics of the Panchayat system, who were campaigning for transparency in the functioning of the Rastriya Panchayat, but the latter abolition, according to Whelpton, was carried out to end “the regular embarrassment”, which the system suffered when the Graduates’ Constituency elected “anti-establishment

<sup>67</sup> For an understanding of Shaha’s view on patrimonial elitist political structure in feudal Nepal see, Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 1–13 According to his explanation the king in Nepal rules through peremptory command and considers himself as the master of the house. The Government runs through his will, which is theoretically unlimited. However it allows the use of rulers’ grace and in such system the beneficiaries of the grace uphold the position of the King. Thus, he was saying that the Commission for the Prevention of the Abuse of Power was just for threatening people to accept the King’s rule to win his grace.

candidates” (101). Thus, if one were to judge these amendments, they were, in sum, intended only for the upkeep of the King’s interest.

In December 1976, Ganesh Man Singh and B.P Koirala returned home. On arrival, as Whelpton observes, “B.P claimed publicly that he wished to contribute to national solidarity against a danger to Nepal’s independence, presumably a reference to India’s annexation of Sikkim two years previously” (105). Reacting to B. P’s statements, NCP (Pushpalal) categorised him as one who had “deserted the democratic movement ... in the name of national unity” (NCP [Pushpalal], Report on the current situation 15). But, his declaration was of no avail. Both Koirala and Ganesh Man were arrested, and later B. P was allowed to go abroad for treatment. Then in “October 1977 in his deathbed [he was alive even in 1979]” in Calcutta he transferred the Party leadership to Subarna Shamsher (Whelpton, History 105). However, in July 1978 Pushpalal breathed his last breath in Delhi and thereafter Balaram Upadhyaya emerged as the Party spokesman.

The second quarter of 1979 witnessed a challenge to the Panchayat regime. The challenge, according to Shaha, evolved out of a minor incident for he states:

Great happenings have at times humble beginnings. On 6 April 1979, some students took out a procession to protest against the execution of the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Z. A. Bhutto. At the back of the students’ minds at the time were also the breath-taking events that had overtaken the Shah of Iran and the belated execution on 8 February 1979 of two Nepalis, Capt Y. B. Thapa and Bhim Narayan Shrestha, who were respectively charged with taking up arms against the state for making an unsuccessful attempt on King Birendra’s life as far back as 1974 (See footnote 65). When the processionists were stopped by the police on their way to the Pakistani Embassy in Kathmandu, there were clashes leading to a lathi charge (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 48).

This apparently minor incident set off a series of developments<sup>68</sup> culminating in the

<sup>68</sup> See, Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 49–52 The author, while charting the course of events, describes that after the lathi charge students’ movement began. The movement was led by Nepal Vidyarthi Sangh, Aakhil Nepal Swatantra Vidyarthi Union and Nepal Rastriya Vidyarthi Federation—the front organisations of the banned Nepali Congress, the pro Chinese Communist Party of Nepal and the pro-Soviet Communist Party of Nepal respectively. In the movement they prepared a list

Royal Proclamation of 24 May 1979, which announced “a popular referendum ... to choose by secret ballot between the existing panchayat system with timely reforms and a multiparty system” (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 51).

However Whelpton observes, that at that time the students “were already unhappy over recent changes to the education system, meaning, thereby, that it was also one of the factors behind the students’ procession (107). Explaining the same event the NCP (ML) observed the movement as the expression of peoples’ long held dissatisfaction against “the plots of the system hidden in its social, economic and political reforms”. It viewed the movement as a reaction against “the lies hidden in the land reform policies ... [a reaction against] the neo-colonial education system ... and an angry move against the Fascist BVNC programme” (NCP (ML), “Janmat Sangraha ... Mulyankan” 2–3).

In the proclamation, the NCP (ML) sensed the pressure of foreign hand and of the nationwide movement. It objected against its limited scope: either way it viewed its result to serve the existing system. It felt that it was occasioned by the King’s desire to douse the movement; to haul a system which was on the verge of collapse, and to lead the revolutionaries astray. Because of its limited scope and the other intentions wrapped in it, the Party perceived the proclamation as a King’s machination. Besides, it was against the referendum not only because its procedure was parliamentary—because of the voting involved—but also because its outcome, whether Party-less or multi-Party Panchayat system, was incapable of resolving the fundamental problems of the society. The problems, according to the Party, could be

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of 22 demands, mostly academic, which they wanted the authorities to fulfill immediately. But, even when their demands were met, militant groups from within the student organisations objected to the manner in which the movement was called off. This led to fresh movement, which snowballed into a 30,000 strong procession in the Kathmandu Valley. By then 37 out of 75 districts of Nepal had come within the influence of the movement. As such the King made his proclamation on 24 May 1979.

resolved only by the New Democratic political system, and to achieve it the singular path which the Party admitted of was the path of armed struggle. Hence, it observed:

The leader of the Party-less Fascist Panchayat system, King Birendra in Jestha 10 [24 May] announced a referendum kowtowing before foreign pressure and the nationwide movement. This referendum is not for choosing a political system ... In its scope it is limited to choosing a Party-less or a multi-Party system, which is meant for serving the reactionaries. By this proclamation the King wanted to douse the rising tide of the people's movement, and to mislead the revolutionaries. He wanted ... to lengthen the age of the monarchy, which was on the verge of collapse.

Understanding the limited scope and the objectives of the reactionaries, we pointed out the plot inherent in it. Besides we had pointed out that both the types of political systems whether Party-less or multi-Party are the same.<sup>69</sup> They can resolve none of the fundamental problems of the society. Only new democratic system can do so ... but to achieve it we should not take the Parliamentary path, but the path of armed struggle (NCP (ML), Fascist Nirdaliya ... Gara! 1).

If the above statements of the Party revealed its perceptions regarding the causes behind the proclamation and its objections to it, the statements following the above clarified the real reasons as to why it boycotted the referendum for it stated:

From the very beginning we have been saying that the 'referendum' is a plot and we have been urging the people to move forward, without being deluded by the ideas of Party-less and multi-Party Panchayat system, in the path of revolutionary struggle against the Fascist Panchayat rulers with a view to protect nationalism, to secure democratic rights and to ensure the guarantee of food, clothing and shelter. This was the essence of the policy which our Party followed to boycott the referendum (1-2).

However, the NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)) did not analyse the reason behind the movement but it did categorise the movement as "a nation-wide wave against the autocratic monarchy and the Panchayat system" (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Rajnaitik Singhawalokan" 91). And it followed a policy of boycotting the referendum while supporting the cause for multi-

<sup>69</sup> The NCP (Fourth Congress) was against the NCP (ML), which characterised the party-less and multi-party system as the same. In its document NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Rajnaitik Singhawalokan" 97 and 100 it argued that the struggle for multi-party system even within the Panchayat system was a movement towards progress, because if multi-party system and independence for political parties were achieved then the achievements could be used for revolutionary purposes. In NCP (ML) tactics it identified the predominance of mechanical thinking.

Party system. It boycotted the referendum on the ground that it perceived in the King's proclamation "a plot" to block a movement which had "the power to immediately destroy the autocratic Panchayati system" (92). Further, it stated that "within the limits set by the proclamation, it was not possible to win even basic rights and freedom for the political parties" (95). Hence, the need was to keep the movement going. The boycott signified the continuity of its struggle for it stated:

To boycott referendum is not our ideology. It is a policy which needs to be followed after considering its impact on the course of the revolution. When we find that the policy of boycott sustains the movement and helps it to move forward then we use it ... at present we therefore consider the policy of boycott the right policy (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Rajnitik Singhawalokan" 95).

Further, the Party pointed out that its politics of boycott of the referendum and the politics of support for multi-Party system were not contradictory tactics rather they were independent from each other for it stated:

On the one hand there is the boycott of the referendum and on the other hand the support for the multi-Party system. Are these issues contradictory? Certainly not. The issue of referendum has recently come up after the Jeth 10[May 24] proclamation, but for removing the ban imposed on the parties, the Party had been campaigning since long ... in lieu of the autocratic Panchayat system the support for multi-Party system was independently campaigned even before the proclamation of the referendum. Hence, its struggle for political freedom of the parties and for multi-Party system is not at all influenced by its decision which may either be in favour of the referendum or for its boycott (98).

And since they were independent tactics the decisions taken to struggle for the multi-Party system along with the boycott of the referendum were both regarded as struggles—"peoples' struggles", which the Party perceived as a necessity for achieving the multi-Party system (99).

But, in the assessment of the NCP (Pushpalal) the movement was a reaction of the students, farmers and workers to solve their "problems of daily life". It claimed that the movement was led jointly by the "Party and the workers of the Nepali Congress [a fact denied by many]<sup>70</sup> (NCP (Pushpalal), Report on Current Situation in

<sup>70</sup> See, Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 50 The author

Nepal, 1984 4–5). For it, if the movement signalled the beginning of politics of mass movement in Nepal, the proclamation was the result of the fear that the movement had inculcated in the mind of the King for it stated:

The movement united all political and social forces struggling against the anti-people system and made them move in the same direction. The journalists ... along with teachers and low-paid employees joined the movement. The people became more active in the movement. In brief, the form of United People's agitation directed by our Party was truly reflected in this movement ... Mass movement had started in Nepal, and it had also taken its form. Afraid of this situation, King Birendra made a declaration for an opinion poll to make choices between the Party-less Panchayat system and the multi-Party system (5).

However, it also perceived the declaration as “a result” of the “people's struggle” a “gain”, which needed to be protected by more “peoples' movement” (6). Hence, it decided to take part in the process as well as in the referendum. After the proclamation events moved fast: Prime Minister, Kirtinidhi Bista resigned; the apparatus of the BVNC was dismantled; on 1st June Surya Bahadur Thapa was sworn in as the Prime Minister, and on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May a 15- members National Election Commission was formed but the chairman of the Commission on June 2 declared that the election was not possible even by the end of 1979 (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 53–4). And from what Shaha observed in the unfolding pre-poll environment<sup>71</sup> one can conclude that in the situation the possibility of fair poll was

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categorically denies the involvement of political parties in the movement. See, also NCP (ML), “Janmat Sangraha ... Mulyankan” 5 and Whelpton, History 107–8 Both these works deny the involvement of political parties.

<sup>71</sup> See, Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 53–61 During the period the King was involved in contradictory activities. On the one hand he appeared to respect the mood of the movement by dismantling the BVNC and by asking the National Panchayat to suggest the name of the Prime Minister. But, on the other hand he encouraged the Panchayat government to make use of the state machinery to influence the people for party-less system. Besides, he dissolved the town Panchayats of Narayanghat and Tansen when the members of the Panchayat bodies unanimously decided to vote for multi-party system, and used philanthropic funds received from outside to influence voters. Though he allowed the advocates of multi-party system to carry on propaganda, yet he kept in force the ban on political parties. And surprisingly

remote. But from the claims of the NCP (Pushpalal) it appears that such misgivings were harboured by the Party even a day after the proclamation, because it claims that one day after the proclamation it called upon all the democratic forces to come together in a struggle aimed at achieving five basic demands for the impartial conduct of the election for it stated:

Making an objective analysis of the special situation prevailing in the country, our Party drew the attention of the people of Nepal towards the possibility of the Government reorganising itself and starting a counter-attack on the democratic movement in the comparatively peaceful material conditions following the declaration for opinion poll and it appealed to them to remain more united, more powerful and more cautious. The very next day of the declaration of the opinion poll, an emergency meeting of the Central Committee of the Party called upon all the progressive and democratic forces to join the struggle with five basic demands namely, Release of all political prisoners, Setting up of a Government of national consensus, Abolition of all Panchayat bodies, Guarantee of freedom of writing, speech and organising meetings against the Panchayat system and impartial conduct of all propaganda modis [sic] as preconditions for free and fair opinion poll (NCP (Pushpalal), Report on Current Situation in Nepal, 1984 6).

Thereafter, the Party wails over the responses of the parties involved in the process for it states:

But some leaders and groups supporting the multi-Party system believing in the graciousness of the King<sup>72</sup> remained indifferent to these basic preconditions for a free and fair opinion poll. On the other hand, the boycottists [sic] being indifferent to the opinion poll, naturally remained indifferent to these preconditions as well (6).

But the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)),<sup>73</sup> contests the claims of the NCP (Pushpalal) that it was the author of the 5 preconditions for it states that the “5

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when the rules for casting votes were brought out, they barred youths aged 18-21—the very youth population who had triggered the movement.

<sup>72</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), Report on Current Situation in Nepal, 1984 5 The party was referring to both B. P. Koirala and the leader of NCP (Man Mohan) faction, Man Mohan Adhikari. When the proclamation was made they are said to have hailed the declaration as a great favour of the King. Besides both of them is reported to have started opposing all types of movement saying that a peaceful atmosphere was needed for the opinion poll.

<sup>73</sup> The faction came into being in 1984. See, p. 372

preconditions were actually the modified version [modified by other Communist parties] of the preconditions framed by the NCP (Fourth Congress)". Moreover, its statements point out that the objectives behind the demand for the implementation of the 5 preconditions were a bit different for it states that they were "framed to check the possibility of rigging in the referendum and to destroy the Panchayat system" (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 33). As for the effect of the demands in the political environment the faction claims that it did unite a few of the Communist forces for it stated, "On the basis of these preconditions, Communist parties of Nepal the NCP (Pushpalal), the NCP (Rohit)<sup>74</sup> [and the Nirmal Lama group operating within the NCP (Fourth Congress) which ultimately formed NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) ... were able to ... organise a nationwide procession in Bhadra 24, 2036 [9 Sept. 1979]" (34–5). Thus, the indifference of the 'boycottists' as described by the NCP (Pushpalal) does not reflect the totality of the political environment then, because a section of the 'boycottists' seems to have supported the preconditions and favoured the movement for ensuring free and fair referendum. However, the effort, it seems, was not enough, because neither the environment before the referendum (See footnote 71), nor the nature of the votes polled indicated a fair poll. Commenting on the latter fact Shaha stated:

The higher percentages of the votes cast and also the ratio of valid votes to invalid votes in most remote and inaccessible areas, which have widely scattered population and settlements and a definitely lower level of political consciousness, go to prove that panchayat officials must have got the boxes stuffed and ballots stamped in favour of the panchayat system wherever the multi-Party side was not represented or was poorly represented at the polling booths. The higher percentage of votes cast and a higher ratio of valid to invalid votes in the Karnali and Dhaulagiri zones can be explained only in these ways (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 89).

For the above results, if the NCP (Pushpalal) blamed the attitude of the 'boycottists' the NCP (ML) blamed itself for following an inflexible tactics, which it described as "ultra-left deviation" (See, p. 354). The NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)),

<sup>74</sup> This is NCP (NWPP) a faction of NCP (Pushpalal). See, p. 340

however blamed the Central Committee of the NCP (Fourth Congress (Mohan Bikram faction)) for dampening the force of the movement and for destroying the chance of supporting the cause for multi-Party system by following a wrong policy for it stated:

When the Central Committee of the NCP (Fourth Congress) ... categorised the demand for the establishment of the Interim Government<sup>75</sup>[one of the preconditions] as an expression of right opportunism and when it did not categorise the participants of the Bhadra 24, 2036 [9 Sept. 1979] struggle as the representatives of the Communist forces ... the movement for ensuring free and fair referendum lost its steam and it fizzled out.

It boycotted<sup>76</sup>the referendum ... This policy isolated the Party ... [and when] the date for referendum was fixed our Party was forced to take part. Because of such wrong policy of the Central Committee, the Party lost the chance to support the cause for multi-Party system (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 35–6).

Hence, it said, before VS 2037 Baisakh 14 [2 May 1980], the day when the referendum was held “the political forces opposed to the Panchayat system were tactically divided” and “the struggle was devoid of strength” (42). Compared to such situation, Shaha observes that the forces in favour of reformed Panchayat were “entrenched” in the Government machinery, and were in a position to “commandeer the manpower and other resources of the state” to force the people to support their cause (88). And since the referendum rejected the participation of students of age group 18–21, the verdict went in favour of a reformed Panchayat. However, the NCP (Pushpalal) dubbed the result as an outcome of “mass rigging unleashed by the feudal-authoritarian Panchayat system” and appealed for the formation of “National Democratic Front” to carry on a “decisive struggle against the system” (NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnitik Report 2043 [1987] 12). After the result, the King on 21 May formed an 11 member Constitutional Reforms Recommendation Commission. Then

<sup>75</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), Report on Current Situation in Nepal, 1984 39 The party uses the phrase “government of national consensus” to convey the same demand.

<sup>76</sup> See, NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 43 The faction points out that the boycott was passive as a result the tactics isolated the party and then it clarifies that it was in favour of active boycott which meant that the boycott was to result in the increase in the intensity of the movement.

on December 15, 1980 the 1962 Constitution was amended for the third time. The NCP (Pushpalal) perceived the amendments, as changes “forced upon the people” with the “so-called right to adult franchise” (NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnitik Report 2043 [1987] 13). NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) perceived the changes as the hypocritical responses of the monarchy to preserve and strengthen itself in the changed circumstances. It viewed them not as qualitative, but as quantitative changes for its document stated:

... the introduction of election on the basis of adult franchise, the switch over to a system where the ministry is responsible to the legislative assembly ..., and the hypocrisy perpetrated in the name of reformed Panchayat in the third constitutional amendment for presenting a façade of multi-Party system made it clear that the reactionary monarchy was not in a position to rule in its old ways. In fact, those reforms and hypocrisies were mere plots for strengthening and preserving the monarchy.... The Rastriya Panchayat came into existence in somewhat different form. However those changes were only quantitative and not qualitative... (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 42).

Thus, ended the struggle for the multi-Party system.

#### 1.14. Third Constitutional Amendment: More Power to the King

The amendments brought about a number of changes in the Constitution. The numerical strength of the Rastriya Panchayat was raised to 140. Out of these, 112 were directly elected by the adult population and one fourth of it i.e. 28 was nominated by the King (Article 34:2 (a), (b)). However, to become a member of the Rastriya Panchayat it was compulsory to be a member of one of the class organisations (35: e). The most strange was the method, which was provided by Article 26 regarding the election of the Prime Minister. The method<sup>77</sup> allowed the

<sup>77</sup> See, HMG of Nepal Ministry of Law and Justice 20 Any member seconded by 25% members of National Panchayat could stand as a candidate for Prime Minister. There was no problem if a candidate were elected uncontested, but in the event of a contest between two candidates the name of the one who pooled at least 60% of 140 or more votes was to be recommended for the post. In case of tie or in case both failed to cross the minimum 60% of 140, then the National Panchayat could recommend the names of both as well as of the third member. Out of these the king was free to choose one.

King to exercise his wish in the appointment of the Prime Minister. The insertion of Article 20 A gave power to the King to form a Coordination Council. He could use it to coordinate the executive, legislative and judicial functions of the country. Clause 2 of the Article gave him full power to frame laws governing the composition and functions of the body and the rules so framed could not be questioned in any court of the country. Thus by virtue of the Body, the King could function as a supra-executive, legislative and judicial institution of the State. Article 41B provided for the creation of a Panchayat Policy and Enquiry Committee. As in the case of the Coordination Council, the rules governing the composition and functions of the Panchayat Policy and Enquiry Committee were framed by the King and the courts were barred from questioning the rules so framed. The primary function of the committee was to promote Party-less Democratic Panchayat system (41 B: 2), and clause 3 of the Article empowered the body to supervise the National Panchayat while it implemented its policy decisions. Thus, the amendments instead of decentralising the system bolstered the centrality of the monarch in the Constitution. Besides, with the new institutional additions he still enjoyed the power to remove the members of the Rastriya Panchayat and the judges, and there was virtually no power to check him in the exercise of his volition. Hence, the NCP ([Pushpalal]) saw “no difference in the system that existed before and after the referendum” (NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnitik Report 2043 [1987] 13).

As for the NCP (Fourth Congress), the amendment represented “the King’s reactionary desire, presented as the people’s desire”, therefore, the Party decided “to fully boycott the amended Panchayati system and to carry out continuous peoples’ movement against the autocratic Party-less monarchy” (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Nirdaliya ... Bywasthalai” 109).

On 9 May 1981, the country then went to polls, where the Constitution still banned the functioning of political<sup>78</sup> parties. As such there were no competitions

<sup>78</sup> See, NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Nirdaliya ... Bywasthalai” 113 NCP (Fourth Congress) clarifies that it was following a policy of

among “manifestoes or programmes” (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 106). This had its effect: in the absence of ideological positions, the candidates resorted to currying favours with their “ethnic, tribal and linguistic” affiliations to mobilise votes. For the first time, the Nepalese polls, therefore, witnessed the election of candidates on the basis of their ethnic affiliations: in the election the “Tamangs”, “managed to win 5 seats” (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 109). Besides, a few political factions fielded their candidates as “independents” (Whelpton, History 109). Out of these, “three communists” and “four” representing one of the factions of the “Nepali Congress” were successful (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 111) .

In the fall of 1981, King Birendra went to Paris to attend the international conference of the least developed countries. There in a press conference he revived his desire to have Nepal recognised as a zone of peace. However, the NCP (Mashal) interpreted the move as “the King’s plot to create international support for his reactionary regime”, so the Party pointed out that it was “opposed to the proposal” (NCP (Masal[Mashal]) 206). The extent to which India supported the move is not known, but when President Sanjiva Reddy visited Kathmandu in December 1981, and when the host nation broached for his opinion on the issue he lightly brushed aside the query saying, “Nepal and India had lived in peace since the days of Buddha and would do so for ever” (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 127).

In 1982, with the death of B. P Koirala the Nepali Congress leadership passed on to the group of three—Ganesh Man Singh, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Girija Prasad Koirala. In May 1985, the group decided to launch a satyagraha demanding full freedom for political parties to function. However, not every Party participated.

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actively boycotting all future elections held under the amended Constitution. By active boycott it meant that it should try to convert the boycott into a movement against the system.

According to NCP [Pushpalal]'s document, "the NCP (ML) kept itself aloof and dubbed the movement as a reformist-opportunist movement" (NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnitik Report 2043 [1987] 19). Finally, in June 19 and 20, when series of bombs exploded<sup>79</sup> in the valley, the Congress called off the movement. Five months later, signalling a change in the tactics, the parties held a meeting in "November 22, 1985" (NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnitik Report 2043 [1987] 27). In the meeting, the NCP (Pushpalal) document indicates the coming together of the many Communist parties and the Congress. There they decided to develop the 25 year old pro-democratic movement to destroy the Panchayat system for the document says:

... a meeting of the opposition leaders was held under the presidentship of former Prime Minister Tanka Prasad Acharya. In this meeting Sri Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, President Nepali Congress, its leader Ganesh Man Singh, the President of National Congress Dr Dilli Raman Regmi, Dr Rishikesh Shaha, Shri Man Mohan Adhikari... Manandhar, Verma group, ML group, Mashal group,<sup>80</sup> Rohit group, Tulsilal group, Com. Sahana Pradhan, Com. Balaram Upadhyaya ... were present. It was unanimously resolved that the Nepali people had been fighting for their democratic and civil rights and independence for the last 25 years. To develop this movement further, and to destroy the present Panchayati system, to restore democracy the meeting resolved that the unity shown during the struggle this year would have to be forged ahead. It was also resolved to struggle for the restoration of democracy and for the release of political prisoners by united struggle of all the political forces in Nepal (NCP (Pushpalal), A Report ... Political Situation, 1986 27).

In May 1986, Nepal conducted its second election to elect the 112 National Panchayat members. In nature, the 1986 election was no different from the 1981 election: contests on the basis of ethnic, linguistic and tribal affiliations prevailed over

<sup>79</sup> See, Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 149–50 The bombs were planted by the Samyukta Mukti Bahini, a little known group. The group advocated the end of monarchy as the only solution to the problem of Nepal.

<sup>80</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), A Report ... Political Situation, 1986 30–1 and NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Nirdaliya ... Bywasthalai" 109–13 This was the beginning of the tendency of different Communist factions' coming together with the Congress against the Panchayat system. Even factions like NCP (Masal) was ready to join hand with the Congress and if the NCP (Pushpalal) document is taken at face value then it seems that NCP (Mashal) and NCP (Fourth Congress) were also ready to collaborate with the Congress.

ideological competitions. Highlighting the similarity of the trends of the two elections the NCP [Pushpalal] faction pointed out that “the elections were devoid of ideology as such [they were meant] for the selection of candidates on the basis of caste, creed, parochialism and communal considerations”. In their assessment, the election had “hit hard the basis of national unity” (NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnitik Report 2043 [1987] 16). As such the election results reflected the State’s ethnic variety.<sup>81</sup> However, the legislature of 1986 differed from the 1981 body in one respect. It consisted of 5 members affiliated to the NCP (ML); 1, to the NCP (NWPP); 1, to the NCP (Rayamajhi) and 2 Communists, elected as independent candidates. They were all in favour of multi-Party system (Whelpton, History 110; Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 135). NCP (Pushpalal) did not participate, because it felt that “participation in the election amounted to its surrender before the Party-less Panchayat system” (NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnitik Report 2043 [1987] 16), and it “denounced” (18) the participation of the NCP (Manandhar/Verma) factions and of NCP (ML), because their participation was contrary to the position that the Party held even in the 1982 satyagraha movement (19).

Following the election, Marich Man Singh Shrestha was appointed as the Prime Minister. On assuming office he took two decisions, which, according to Whelpton, soured the relation of Nepal with India. The first decision, taken in 1987, made it compulsory for Indian labourers to acquire “work permit” if they wanted to work in the three districts of Kathmandu. The second was the 1988 decision where the Government “unilaterally”<sup>82</sup> decided to “import ... weapons from China” (Whelpton,

<sup>81</sup> See, Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 134 Among the candidates elected for the National Panchayat 45 belonged to the Chhetri-Thakuri caste; 16, to the Brahmin; 3, to the Tamangs; 7, to the Magars; 4, to the Rais; 4, to the Gurungs and 3, to the Limbus. The result kept intact the traditional dominance of Chhetri-Thakuri, Brahmin and Newar candidates.

<sup>82</sup> See, Government of India 275 The decision on the need for work permit for Indians working in Nepal was against Article 7 of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed between India and Nepal in 1950. See also. Srivastava 151 The appendices

History 112). During this time, the two governments were also haggling over the issue of signing treaties. The issue was “whether one treaty or two separate treaties on trade and transit matters, security considerations, work permit, etc” should be signed (Jha 14) . Nepal was for two different treaties, but “India favoured signing one single treaty within the framework of special<sup>83</sup> relation” (Shrestha, B. 15). Commenting on Indian stand for a single treaty in the context of the Janata Dal’s rise to power in India, the Extended Central Organisation meeting of NCP (Masal) held in Paus 2046 VS [December/January, 1989/90] stated:

In India with the arrival of the Janata Dal Ministry, a representative of the reactionary class, there will be no change in her stand towards Nepal. They will also keep Nepal within India’s security ring to extend her control. Therefore, it will stick to its stand for a single treaty (NCP (Masal), “Rajnitik Prastao 2047 Asad [June 1990]” 370).

When the haggling was on, in March 1989, the decennial trade and transit treaty between the two lapsed. So, the trade relation between the countries came under “MFN” [Most Favoured Nation] regime. This meant, Nepal could use only “one or two” (Panday 343) of its transit points, “Jogbani-Biratnagar and Raxaul-Birganj” (Shrestha, B. 15). In the lapse of the treaty India pointed out administrative reasons. However, Whelpton feels that the “administrative reasons”, which Government of India provided for explaining the lapse of the treaty was in fact an innuendo to express its “real concern ... regarding the work permit and Chinese arms issue” (113). To explain the lapse of the treaty NCP (Masal) blamed both the Government of India and the Nepalese political arrangement, but on balance the blame tilted more against India for it stated:

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provide the text of the letters exchanged after the Treaty. Section 2, of the letter explicitly forbids Nepal from importing arms and ammunition without the assistance and agreement of the Government of India.

<sup>83</sup> See, Panday 310 Special relation meant relation within the framework of 1950 Treaty which tangled economic relations between the two countries with the security concern of India.

Indian expansionist is mainly responsible for the non-renewal of the trade and transit treaty ... It has created the crisis to extend its complete economic and political control over Nepal like Sikkim... (361).

The present Nepalese political system is also responsible for the crisis, because it has structured Nepalese economy in such a way that it is dependent upon India ... and because the King is linked with the Indian expansionist it is unable, even in this crisis, to combat effectively the Indian expansionist's design at the international level (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Prastao 2045 [May/June 1989]" 362).

On the same issue, the NCP (ML) saw the hand of the Indian expansionist and of Nepalese reactionary Government. But, there was difference: their explanation was aimed at rousing the masses to fight for democratic rights. And since their tactics (See p. 358) then was for forming a broad front to fight for democracy the Party was using anti-India vocabulary to draw forces towards it for it stated:

After 1947... the rulers of India ... considered the Himalayas as their line of security. In that context, they imposed upon our country all sorts of unequal treaties; they denied unhindered trade and transit points, and in different times they encroached upon our boundary... In this way, India went on extending its authority upon Nepal... (33).

... The present blockade of trade and transit points is also a reflection of their policy of extending their influence in the region... (34).

However, the present crisis due to the blockade, which has come over our national life ... is owing to the faulty policies of our reactionary leaders. Their anti-people anti-national economic policies had already created the preface to this crisis. Indian blockade has simply brought the crisis to the surface. And the Indians are using it to fulfil their aim of extending their influence... (34).

... To solve the present crisis, the people should be given Democratic rights, and all national forces should be united to oppose Indian authoritarianism... (NCP (ML), "Nepali Krantiko ... Karyakram" 36).

In explaining the lapse of the treaty to Indian action, the Communist parties were not alone. Even the Marich Man Singh Government did the same, but, according to Rishikesh Shaha, the aim was to whip up "anti-Indian feeling" "to divert" the attention of the people from its "own failure" (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 157). Though Shaha does not explain what he meant by the failure, yet the context provides the answer: he was referring to the failure of the Government in renewing the treaty. The situation dragged on but towards the end of the year, Hoftun makes note of several changes. These were: reflection of "Government's concern about the situation" in the "official media"; "governing elites'" open criticism of the "Government in a manner never heard before" and the spread of a "high degree of

defeatism and internal dissent” among the ranks of the “old regime”. Then he writes, “As a final factor there came the revolutions in eastern Europe, fully displayed on TV screens in the homes of Kathmandu citizens” to explain how the exposure of the people to the eastern European revolt triggered the 1990 Nepalese movement (16).

From “September 9 through 15”, Shaha points out, that the Congress organised “the Political Awakening Week” (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 178). On 15 September 1989, before the “Kathmandu district committee of the Nepali Congress” could submit its “planned memorandum” to the “Bagmati Zonal Commissioner ... complaining of shortages of essential goods ... and price rise” (171), “21” of the activists were arrested. But, on 18 September they were released on bail. After the release, the activists reached the “Congress office at Jamal”. There they were welcomed by the “top Congress leaders”. Then the leaders and activists pleaded for “democratic unity ... to [launch] an effective mass movement ... for the restoration of democracy and human rights” (179). According to Rishikesh Shaha, there was then a “national debate”. Where, he says, “a consensus seemed to emerge on the establishment of an interim national caretaker Government for the purpose of holding Party-based ... free and impartial election within a year, and also on the question that in a democracy sovereignty must reside in the people” (180).

Meanwhile, Shaha notes:

Ganesh Man Singh ... had asked me to hold talks with the leaders of various leftist factions to explore the possibility of their joining hands with the Congress in any movement it may decide to launch for the restoration of democracy and human rights in Nepal. The responses of almost all factions of Communist movement with the exception of those, who subsequently formed their own united national people’s movement was highly favourable... (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 180).

One of the exceptions among the Communist parties to which Shaha was referring to was the NCP (Masal). The Party was not ready to respond the call, because of its understanding about immediate Nepalese political context and the nature of Nepali Congress. In 1989–90 Nepal, the Party identified “the main contradiction as between the King, Panchayat system, Indian expansionism and the people” (NCP (Masal),

“Rajnitik Prastao 2046 [December/January 1989]” 371). So, its document says, “In such context, it is important to carry on our movement in favour of democracy, nationalism, and for immediate needs of the people” (371–2). As regards the nature of the call given by the Nepali Congress, the Party perceived in it the voice of a reactionary element, and it sensed India as the instigator of the movement. So, in its assessment the movement was in the service of Indian expansionism. Hence, its response was ambiguous for it stated:

The call for the movement given by Nepali Congress is the product of its reactionary interest. They intend to carry it with the help of Indian Government. As such, in the end their movement will only serve Indian expansionism... But we will support any of their cause, which is pro-people... (NCP (Masal), “Rajnitik Prastao 2046 [December/January 1989]” 372).

Besides, its strategy and tactics (See, p. 393) stood in its way to respond to the Nepali Congress’s call for the movement.

#### 1.15. Jana Andolan and the Framing of the 1990 Constitution

By 15 January 1990, the United Left Front came into existence expressing its ‘moral support’ to the Congress’s call (See p. 403). But, by then, Nepali Congress, according to Rishikesh, had decided against forming “any formal United Front with the leftists who [were] ambiguous about their views on monarchy and tend[ed] towards violence, but it ... welcomed ... [their] cooperation” (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 183) . However, Balchandra Mishra notes something else. He says, “The Nepali Congress was worried to go together with the Communists lest such cooperation would infuriate the Americans and the Indians” (196), but he fails to account for Nepali Congress’s stand creating doubts about his statements.

On 18 January, the “Nepali Congress held its 3-day national conference at the home [of] ... Ganesh Man Singh” (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 183) . Attending the conference were, “Party delegates and activists, leftists and human rights activists ... and invited guests from various Indian political parties” (183) . According to Shaha, “the Indian delegation of political leaders was led by Chandrasekhar [Chandra Shekhar]” (183) . Further, quoting Girija Prasad Koirala he

explains that the conference was called to “identify the kind of step or mass movement to be launched in the context of ... hardships [faced by] the people” (183) .

The conference decided to launch *Jana Andolan* from 18 February. However, the representatives of ruling group raised objections against what Chandra Shekhar had stated during the conference. According to Shaha, he is said to have told the delegates that “fear was their greatest problem ... and that they [the people of Nepal] should take courage from the overthrow of tyrants like Ceausescu, Marcos and the Shah of Iran” (184) . As a sequel to the statement T. Louise Brown notes,

On 28 January a large Pancha rally took place in Kathmandu ... [they] marched around shouting slogans ... ‘Down with foreign agents’ and ‘Down with foreign alliances’. The implication was clear: no sincere patriot could support the forthcoming Movement because behind the seemingly innocent Congress and ULF was the sinister imperialist India (Brown 116).

Following this show of strength by the Panchas, came administrative repression. According to Balchandra Mishra, “On 13 February leftist leaders Bishnubahadur Manandhar and Badriprasad Khatiwada were arrested” (198). A day later, “Sahana Pradhan, the President of the ULF was arrested, and on 16 February Congress leaders Ganesh Man Singh, Krishnaprasad Bhattarai and Girija Prasad Koirala were put under house arrest” (Mishra 198). So, the planned movement was left without leaders. So, Jan Sharma points out that after the arrests “the parties undertook to pursue separate but complementary campaigns ... and the informal alliance operated as a loose coalition” (116). Nevertheless, the movement began on 18 February amid continuing Government’s repression. “As Government suppression increased”, Hoftun notes, “the population of the cities showed a more stubborn defiance ... There was a steady increase in the involvement of various professional associations such as the Medical Association, teachers’ associations etc.,” (17). On 19 February, movement began in Bhaktapur, one of the sister cities of Kathmandu. However, at that stage, Hoftun says, “one could not describe the political conflict ... as a mass movement” (17). It turned so after March 30. And the events responsible were unrest in the sister towns of Kathmandu and the following repression of the police for Hoftun writes:

On 30 March the situation changed dramatically when the unrest in Bhaktapur spread to Patan. Police opened fire against demonstrators and several were killed. This display of violence just a few miles from the centre of the capital was probably the main reason for the struggle turning into a mass uprising in the Kathmandu Valley ... In the following days the remaining professional associations, including civil servants and employees of Royal Nepal Airlines, organised strikes in support of the movement. The general strike in Kathmandu on 2 April was a considerable success (17).

In similar line, T. Louise Brown explains the role of the sister towns of Kathmandu in the movement while underlining the significance of Communist tradition and of police repression in turning them as centres of radical support to the movement for she writes:

... events in Patan and Bhaktapur ... were vital to the success of the *Jana Andolan*....

Bhaktapur, which was a Newar town and which was a long-time Communist stronghold and home of Workers and Peasant Party, emerged as a focus of radical support for the Movement ... (118).

A similar pattern was followed in Patan ... A strong Communist tradition amongst the Jyapu, the community of urbanised Newar peasant farmers. As in Bhaktapur, police brutally radicalised an already hostile population ... (Brown 119).

Besides, her work brings out the nature of roles played by the parties, the professional people and the students while explaining that it was mainly a middle class movement for she remarks:

Throughout the movement large crowds were absent. The parties rather organised ... a series of lightning demonstrations groups of activists would assemble, demonstrate, disperse and then regrouped in another location. Lightning demonstrations gave the impression that *Jana Andolan* activists were ubiquitous.

Most of the groups who spearheaded the *Jana Andolan* in the capital belonged to the middle class. Professional people were at the forefront of the movement and it was their protests which right up until the mass popular demonstrations of early April, dominated and maintained the momentum of Nepal's revolution....

Students drawn overwhelmingly from Nepal's middle-class, played a vital role in the movement ... students who supported the leftist and the Nepali Congress directly challenged the Government ... and ... through ... underground networks [spread] ... information... (Brown 121).

However, in NCP (ML)'s assessment the movement drew a wider section of the people for it noted:

The *Jana Andolan* was not a class struggle. It was democratic movement against despotism of the political system. It was movement of all sections. In it even the liberal sections of the Zamindar class and

the tout bureaucratic capitalists were aligned with the masses ... (NCP (ML), Bartaman Paristhiti: Oct/Nov 1990 8).

But, considering its later position that too on a vital issue (See p. 409) Brown's analysis appears to be the correct depiction of the movement's complexion. Later, on 1 April, Marich Man Singh Shrestha's Cabinet was reshuffled where Foreign Minister, Sailendra Kumar Upadhyaya's name was missing. In fact, he had reportedly resigned somewhere between March 31 and April 2 protesting "Government repression" (Hoftun 17; Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 202), and by pointing out the "mismanagement of ... Indo-Nepal trade crisis ... [which had made] his position untenable" (Brown 132). If Hoftun sensed the resignation as "the first signs of [Government's] wavering" (17), Louise viewed it as "signs of success" (132) of the movement.

Meanwhile, Whelpton says, "India ... submitted the draft<sup>84</sup> of a new treaty reaffirming the security relationship set up by the 1950 agreement" (115). In doing so, he assumes that India was trying to "tempt" the King to accept the proposal in the hope of getting "Indian support ... against domestic opposition" (115). After that he writes that Birendra did not accept the "politically ... impossible" course rather he chose "to give concessions at home" (Whelpton, History 115). And the concessions came on 6 April as King's proclamation.

The Proclamation charged Marich Man Singh's Council of Ministers for having failed in its duty "to maintain law and order ... resulting in the loss of life and property". It dissolved the Council in "Accordance with clause I of Article 81" of the

<sup>84</sup> See, Bhattarai, K. 77 This draft proposal was proposed in March 1990. It had 5 parts. Part I forbade the two countries from passing any law against the economic rights of the people crisscrossing the open border. Part II, Art. I.–Art. V dealt with the security concerns of India. Art.I enjoined Nepal to seek Indian advice to import materials that it needed for its security; Article II forbade both the signatories from entering into treaty relation with a third country, which harmed the interest of either parties. Part IV dealt with development issues, where Article 2 enjoined Nepal to seek Indian help for developing her natural resources unless help from other sources were profitable. Finally, it introduced the Common river concept which bound Nepal into agreeing joint harnessing of rivers which were of use to both the countries.

Nepalese Constitution, and “entrusted ... Mr Lokendra Bahadur Chand to form a Council of Ministers” (Rising Nepal, “Royal Proclamation” 1990 April 7) .

According to the Proclamation, the Council of Ministers had two tasks to perform. They were: 1) To consult people holding different political views for bringing about constitutional reforms. To do so it proclaimed to set up a Constitutional Reforms Commission in future. 2) To set up a commission to study incidents that resulted in loss of life and property during the movement. However, the media failed to report the result of the United National People’s Movement’ (See, p. 404 for its formation) call for action on 6 of April. According to Shaha, their “call for action on Friday, 6 April 1990 ... turned out to be the climactic day of the protest movement” (107). On that day people swelled in thousands at Tundhikhel. From there, shouting slogans pointed towards the royalties they marched throughout the valley. When the march reached Darbar Marg the police slaughtered them. Later, in the evening, the Government announced its decision to release political prisoners (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 208–9). Next morning, amid “curfew imposed peace” Balchandra Mishra writes, “Chand visited Ganesh Man in the hospital” and later “released Sahana Pradhan and Man Mohan Adhikari” from jail. In the talks that followed between the Government and the released leaders he writes, “The leaders agreed to hold further talks if an Interim Government was formed and the ban on the functioning of political parties removed” (209). Describing the later events Whelpton writes,

On 8 April, Congress leaders Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Girija Koirala, together with Sahana Pradhan and the CPN (Marxist-Leninist’s) Radha Krishna Mainali went to the palace for direct negotiations with the King. They agreed to accept, for the moment, a simple ending of the ban on political parties; this was announced over state media late that evening. Bhattarai told an interviewer that the movement was now over ... (Whelpton, History 115).

Same day, the press Secretariat of the King issued a communiqué. It removed the ban on political parties; repeated the promise to set up a Constitution Reforms Commission while deleting the term ‘partylessness’ from the Constitution of Nepal (Rising Nepal, “Ban Removed” 1990 Apr. 9). Later, in its document the NCP (ML)

viewed the communiqué as the King's final effort to save the Panchayat system—a conclusion which the Party seems to have arrived at considering King's offer of a Constitution Reform Commission. Besides; the communiqué, in its assessment, was important, because it removed the word 'Party-less' from the Constitution and gave political parties the freedom to engage in talks with the King. By allowing parties to struggle both in streets and in table, it made way for the peaceful destruction of the Panchayat system for the Party stated:

April understanding was the final try by the King to protect the Panchayat system. But, it was an important understanding. On one hand it removed word 'Party-less' from Constitution, on other, the ban imposed on the political parties. So, it transformed violent movements to table talks: it opened the door to dialogue with the King. By doing so it created settings, where peaceful struggle both in streets and in tables could be waged for destroying the Panchayat system... (NCP (ML), Bartaman Paristhiti: Oct/Nov 1990 9).

However, commenting on the agreement NCP (Masal) implied that it was a wrong tactics for it noted:

By entering into the Chaitra 26 agreement the Nepali Congress and the ULF have ditched the people. When the movement was at its peak they terminated it without transferring power into the hands of the people. By doing so they have only strengthened the hand of the King ... They should have intensified the movement for the creation of the Constituent Assembly rather than accepting Constitution Reform Commission ... (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Pratibedan Paus 2048 [1992]" 446).

On 9 April, in a joint Congress-Communists meeting at Tundikhel the parties demanded an Interim Government, which included members of both Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal as they enjoyed the support of the people (Rising Nepal, "Politicians Appeal" 1990 Apr. 10). However, Man Mohan Adhikari of the NCP (Marxist) pointed out that they would now demand dissolution of all Panchayat units, formation of Interim Government and the drafting of a Constitution that promoted the welfare of the people (Rising Nepal, "Politicians Appeal" 1990 Apr. 10). And the speech of Sahana Pradhan of the NCP (M) reflected what the leaders feared in the days to come. She warned that if the existing Ministry, in its expanded form, were turned into an Interim Government then it would not be accepted" (Rising Nepal, "Politicians Appeal" 1990 Apr. 10). In saying so she was not off the mark in

gauging the intent of Chand Ministry, because Whelpton says, “Lokendra Bahadur Chand still hoped to get the political parties simply to join his existing cabinet” (115). On the 10<sup>th</sup>, Tundikhel hosted an open meeting of the United National People’s Movement. There, Shaha points out, its leaders dubbed the 8<sup>th</sup> April understanding “a conspiracy against the people”, and the lifting of the ban on parties as “sheer deception”. They urged the people that “the struggle must go on” (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 212). In the days ahead, the Palace versus the political forces’ tussle dominated the politics of the kingdom. On April 12 in a Congress-ULF sponsored joint condolence meeting held at Mangal Bazar the parties repeated their three demands. They demanded the forming of an Interim Government; dissolution of all Panchayat units including Rastriya Panchayat, and drafting of people oriented Constitution. In the meeting, Congress leader Krishna Prasad Bhattarai told the crowd that he had asked the King to dissolve the Chand Ministry and the Rastriya Panchayat as they were constituted before the deletion of the term ‘Party-less’ from the Constitution, and that people should make the Constitution (Rising Nepal, “Nepali Congress, United Left” 1990 Apr. 13). On April 13, Ganesh Man Singh and others after their talk with the King expressed the possibility of an Interim Government by the end of the coming week (Rising Nepal, “Leaders Appear” 1990 Apr. 14). However, King’s New Year message to the nation on April 14 turned out to be a damp squib. It simply told the nation that the process for setting up Constitutional Reforms Commission was on (Rising Nepal, “Proper Understanding” 1990 Apr. 15). Meanwhile, a three-member Investigation Commission under Supreme Court judge Prachanda Raj Anil began investigating loss of life and property during the *Jana Andolan* (Rising Nepal, “Investigation Commission” 1990 April 16). However, it could not last long. One month later, that is on 17 May, it was dissolved when fresh members, added on 3 May, declined to function in a Commission formed during the Panchayat period (Rising Nepal, “New Investigation Commission” 1990 May 18). Sometimes later, the Government established another Commission under Janardan Lal Mallik, Judge, Eastern Regional Court (Sharma, J. 45). Meanwhile, Balchandra

Mishra states, “Considering the Palace’s wavering attitude towards the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> April understanding, the parties threatened the authorities with fresh movement” (211). The threat worked for Rishikesh Shaha writes, “In the face of the resumption of popular agitation, the King on the morning of 16 April produced a new proclamation” (215). It “dissolved the national Panchayat, the Panchayat and Policy Evaluation Committee and all six class organisations associated with the panchayat system” (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 215). Same day, King asked Ganesh Man Singh to head the Interim Government. But, on health grounds he declined the proposal while suggesting the name of Nepali Congress’s Acting President, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai’s name for the post. The King accepted his suggestion (Shaha, Politics ... Triumph of People Power 215). And when journalists asked Bhattarai about his priorities, he clarified that he would try to restore Indo-Nepal relation to the level that existed before 23 March 1989 (Rising Nepal, “Bhattarai Nominated” 1990 Apr. 17). On the 17<sup>th</sup>, expressing his views on 1950 Treaty he stated “the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship with India is an old Treaty, as times have changed ... we can afford to change it here and there without losing interest of both the countries” (Rising Nepal, “Bhattarai to Submit” 1990 April 18). The message was clear the Congress was not for two separate Treaties: it was ready to recognise Indian concern for security while wangling transit concessions under the package of ‘special relation’. On 18 April, Bhattarai revealed the names of his Cabinet members. According to Shaha, it was a ten-member Cabinet. Of these, three represented the ULF; three, Nepali Congress;<sup>85</sup> two independents and two royal nominees. From the ULF side the well-known ones were Sahana Pradhan, chairman of ULF and Jhal Nath Khanal and the royal nominees, whose names were flashed later, were Kesar Jung Rayamajhi and Achyut Raj Regmi (217–18).

<sup>85</sup> Though the representation of the ULF and the Nepali Congress was equal in the Interim Government, yet for all the failures of the Interim Government the parties blamed the Congress probably because it was led by a Congress leader.

After assuming office the Government was engaged in controlling a series of violent activities. These activities, T. Louise says, were “the activities of the *mandales*, a group of ‘counter revolutionaries’ who were allegedly funded by the palace” (Brown 145). In NCP (Masal)’s view, they were “the main enemy of democracy ... undermining its foundation while strengthening the position of the King” (NCP (Masal), “Rajnitik Prastao 2047” 394). Eventually, when situation turned normal Government’s attention was drawn towards controlling price rise, dismantling of the remaining Panchayat units and in framing a Constitution under which election could be held within a year. In controlling the price rise the continuing Indo-Nepal treaty deadlock restricted its options. However, a Cabinet directive of April 27 was all that was necessary to dissolve “local level Panchayat units” (Rising Nepal, “Government Dissolves” 1990 Apr. 28). After dissolving them, the directive transferred their functions to office Secretaries, Chief administrative officers and Local Development officers at the village, town and district levels respectively. But, on the issue of framing the Constitution it was faced with a number of challenges. Standing on its way for the creation of a Constituent Assembly was its assessment of the Palace’s position. it was reflected, as Hutt reports, in Ganesh Man Singh’s statement, where he is said to have stated, “the King could not be pushed too far too fast, and that the notion of a Constitution which derived from the people and not from the King would provoke a reaction from the Palace” (33). So, it stood for a Constitution drafted by a Constitution Recommendations Commission. However, the UNPM and NCP (Masal) favoured election for a Constituent Assembly and then a Constitution (For reasoning see p. 410). Besides, it had to bear with the Palace’s intrusion in the Constitution framing process. And regarding the expected nature of the Constitution itself, there were divergent views expressed from different quarters which it had to manage.

On 11 May, Hutt writes, “without consulting the interim Government, King Birendra formed a seven-man Constitution Recommendation Commission” (33). It was to function under Supreme Court Justice Biswanath Upadhyaya (Rising Nepal,

“HM Forms” 1990 May 12). Such creation of the Commission, Hutt says, “was in direct contradiction to the ULF’s demand for a commission including representatives of both political parties within the interim Government” (33). Hence, the Nepali Congress press release of 12 May rejected the Commission (Rising Nepal, “NC Hopes for Early Solution of Crisis” 1990 May 13), and so did the ULF (Rising Nepal, “Communists Demand” 1990 May 13).

In the King’s initiative, the UNPM sensed “revivalist” attempt at “consolidating state power in his hand”; the “powerlessness” of Interim Government, and the meddling of the Palace in the affairs of the Government. It demanded transfer of sovereignty to the people (Rising Nepal, “UNPM Rejects” 1990 May 14) which, in their terms, meant an election for a Constituent Assembly. In sum, the mood favoured a body with powers to frame a new Constitution uninfluenced by the Palace. The barrage of attacks, finally led to the dissolution of the Commission. Describing the course of events Michael Hutt writes, “The commission’s chairman ... resigned and three of the six other members refused to join at all. The commission was dissolved after only four days” (34). Further, he noted:

On 22 May, the King vested the legislative and executive powers of the dissolved National Panchayat to the Interim Government [but until] ... 1 June ... the Government was still hindered by a lack of judicial power, which had not yet been granted to it. Critics of the Government said that it was still operating under the 1962 Constitution, minus the word ‘partyless’, and that it therefore still sought Palace approval for every move it made ... (35).

The transfer of the legislative and executive powers to the Interim Government was perhaps the King’s method of gratifying the UNPM, the force to be reckoned with. Then on 30 May 1990, the King, on the advice of the Interim Government, formed “a nine-member Constitution Recommendation Commission” (Election Commission, General Election in Nepal: 1991 7). Though Biswanath Upadhyaya still chaired the Commission, the members represented the Nepali Congress; the constituents of the ULF and the nominees of the King. Representing the Nepali Congress, were: Laxman Aryal, Mukund Regmi, Daman Nath Dhungana. Nirmal Lama, Bharat Mohan Adhikari and Madhav Kumar Nepal represented NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun),

NCP (Marxist) and NCP (ML) respectively (Election Commission, General Election in Nepal: 1991 8). Despite these changes, NCP (Masal) commented that “there was still the possibility of the draft going to the King first and, therefore, of him being the source of the Constitution” (379). Furthermore, the Government during April-May was also faced with a spate of suggestions regarding the content of future Constitution. These suggestions came from ethnic, regional and religious organisations. On May 8; a new political Party, Nepal Rastriya Janamukti Morcha was formed. It demanded a federal Constitution and a secular State to free ethnics from exploitation (Rising Nepal, “New Political” 1990 May 9). In similar lines, the *Janajati Mahasangh*, which represented 14 ethnic groups<sup>86</sup>, asked Prime Minister Bhattarai to include their representatives in the Constitution Recommendation Commission (Rising Nepal, “Delegation Calls” 1990 May 24). Their demands, besides those of the Rastriya Janamukti Morcha, stressed on constitutional provision for the development of all languages, proportional representation of ethnic minorities in Government jobs and removal of Nepali language from preferential position in the future Constitution of Nepal. Besides, regional groups demanded inclusion of Terai residents in the army and police force of the kingdom (Rising Nepal, “Delegation” 1990 May 17). However, there were groups opposed to the demand for a secular State. These were religious organisations like Arya Samaj (Rising Nepal, “Arya Samaj” 1990 May 20) and Krishna Pranami Yuva Parishad, who feared forced conversion to Christianity under secular arrangement (Rising Nepal, “Religious” 1990 May 25). Later, when the Constitution Recommendation Commission sought advice from the people, these ethnic and regional issues formed a corpus of suggestions. But, as Hutt observes,

<sup>86</sup> This organisation was formed in May, 5, 1990. When formed it included eight ethnic organisations (Nepal Janajati Mahasangh, “Yatrako Ek Dasak” 16). Until 2000 its name was Nepal Janajati Mahasangh, however, these days it is called Nepal Janajati Adivasi Mahasangh or Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities. See also, Gellner, “Ethnicity ... in Nepal” 1825 for the mistakes that he commits in providing these information.

“Rather than attempting to accommodate these differences, the commission and Interim Government simply perceived them as threats to national unity, and virtually dismissed them out of hand” (36).

Meanwhile, from May 1990 Bhattarai had initiated moves to restore Indo-Nepal relation. In a letter to Indian Prime Minister, Viswanath Pratap Singh, he underlined the need “to work together to build and promote mutual trust and confidence” (Sharma, J. 64). As a sequel to it, Bhattarai visited India from June 8–10. On 10 June, keeping in the abeyance the signing of a comprehensive arrangement on all bilateral issues until the installation of an elected Government in Nepal, the two leaders issued a joint communiqué. The full text of the communiqué published in *Rising Nepal*, June 11, 1990 had the following declarations:

Ÿ From July 1, 1990 the Indo-Nepal relation was going to be restored to the level that existed on April 1, 1987.

Ÿ Annexure I listed concessions given by Government of India. Entry 9 restored 22 border points between the two countries as custom stations, and entry 10 restored 15 transit points. Entry 12 enjoined Government of India to allow the movement of capital once an Indo-Nepal joint venture was approved. The other sections of the Annexure enjoined Nepal to remove the work permit provision meant for Indian nationals working in Nepal. Besides, Nepal was to treat Indians working in Nepalese schools at par with Nepalese in terms of conditions of employment.

Ÿ Annexure II enjoined Nepal to exempt Indian goods entering Nepal from customs duty. And tariffs on third country goods were not to be structured in a way which would hamper tariff regime for Indian exports. Finally, the preface to the communiqué expressed that both the countries would respect their security concerns.

Back home, Bhattarai described his visit “a complete success”, and pointed out “the restoration of the *status quo ante* as the main achievement of his visit”. On 11 June, “the Cabinet passed a resolution congratulating the Prime Minister on his successful visit to India” (Sharma, J. 70). However, commenting on the provisions of the

communiqué NCP (Masal) obliquely stated, “From the communiqué signed between Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Indian Government the reactionary and revisionists intentions of the latter in giving support to the Nepali *Jana Andolan* becomes clear” (NCP (Masal), “Rajnitik Prastao 2047 Asad [June 1990]” 378).

From the middle of June, Nepali Congress was involved in rejecting the ULF’s demand for an Interim Act (See p. 412). Its leader Ganesh Man Singh repeatedly maintained that in view of the executive and legislative powers, which the King had transferred to the Government such Act was unnecessary (Rising Nepal, “Sahana Says” 1990 June 22). Endorsing his views, at the end of its three day meeting held in the first week of July, the Central Working Committee of Nepali Congress passed a resolution (Rising Nepal, “NC Sees” 1990 July 5). But, the Communist demand lingered on. On July 10, the King suspended a number of Articles of the Panchayat Constitution (Rising Nepal, “His Majesty Suspends” 1990 July 11). Commenting on the King’s act NCP (ML) press release said:

Those Articles which were already inactive following the abolition of the Panchayat System have been suspended and no other important Articles that give the King the sovereign power have been suspended. Our main demand is to transfer the power vested in the King to the people by promulgating an Interim Act (NCP (ML), Bigyapti 1990 July 10).

Meanwhile, according to Jan Sharma, the Government accepted a four-member Pay Commission’s recommendations, which it had constituted to recommend changes in Government corporation employees’ pay structure. The acceptance substantially increased their wages (43). However, it had its fallout for Mishra writes, “the hike left more than one lakh Low-Grade Civil Service employees working in Government establishments dissatisfied since their pay did not increase” (228). Hence its organisation, “Nepal Civil Servants’ Organisation began pressurising the Government” (Mishra 228). When nothing transpired, Mishra says, “The Organisation threatened the Government with protest movements from October 28, 1990 if its demands for pay hike and registration of the Organisation were not met with” (228). The Government, however, responded. “It promised the registration of the

Organisation and sympathetic consideration of its demands, but 15 days after the promulgation of the Constitution” (Mishra 228). The Organisation decided to be accommodative: it deferred its agitation. From August, the tussle between the King and the Constitution Drafting Commission resurfaced in Nirmal Lama’s threat: on August 6 he threatened the Government with his resignation from the Commission if the draft went to the King first (Rising Nepal, “Lama Insists” 1990 Aug. 7). However, by August 31 the draft of the Constitution was ready. Next day, when its “outline” became public in “Gorkhapatra” it indicated, that in the future Constitution of Nepal it would be possible to amend<sup>87</sup> the provisions related to “constitutional monarchy, multi-Party democracy and the vesting of sovereignty in the people” (Hutt 39) by ¾ votes of the legislature followed by a national referendum. Since, the Congress had always stood by these feature, the inclusion of such amendment provision was considered by the Communists as their victory over the Congress (Hutt 39). Hence, from then on Hutt writes that they began asking for “immediate promulgation” of the Constitution “while the Congress continued to look for an opportunity to make [the] concepts inviolable” (39). Meanwhile, news regarding Bhutan People’s Party’s democratic struggle against Drukpa regime there began pouring in Nepal.<sup>88</sup> The Party’s plan to carry on movement in Phuntsholing from August 26, 1990 was flashed across the kingdom (Rising Nepal, “Demonstrations” 1990 August 22). However, by then the flow of Bhutanese refugees into Nepal had already begun and a support group, the Bhutan Sahayog Samuha was carrying on silent processions in Nepal in support of the movement (Rising Nepal, “Silent” 1990 August 26). From September onward, constitutional issues claimed much of the nation’s time. And majority of it

<sup>87</sup> See Whelpton, History 117,. The communists wanted the possibility of abolishing monarchy and replacing bourgeois democracy in future so such provisions were in support of their stand.

<sup>88</sup> See, Whelpton, History 190 The movement in Bhutan was launched to protest against Bhutanese government’s campaign of forced assimilation and restrictive legislation on citizenship.

was spent in the Palace-Government tussle. But, when the Election Commission described the end of the Constitution making process it observed:

The Commission submitted the draft of the Constitution to the Government. The Council of Ministers, further considered the draft and with some alternatives (sic) thereon, submitted the final draft to His Majesty and the Constitution was promulgated with the Royal proclamation on November 9, 1990 abrogating the earlier Constitution of Nepal, 1962 (Election Commission, General Election in Nepal: 1991 8).

The statements hid two facts. First, by saying that the draft went to the Government it hid the fact that it went to the King first. Second, it hid the events which went in between the period when the draft moved hands between the two institutions namely the King and the Council of Ministers. On these Michael Hutt had this to say:

Justice Upadhyaya presented the draft of the new Constitution to the King on 10 September. The King then handed it to Bhattarai as agreed, but sparked ... controversy by instructing him to consider suggestions put forward by constitutional organs and political parties which had not been represented in the Recommendation Commission... (39).

On 11 October, with inputs from the Council of Ministers, Bhattarai presented the draft of the Constitution to the King (Rising Nepal, "Bhattarai Presents" 1990 Oct. 12). According to Hutt, they "made over twenty changes to the draft" (40). But, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October the Palace released "a new draft" which was "claimed ... [to have been] prepared jointly by the King and the prime minister" (40). The Palace draft did not express what the Communists wanted: its Preamble did not declare that it was the outcome of the movement. Besides, it gave the King the power to declare emergency without the advice of the Council of Ministers (Hutt 41). Further, it included the institution of *Raj Parishad*, which the Congress did not want and it failed to meet the aspirations of ethnic and regional groups. After that, revealing the issues compromised in a Palace-Nepali Congress's talks Hutt says, "Inside the Palace, on 24 October, the King spent four and a half hours in talks with Congress leaders and Justice Upadhyaya. By the end of the day, agreement had been reached on the issues of multi-Party democracy, constitutional monarchy, the vesting of sovereignty in the people, and human rights ..." (42). On 25 October, a Royal Palace communiqué informed the nation that the King would proclaim the Constitution on 9 November

1990 (Rising Nepal, “NC Welcomes” 1990 Oct. 26). But, when it was promulgated voices of dissent were heard from three quarters. NCP (Mashal) viewed it as a symbol of betrayal for having placed unlimited powers in the hands of the King (Rising Nepal, “Mashal Takes” 1990 Nov. 18). In similar tone NCP (Masal) stated:

The Constitution has placed the sovereign authority in the hands of the King ... and given him the power to declare emergency without the advice of the Council of Ministers. Besides, it has created Raj Parishad, an institution parallel to the Council of Ministers ... there are enough gaps in the Constitution which allow him to exercise his discretion. So it has failed to establish constitutional monarchy in Nepal (NCP (Masal), “Bahiskarko Ghoshnapatra” 411–12).

And Nepal Sadbhavana Party leader, Gajendra Narayan Singh described it as a document which “discriminated against the people of Terai”. He demanded citizenship to all Terai people whose names were in the voters list prepared before the referendum. He threatened to hit the streets if discriminatory provisions of the Constitution were not changed by 29 December. And by way of suggesting improvements in the document he pointed out that Nepal should adopt a “federal structure” and “ensure Terai representation in her administrative and political institutions” (Rising Nepal, “Problems of Terai” 1990 Nov. 30). Were Gajendra Narayan’s claims and demands unjustified? They were not, because NCP (Masal)’s document, in painting the plight of the Terai population, expressed similar views for it stated:

Today, the situation in Terai is grave. From the beginning the ruler class, corrupt officials from the hills, the police and the Zamindars have treated Terai population as second class citizens of the kingdom. They have discriminated against their language and culture and have not given them equal opportunity in Government services and in educational institutions. We have always raised our voices against these discriminations. Because of such situation communal and secessionist forces especially intruders from India and revivalist of Nepal are working there in planned manner. We should oppose all communal and secessionist forces while supporting their just claims for autonomy, for equal opportunity in developing their languages, culture, and their demands for equal representation in the administrative and defence establishments of our kingdom ... (NCP (Masal), “Rajnitik Prastao 2047 Asad [June 1990]” 381).

But, the NCP (UML) simply noted, “After a long struggle there is a new Constitution in Nepal. It has many weaknesses and defects. Even then, it has provided

constitutional basis for advancing democratic practices” (NCP (UML), Ghoshna-Patra, 2047 8). However, NCP (Prajatantrabadi [Democratic])<sup>89</sup>praised the Constitution when it stated:

The Constitution has bound the autocratic monarch. For the first time in the history of Nepal the people have fundamental rights. The 2047 [1990] Constitution has institutionalised democracy which people can use for the accelerated development of the nation. The fruit of the development can then be used for the uplift of the proletariat; in ensuring their participation, and in building up a just and equitable society... (NCP (Prajatantrabadi) 2).

And in similar vein, NCP (Verma) said, “It has established multi-Party democracy; transferred sovereignty to the people, created parliamentary system, accepted constitutional democracy and provided the path for peaceful transformation of the society” (NCP (Verma) 3). Thus, after the promulgation of the Constitution the Communists of Nepal were divided into three groups: One group was all in praise for the Constitution, and another, against it and still another had mixed opinion about it. In the days ahead, these perceptions were bound to affect the nature of their participation in the 1991 election.

#### 1.16. November 1990 Constitution: The Parliamentary Phase

After the proclamation of the Constitution, the NCP (ML) and NCP (Marxist) factions of the ULF were trying to convince the Congress for an electoral alliance, but the proposal was firmly rejected by Nepali Congress General Secretary, Girija Prasad Koirala. In a seminar held on 24 November he declared that Nepali Congress would go to polls alone (Rising Nepal, “Fight Alone: Girija” 1990 Nov. 25). Explaining such tactics of the strongest factions of the ULF, Whelpton rightly points out that they were, during the period, trying to apply Mao’s April 24, 1945 New Democratic<sup>90</sup>line in Nepal (Whelpton, “Election 1991” 55). In following such tactics,

<sup>89</sup> This was NCP (Manandhar) with its new name suggested to it by the Election Commission.

<sup>90</sup> See, Brandt, Schwartz and Fairbank 295 In April 24, 1945 Mao advocated that China during that phase required unity among all political parties and groups to

they contended that Communist-Congress understanding was important for checking the rise of revivalist in future.<sup>91</sup> However, the tactics was misplaced. In 1945 when Mao was calling for such an alliance between the Chinese Communist and the Kuomintang forces he was speaking from a position of power. Then the Chinese Communist forces were in control of a vast “liberated Area” and the area under the control of the KMT had shrunk to half its former size (Brandt, et al. 299). Compared to it, UML’s plea for alliances and electoral understanding was being made in a situation where no one knew whose strength was more. Thus, while pursuing such tactics the UML was neglecting the objective condition of Nepal. Hence, its tactics was bound to fail. From then onwards, if the Communists were engaged in unity

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form a provisional coalition government and in such coalition he even favoured the entry of the Kuomintang Party. However, see, Whelpton, “Election 1991” 55–6 to explain the changes in the tactical position of NCP (UML) in 1991, Whelpton draws attention to a few historical facts namely, a) the NCP (ML) abandoned its ‘Maoist’ label in 1989; b) NCP (ML) to practice tactical unity with the Congress declared that *Naulo Janabad* would guarantee full freedom for the ordinary people to establish parties ... on the basis of their political belief. To prove his statement (b) he refers to NCP (ML) document NCP (ML), “Nepali Krantiko ... Karyakram” 16. However, the facts are as follows: first NCP (M-L) never used the Maoist Label, but it practised Maoist tactics. It gave it up and chose a more flexible tactics after its failure in 1980 referendum. Second, the content of the document in page 16 cannot be linked to explain that the Party by doing so was trying to establish tactical alliance at the governmental level with the Congress. In fact the statement which he uses is linked with the Party’s acceptance of *Bahudaliya Janabad* or multi-party democracy under New Democracy in p-15 of the document and nothing more can be read in the statement. In 1989, NCP (M-L) was advocating alliance with Nepali Congress only to overthrow the Panchayat system, but for establishing New Democracy it said that the Nepali Congress must be destroyed. Hence, 1989 position of NCP (M-L) cannot be used to explain the 1990 tactical position of NCP (M-L), NCP (Marxist) and of their combined form NCP (UML) after January 1991. However, he was right in pointing out that these groups were talking about tactical alliance with the Congress at the governmental level in the 1990 to fight against revivalist forces. And this was in line with the Party line of the Chinese Communist in 1945.

<sup>91</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “NC, CPN Should Cooperate” 1991 Jan. 17 The tactics was invoked even after the formation of NCP (UML). With same logic Man Mohan Adhikari asked the Congress to enter into an electoral understanding but with no avail.

moves among themselves (See p. 415 ), the Government was faced with pressures from various sides. On 6 December, Civil Servants threatened her with protests if their demands for improving the morale of the employees were not implemented by December 12 (Rising Nepal, “Speedy” 1990 Dec. 7). Meanwhile, the newly formed (See p. 415 ) NCP (Unity Centre) began pressurising the Government. In a mass meeting organised in December 7, its leaders called upon the people to help it launch new democratic revolution. They expressed their concern over rising prices, rampant corruption and state of lawlessness that prevailed under the Interim arrangement. Eulogising use of force to capture power, they noted that it was a “day-dream to expect change through ballots” (Rising Nepal, “Concerned” 1990 Dec. 8). Amid these developments, Mishra notes, “when the Government failed to keep up to its words, Nepal Civil Servants Organisation began its movement from December 12. It launched pen down strike to press the Government for the fulfilment of its various demands” (Mishra 229). Faced with pressure from NCP (ML) to resolve the issue at the earliest (Rising Nepal, “Civil Servants” 1990 Dec. 19), on December 20, the Government entered into a five-point agreement with the Organisation. Out of these five points, which Mishra indicates, the most important ones were as follows:

• Within two weeks there shall be a High Level Commission consisting of experts and members of Nepal Civil Servants’ Association.

• The Commission shall prepare a report on the facilities to be extended to civil servants after studying the facilities extended to the corporation employees. The pay structure recommended by the Commission will be implemented from VS 2048 Baisakh 1 [14 May 1991] and rest of the recommendations from VS 2048 Srawan 1 [17 July 1991].

• The Commission framed as per point 1 above shall submit its report to the Government within two months (230).

On 21 December, Late News item reported that the Organisation has agreed to withdraw the movement following Government’s proposal for a high level administrative Committee to look into its grievances (Rising Nepal, “Late News” 1990 Dec. 21). After that, Mishra says, “The Commission was formed and it presented the Report on time” (230). However, he reports that “In the intervening

period the Government created Nepal Civil Servants' Association<sup>92</sup> and registered it on VS 2047/11/12 [26 March 1991]" (230). And from then onwards, "the then Prime Minister began issuing statements that only the elected Government would implement the recommendations of the Commission" (Mishra 230). The issue lingered on. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, possibly to silence a few Communist factions, who viewed the Parliament as an institution that symbolised bourgeois distortion, Nepal enacted Nepal Treaty Act, which brought into action Article 126 of the Constitution (See p. 231). The Government projected it as a measure necessary to enhance the sovereignty of the Parliament (Rising Nepal, "Pioneer Treaty" 1990 Dec. 28) . However, Jan Sharma observes that it was produced out of "The experiences of Nepal being cheated<sup>93</sup> in water negotiations with India ... since 1959 Koshi Agreement" (53). Then he says that the move angered India. But, considering the outcome, which Nepal would have faced by tampering with the spirit of camaraderie that she had recently cultivated with India,

<sup>92</sup> Mishra's statement here is not precise: Government then could mean either the Nepali Congress or the Communists. And his statement that the Government created Nepal Civil Servants' Association contradicts with Brown's statement where she says, "The long-standing Civil Servants Association became linked with Congress and a rival Civil Servants' Organisation was established in order to counterbalance Congress's influence ... to mobilise support for the communists" 150. Thus, in her understanding the Civil Servants' Organisation was the creation of the Communists. Besides, she further points out that the movement peaked in the summer of 1990. However, considering paper reports of the period both her facts were wrong because Nepal Civil Servants Organisation was the long-standing organisation and since they were demanding dissolution of the "so called Nepal Civil Servants' Association" (Rising Nepal, "Civil Servants' Memorandum" 1991 June 15) it implied that Nepal Civil Servants Organisation was already in existence and the rival group was created by the Congress (see, also p.276 for earlier Communist organisation) Second, the movement did not peak in the summer of 1990, but after May 1991, see, Rising Nepal, "Benefits" 1991 June 30 These minor facts are important in the context of Brown's writing, because by the mistakes she commits in keeping her facts straight her writing implicates the Communists for over-politicising the polity that too after the Jana Andolan.

<sup>93</sup> See, Sharma, J. 53 where the author provides details regarding India's failure in keeping its words. It had failed to supply water for irrigation from Done canal and power from Kataiya Plant.

it is difficult to accept his argument. Meanwhile, on 31 December Mallik Commission submitted its report to Prime Minister Bhattarai. According to the Report, the *Jana Andolan* had claimed 45 lives, injured 2,300 and damaged property worth Rs. 60 million (Sharma, J. 45) and as per Brown, the Commission suggested the Government to take actions “against police, administrators, and ministers ... responsible for suppressing the *Jana Andolan*” (148). Then, in 1 February 1991, Bhattarai referred the Report to the Attorney General to take necessary actions. However, the Attorney General did not take action pointing out that there were no existing laws which allowed him to take punitive actions against those identified in the Report (Brown 148; Sharma, J. 45). Commenting on the obstacles which stood in Bhattarai’s path in implementing the Commission’s suggestion, Brown lists three reasons. First, Congress wanted to protect the institution of monarchy, the symbol of nationhood. Had the Congress tried to punish functionaries responsible for excesses committed during the *Jana Andolan* then the process would have ultimately ended in charging the King so it was abandoned. Second, such action would have distanced the police force and their support in the running of the Interim Government. Third, it was the very nature of the 8<sup>th</sup> April compromise, which, she says, was “designed to bring about a mutual reduction in risk” (149). However, of these three reasons the former two are acceptable but not the last, because in reaching such conclusion she simply uses Huntington’s theory without providing supporting evidence. For the balance of the period, the kingdom faced yet another movement. From 12 January 1991, Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) launched its nationwide demonstrations. It demanded federalism, citizenship to all Terai people settled there before promulgation of the Constitution, electoral constituencies on the basis of [the nature of] the population and inclusion of Terai population in the Army (Rising Nepal, “NSP Holds” 1991 Jan. 13). The Government responded to one of its demands. It promised to give citizenship to all Terai settlers whose names were included in the voters list prepared for the 1980 national referendum (Rising Nepal, “Granting Citizenship” 1991 Jan. 26). But, Man Mohan Adhikari, President of NCP (UML)(For UML’s formation see p. 421), besides

criticising Congress leadership for monopolising official media, flayed the decision as their ploy to influence election outcome (Rising Nepal, “Deceptive Ploy” 1990 Feb. 5). Then on 11 February, the Interim Government announced the date for the much-awaited General Election: it was slated on May 12, 1991. Within this period, Indian Prime Minister, Chandra Shekhar visited Nepal from 13 to 16 February. The visit was focused on improving trade ties with Nepal and in streamlining processes for the construction of Tanakpur barrage and in implementing major hydro-electric projects namely Pancheshwor and Karnali (Rising Nepal, “Nepal-India Talks” 1991 Feb. 15). From then onward, the kingdom entered into election mode. Describing the phase T. Louise Brown writes:

Once a multi-Party system was safely enshrined ... an enormous number of parties appeared on the political scene. Over forty bodies registered as parties with the Election Commission ... That there were so many parties was indicative of the low level of political development ... Judging by some of the interpretations, a Party did not need an ideology or a political platform. It could be formed simply by a man, his family and a handful of followers. Even the concept of democracy seemed confused ... Political awareness was at an elementary stage and was especially low in the more disadvantaged regions of the country (Brown 155).

Besides, She notes, “In many areas of the country it was possible to discern a distinct exodus from the panchayat camp into that of the Congress” (156). The *panchas*, according to her, were in a run for transferring “their allegiance to the prospective victors ... [and the] Congress accepted [them] with enthusiasm ... [to] fortify the Party in the rural areas” (156). This had it fallout for she writes that it transformed the “Congress from the Party of revolution into the Party of the *status quo*” (157). Commenting on this trend NCP (Masal) characterised the class character of Nepali Congress synonymous to that of the King, but more important was its reading on the changing character of Nepali Congress. It observed that it was sliding more and more towards the *mandales* meaning that it was becoming more and more ‘Panchayati’ in character for it stated:

The class base of the King and Nepali Congress is same. Since the main characteristic of Nepali Congress is reactionary one cannot expect it to play a positive role for the sake of democracy and nationalism. On account of its pro-India policies its stand on nationalism was always

anti-nationalist. And in case of democracy it has supported the struggle but only for coming to power. Today it has adopted a new technique of monopolising and perpetuating its autocratic rule. It is welcoming the entry of *mandales* into its organisation in large scale. As a result it is progressively attaining *mandales* character (NCP (Masal), “Rajnaitik Prastao 2047” 394).

And much before the kingdom’s entry into election phase parties had begun defiling her overall political environment: from February 9, 1991 onwards papers frequently reported alleged involvement of one Party or the other in disturbing mass meetings.<sup>94</sup> On May 10, just two days before election, Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP [NDP]) workers were reported buying votes for their candidates in one of the electoral constituencies (Rising Nepal, “Thapa Workers Caught” 1991 May 11). Amid such circumstances, when the May 12, 1991 General Election was held, based on parties’ fielding of their candidates, the election witnessed four major contenders. They were: Nepali Congress, NCP (UML), National Democratic Party (Thapa) and National Democratic Party (Chand). They fielded their candidates in  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the total 205 constituencies. Following them were two other Communist parties, United Peoples’ Front Nepal (UPFN) and NCP (Democratic). The others were, Nepal Rastriya Jana Mukti Morcha (NRJMM) and Nepal Sadbhavana Party. They fielded their candidates in 50–75 of the constituencies (Election Commission, General Election in Nepal: 1991 65). However, the Commission’s report did not mention the names of minor Communist factions like NCP (Verma), NCP (Nepal Majdoor-Kisan Party), NCP (Amatya) and Nepal Jana Rastriya Party which were also in the fray. Besides, it failed to point out that NCP (Masal) boycotted the election (For reasons see p. 424). Nevertheless, when the campaign began the parties tried to project themselves in different hues, but with little success because they all professed their commitment to democracy and economic development. According to Whelpton, “In the month before the May election, the Party [Nepali Congress] continued to present itself as the key

<sup>94</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Meeting Attacked” 1991 Feb. 10 Rising Nepal, “Meet Disturbed” 1991 Mar. 11 and Rising Nepal, “Unity Centre Mass” 1991 Mar. 16.

actor in the struggle to bring democracy to Nepal and also as the sole guarantor of a democratic future” (52). But, its commitment to “political pluralism” he says, failed “to provide the Party with a distinct identity when virtually everyone ... [was] proclaiming the virtues of political pluralism” (52). And its economic programme<sup>95</sup>, which was projected as “social democracy along Scandinavian lines,” (52) promised mixed economy, 75% of National Income for the development of rural Nepal, increase in employment opportunities, distribution of land to the landless and the ending of dual ownership of land. And above all, like Communists, it also promised punishment to all those who had indulged in corrupt and criminal activities during the Panchayat period (Rising Nepal, “NC Manifesto” 1991 March 15). In similar vein, both Chand and Thapa factions of National Democratic parties “proclaimed their own liberal democratic credentials” and Thapa faction, in particular, advocated “a mixed economy and national unity and a promise of ‘fundamental change’ in agriculture and the land-reform programme” (Whelpton, “Election 1991” 62). The only contrasting position were those of the regional and ethnic parties, but even their promises were not different from those of a few Communists (see below). According to Whelpton, the Sadbhavana Party, stood against “alleged discrimination of the *madeshis*, the people of Indian origin or plains origin” (60). Its leader, Gajendra Narayan, opposed any move which sought “to end ... [Nepal’s] open border with India ... naturalisation and economic rights of non-citizens” (60). These positions, at least on one count, were not much different from those of NCP (UML) when its manifesto promised “equal opportunity to all to enter the Armed forces” or when it claimed that it was in favour of “ending discriminations based on regionalism” (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 26). Similarly, the manifestos of Nepal Rastriya Janamukti Morcha (NRJMM) and Nepal Jana Rastriya Party (NJRP) which promised transformation of

<sup>95</sup> See, page 202 . It was, according to Planning Commission Report, an unorthodox variety of socialism.

the kingdom into a federal structure<sup>96</sup> was not different from what the UPFN was promising. Thus, the election of 1991 was fought along lines where promises given to the electorates by parties, which were expected to emerge as national parties, were similar. Naturally, the electorates had little choice to make. However, Whelpton makes note of two important features related to the election campaign. First, based on Political Science Association of Nepal after election survey, as reported by Borre, he says, “For the electorate as a whole it was ... ‘bread and butter’ issues which were of most concern” (63). Second, he observes, that for the electorate “foreign policy issues ... were not of great interest ... [but] the UML manifesto [despite having its rhetoric on the issue] toned down ... [played] the anti-Indian card ... strongly during the campaign” (64).

#### 1.17. 1991 Election and Its Outcome

On 23 May 1991, when the Election Commission declared the final results Nepali Congress secured 110 seats and NCP (UML), 69 seats. Among other Communist contenders, UPFN secured 9; NCP (NWPP), 2; NCP (Democratic), 2 while NCP (Amatya) and NCP (Verma) drew blank. Besides, Sadbhavana Party won 6; Rastriya Prajatantra Party (Chand), 3; RPP (Thapa), 1 while Nepal Rastriya Janamukti Morcha and Nepal Rastriya Jana Party failed to secure any seats. Region wise the Communist victories were as follows: (See, next page).

<sup>96</sup> See, Bhattachan 40 Both these parties demanded the division of the kingdom on ethnic lines. The Nepal Rastriya Janamukti Morcha demanded administrative federalism and Nepal Rastriya Jana Party, the division on the kingdom into 12 provinces namely, *Khasan, Jadan, Magarat, Tamu Dhi or Tamuwan, Tamba Saling, Nepal, Khambuwan, Limbuwan, Kochila, Maithil, Bhojpuri and Awadhi*

Table 1

Communist parties' Tally in Different Development Areas:

Development Areas	Total Constituencies	Communist Tally
Eastern	49	UML=31; UPFN=1
Central	64	UML=25; UPFN=4; Democratic=2; NWPP=1
Western	45	UML=8
Mid-Western	28	UML=5; UPFN=4; NWPP=1
Far-Western	19	None

Source: Election Commission, *General Election in Nepal: 1991*. Kathmandu: Election Commission, 1992. 132–41.

The results reflected a few perplexing trends. These were: a) Krishna Prasad Bhattarai lost against UML leader Madan Bhandari b) Communist victory tapered towards zero in the Far-Western development area, the most underdeveloped part of Nepal; c) Communist parties like the NCP (Democratic) and NCP (NWPP) failed to poll 3% of the total 72, 910, 84 votes cast. Their total votes reached a mere 2.43% and 1.25% respectively and d) Both Nepal Rastriya Janamukti Morcha and Nepal Rastriya Jana Party, which espoused ethnic issues ended up securing just .47% and .08% of the total votes (Election Commission, General Election in Nepal: 1991 270), but out of the 9 United Peoples Front Nepal's elected representatives 7 represented ethnic section of the society (Election Commission, General Election in Nepal: 1991 132–41). Researchers analysed these results, save Bhattarai's defeat, on the basis of ethnic groups' dispersal over the map of Nepal. A representative view of such an analysis in "an often-cited article" (Lawoti and Hangen 10) published in 1995 observed: "Clearly, the Indo-Aryan language speaking belts and the region-based NSP's areas were the NC's strongholds. Similarly, the Tibeto-Burman language speaking ethnic groups of the hills have supported the CPN-UML" (Bhattachan 41). And explaining why there was such a trend, the article's author, Bhattachan says:

The reasons why the Indo-Aryan language speaking people of the Tarai and the far western hills support the NC are: (a) the NC is a pro-Indian Party that reflects Madhesi sentiments; (b) the communist parties, mainly the CPN-UML, do not show sympathy to the problems of the Madhesis; (c) the Madhesis believe that the NC would be able to solve their problems; and (d) the NC stands for the status quo, but the communist parties stand for radical changes which might not be favorable to the Madhesis.

The reasons why the Tibeto-Burman language speaking people support the CPN-UML are: (a) the Party respects nationalism, and has sympathy with the problems of various ethnic groups; (b) it stands against Indian expansion and neo-colonialism; (c) it stands for change; (d) it is the Party that may solve their problems; and (e) the NC is not sympathetic to the problems of the ethnic groups (Bhattachan 41).

And the basis, he says, on which he was drawing the above conclusion were, “The most recent events [which he does not explain] like the dialogue between the ruling NC and the Tarai region-based political Party, the NSP, on the one hand, and a committee report on ethnic issues at the central committee of the CPN-UML ...” (Bhattachan 41). This leaves no room to assess the soundness of his logic, but his statements broadly imply that the support base of the NC is the Indo-Aryan (Indo-European) language speaking masses and the support base of NCP-UML the Tibeto-Burman language speaking masses. In the context of Nepal, the former language group refers to the caste group with vertical hierarchy, and the latter to the ethnic group. But, empirical facts do not support such broad generalisation. In Taplejung and Terhathum constituencies of the Eastern Development Region the percentages of caste group out of the total voters of the Districts were 40.66 and 37.81. Even then all 6 constituencies of Taplejung and two of Terhathum had gone in favour of NCP (UML). Similarly, cases of Sindhuli and Ramechhap Districts had the predominance of ethnics, each district with 37.65 and 33.66 percentages. Even then, UML won in 1 and NC in 2 of Sindhuli constituencies and NC and UPFN won one each in Ramechhap constituencies. Similar examples are interspersed throughout the Western Development Region and a few in Mid-Western Region’s results. In the Far-Western Region, Humla presented an exception. Despite caste group being in dominance that is 61.80% the winner was UPFN. Thus, Bhattachan’s conclusion violated the principle of generalisation. It was not an unbiased study of a complex phenomenon.

Hence, based upon wider empirical sources, when Harka Gurung studied the electoral results after 1994 election he wrote:

Electoral success seems to be based on the broader appeal to voters rather than the ethnic/caste basis. This is indicated by the divergence in pattern of districts by their ethnic/caste dominance and those elected. In other words, successful candidates were able to transcend the ethnic/caste boundary. In this, the Bahun [the Brahmins] emerge as very prominent (Gurung, Social Demography 141).

So, Whelpton was probably right in imputing the UML's successes in 1991 to the preferences of "the population [which was] better educated and more politically conscious than the mass of voters in the relatively less-developed west" (72). Besides, on the basis of empirical findings he wrote that the UML was more popular among the "younger voters" and "UML's reputation as a new radical force appealed to an electorate increasingly eager for change" (72). Hence, the 1991 election results were a vote for change rather than an expression of ethnic/caste biases. Moreover, if Whelpton's statements<sup>97</sup> in his other work, are taken then it appears that even the idea of 'haves' and 'have-nots' are constructs related with the level of consciousness, which in turn seems to be related with the level of development or more precisely the level of education for he writes, "In particular, over much of the country there was a perception of Congress as the Party of the 'haves' and of the various Communist groups as representing the 'have-nots'. This was especially so in the developed regions of the country" (Whelpton, History 119). This seems to answer the puzzle why the Communists fared well in the developed regions. However, one must remember that these empirical findings and conclusion are still tentative, because they all neglect the historical biases: the traditional areas where the parties flourished and their organisational readiness to face elections. The failure of ethnic parties despite the rise of ethnic issues is a pointer towards the importance of analysing the organisational readiness of a party before election.

<sup>97</sup> These are also based on opinion survey before polling day.

After the results, on 23 May, Nepali Congress's Central Working Committee unanimously elected Girija Prasad Koirala to head the Government. On 30 May, he assumed his responsibilities. Speaking shortly after, he indicated the priorities of his Government: it was to fight against poverty, the cause behind all socio-economic problems of Nepal. However, he appealed the people for their patience, and drawing attention to the status of economy, which he said was "in shambles", he asked all organisations to desist from raising demands (Rising Nepal, "Close Ties with India, China" 1991 May 31). Meanwhile, NCP (UML)'s Parliamentary Board elected its Chairman, Man Mohan Adhikari, the leader of the opposition in the House (Rising Nepal, "Long Innings" 1991 May 25). Thus, from May 1991 onwards the kingdom was all set to witness a political phase where people expected fast change. However, in such environment of heightened expectations the two main political forces namely the Nepali Congress and the UML including other Communist parties did not see eye to eye on several issues. On the one hand, the Nepali Congress because of its leaders' reading of the situation, particularly its views regarding the position of the Monarchy, and the change that had come in its organisation owing to the entry of *mandales* was constrained to function within the bounds of Panchayat values. On the other, the UML and its kindred was all set to practice their revolutionary tactics (See p. 436 ). For the UML it meant preservation and strengthening of democratic values, but for others like NCP (Masal) it meant preservation and destruction at the same time for it said, "In short we should support present multi-Party system to check the rise of Panchayat autocracy, but at the same time we should struggle against it to bring about New Democratic system" (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Prastao 2047" 393). Practised together, which they often did, their tactics meant simultaneous preservation, destruction and construction of the system. The following years were, therefore, marked with political activities where the Communists viewed Nepali Congress as the flag bearer of Panchayat autocracy and themselves as practitioners of revolutionary ideals.

### 1.18. June 1991–1994: Nepali Congress in Power

Immediately after election, Koirala Government was exposed to the criticism of Nepal Journalist Association when it passed Press and Publication Act, 1991. The UML objected against the process adopted in passing the Bill and the content of the Bill itself (See p. 437). This was followed by clamours of leaders and organisations to fulfil a series of demands. Of these, the demands of civil servants turned into a month and a half long agitation. In dealing with the agitation, Koirala used harsh legal means (See p. 440). While applying them, Jan Sharma writes he “selectively hired and fired [the] civil servants” (157). This brought the Government at loggerheads with the Communists because the Communists viewed in the Government’s approach an authoritative tendency which their tactics of the period sought to fight. Explaining Koirala’s approach of suspending and firing agitating employees, Narayan Man Bujukche pointed towards “Government’s partiality and high-handedness” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Dwitiya Adhiwayshun 3–4). And explaining such behaviour of the Government, NCP (UML) pointed towards the trend that had set in the Congress’s organisation from the Interim period. In its view the trend progressed when, for the sake of gaining power, it hobnobbed with Panchayat activists meaning that it was the result of the changes in the class basis of the Party for it stated:

On many issues such as in encouraging investments in productive sectors, reducing administrative costs ... the Interim Government took relatively positive stands. In some way it had democratically behaved with the agitating civil servants ... but many of its decisions on the issue were damaging. From then onwards it had begun taking decisions against civil servants’ sense of self-respect. The trend progressed especially when to fulfil its over-ambition it either encouraged the entry of erstwhile Panchayat members within its fold or befriended those remaining outside ... Thus, from the Interim period its activities raised doubts regarding the future of the nation. These negative trends such as price rise, status of civil servants are the result of the administration which remained in the Congress’s hand since the days of the Interim period... (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 13–14).

Besides, it observed that the suspensions were used by “the Government to fill vacant posts by its minions and to implement its policy of ‘congressisation’, which “deprived the nation of a democratic and an impartial administration” (NCP (UML),

Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 43). These were not acceptable to UML's tactical position. In the process of 'congressisation' it perceived Government's authoritarianism and in the destruction of administrative neutrality, the destruction of democracy. In addition, the result of the movement, where "four hundred twenty" (Mishra 236–48) employees lost their jobs, whittled UML's "support base". Hence, from then onwards Whelpton points out that the relation between the Congress and the UML became "a running sore" (189).

On the 8<sup>th</sup> July 1991, Girija presented Mallik Commission's Report to the House of Representatives (Rising Nepal, "Mallik Report" 1991 July 9). However, after its presentation in the House, Girija, like his predecessor, shelved it. Later in August 1992, sheltered in the reasoning, which the Attorney General had offered and by pointing out that the Commission had failed in providing concrete evidence against the criminals, Girija declined to implement the directives of the Report.<sup>98</sup> Mallik himself asked the Government to study the report deeply and one of Commissions' members, Indra Raj Pandey, frankly stated that the Government did not have the guts to implement the Report (Rising Nepal, "Study Report" 1992 Sept. 2; Rising Nepal, "Member Issues Denial" 1992 Sept. 3). The issue died a natural death when the Communists failed to raise any voice against Government's inaction. Communists' reaction on this issue was indeed surprising (For reasons see p. 445). From then onwards, Whelpton points out that two issues, namely price rise and Tanakpur became important. According to him, price rise was due to Congress's abdication of its "socialist orientation" in support of a "a neo-liberal economic policies favoured by the aid donors" (Whelpton, History 189). And Tanakpur issue emerged out of the perceptions of "many" who "felt" that "Koirala ... [had] secured an insufficient share of electric power and water for Nepal in an agreement legalising India's construction of a dam on Nepalese territory at Tanakpur on the Mahakali river" (Whelpton,

<sup>98</sup> See, Rising Nepal, "Action Impossible" 1992 Aug. 22; Rising Nepal, "Implement Mallik Report" 1992 Aug. 25

History 189). However, in the eyes of NCP (NWPP) representative price rise was due to the unequal relation that the Congress had cultivated in between Nepal and her two neighbours.<sup>99</sup>Speaking in the Parliament on 21 February 1992, Narayan Man said, “Had we maintained similar level of relation with both our neighbours, had we allowed unrestricted imports of commodities from both the countries then we would not have faced price rise to this extent” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Dwitiya Adhiwayshun 3). Similar views of NCP (UML) MPs are found in their Parliamentary deliberations of 1991. Thus, Whelpton’s statements on the causes behind price rise, despite being reasonable, fails to bring out the perceptions of the Communists on the issue. In similar vein, his statements on Tanakpur does not reflect the Communists’ views and the politics attached with such views. The following section is, therefore, directed towards exposing Communist perceptions on the Tanakpur issue.

#### 1.19. Tanakpur Issue and Communist Perception

In a week long visit to India that started from December 4, Koirala signed two different treaties on Trade and Transit<sup>100</sup> on December 6, 1991. Included in the treaties was the issue concerning the joint management of water resource of Nepal. It touched upon the development of a number of hydro-electric projects both minor and multipurpose in Nepalese rivers which included Indian proposal to build Left Afflux Bund near Tanakpur barrage (Rising Nepal, “India and Nepal Sign” 1992 December

<sup>99</sup> See, NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Pratinidhi Sabhama Com. Rohit: Pahilo Adhiwayshun 5 Speaking on the nature of Nepal’s foreign policy, Narayan Man questioned: What is the reason behind our partial relation between two of our neighbours. Commodities coming from India are not taxed even if they are taxed the amount is low. If a commodity coming from China is taxed to the tune of Rs 5, commodities coming from India are not taxed at all.

<sup>100</sup> Separation of one single Trade-Transit Treaty into two separate treaties had been the demand of even the UNPM in the past. However, none of their documents explain why such separation was necessary except by the document of NCP (Marxist) which came into being in 1992. See. NCP (Marxbadi (Marxist)), Rajnaitik Pratibedan: 2049 75 According to them transit issue is of permanent nature and trade issues change with the change in time hence two separate treaties are required.

7). Regarding Indian proposal to build Left Afflux Bund near Tanakpur Barrage the Treaty text read:

¶ The site at Mahendra Nagar Municipal area in the Jimuwa village will be made available for tying up of the Left Afflux Bund, about 577 meters in length (with an area of about 2.9 hectares) to the high ground in the Nepalese side EL 250. The availability of land for construction of Bund will be affected in such a way by HMG/N that the work could start by 15th of December 1991.

¶ India will construct a head regulator of 1,000 cusecs capacity near the left under sluice of the Tanakpur Barrage, as also the portion of canal up to Nepal-India border for supply of up to 150 cusecs of water to irrigate between 4000–5,000 hectares of land on Nepalese side. The releases from head regulator will be increased as and when substantial upstream storage at Pancheswor, or similar, is developed on the Mahakali River; and

¶ In response to a request from Nepalese side, as a goodwill gesture, the Indian side agreed to provide initially 10 MW of energy annually free of cost to Nepal in spite of the fact that this will add to a further loss in the availability of power to India from Tanakpur power station (Nepal Gazette 1991 Dec. 23)

The Communists attacked the provisions from various angles. NCP (Masal) viewed in it “the increasing control of India in the natural resources of Nepal” owing to “Congress’s pro-India policies of converting Nepal into India’s sole market by handing over Nepalese economy and natural resources through unequal treaties, which was costing Nepal her nationalism” (NCP (Masal), “Rajnitik Pratibedan Aswin 2049” 480). In it, the Party noted Congress’s role as of an organisation “bent upon turning Nepal into a neo-colonial State” (480). Further, it observed: “Tanakpur question is not a question related only with Tanakpur. In it are issues related with Nepal’s entire water and natural resources, which from now on are under the danger of Indian hegemony” (480). In its document of the fifth Congress NCP (UML) noted:

The Nepali Congress has reflected its anti-Nationalist characteristics by entering into trade and transit treaties. By these treaties, especially by the treaty on water resources, it has disregarded our Constitution, diluted our sovereignty, and worked against our nation’s interest. By its act it has dwarfed our sovereignty and exposed itself. It has shown that for its own interest it can disregard the interest of the country, people and democracy (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 18).

Speaking in the Parliament on the same issue, in March 1, 1992, NCP (NWPP) leader Narayan Man Bijukche observed:

As far as I am concerned, today I shall not broach the issue whether our land has been sold or not. However, I am concerned regarding the amount of water that we will receive from the Tanakpur Barrage. According to my information we will receive 51 thousand cusec water in dry season and two lakh cusec in rainy season. Then what does it mean when the treaty says that we will receive 150 cusecs water? [He was probably saying that the treaty reduced Nepal's usual share] Where is justice in it? Hence, rivers and barrages are not only rivers and barrages, but also irrigation and development. As indicated by other colleagues they are also the means of national development and prosperity. Therefore, in here we are not talking only about sovereignty, nationalism and patriotism. Those are different issues. But, our Government which talks about prosperity and about development has sold them to the foreigners ... We were cheated in the Koshi and Gandak Agreement. Let us not be cheated again ... This treaty has taken our water: our means of irrigation. Western Nepal will be impoverished. Hence, the treaty is wrong ... Our Prime Minister has kowtowed before India (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Dwitiya Adhiwayshun 9–10).

Thus, the objections against the treaty rotated around three questions: Whether, norms of democracy, that is, Nepalese Constitution had been violated? Whether Nepalese sovereignty disregarded? And whether Nepal was cheated? NCP (UML) document observed that the treaty violated Article 126 of the 1990 Constitution which enjoined Government of the day to seek Parliamentary ratification of treaties related to the use of natural resources of the country if the party involved was another nation (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 45). Besides, it was piqued by India's unilateral construction of Tanakpur Power Project despite the fact that the project site fell mostly within the territorial jurisdiction of India by virtue of 1920 Treaty. The reaction was perhaps due to its perception that projects using water of common rivers, here the Mahakali River/Sarda River, should have been carried out after securing Nepal's nod. India did not do it and Koirala's act facilitated India's unilateral actions by agreeing to the use of Nepal's 577 metres stretch of land. Moreover, its statements implied that the 150 cusecs water, which India was giving along with the 10 million units of electricity were not just. Hence, its document argued that Koirala's act had hit upon sovereignty of Nepal and allowed India to cheat Nepal for it stated:

The Mahakali river bordering India and Nepal is common to both. In it both have equal rights. Any project which uses the water of Mahakali should be carried out under the understanding and in the equal interest of both the nations. But India began its Tanakpur project unilaterally from 1983/84 and when Indo-Nepal relation dipped in 1989-90, it

completed the project. The Panchayati rulers raised mild voices against India without taking any concrete steps in the direction of protecting our interest.

Though the main part of Tanakpur project was built in the land which India had secured from Nepal as per 1920 Treaty, yet for the completion of the project it was necessary to connect the Left Afflux Bund to E.L 250 of Nepal. For doing so India needed Nepal's land. Hence, it started constructing the Bund without Nepal's approval. However, because of the arrival of multi-Party democracy our cadres of Kanchanpur District Committee, raising issues of sovereignty, stopped the construction. The Prime Minister of Interim period was forced to give orders to stop the construction.

But, after the 1991 General Election, Prime Minister, Girija in his visit to India in Mangshir 2048 [December 1991] signed the Tanakpur Treaty along with other treaties. The Treaty related to Tanakpur project was couched in such a manner as if India had full control over Mahakali river ... as if under Nepal's request India was building the Bund in the 577 meter stretch of our land and it was providing 150 cusec water and 1 crore [10 million] unit electricity free of cost. This treaty, therefore, hit upon our national pride and sovereignty besides whittling away our national interest. We were cheated. To top it all Girija violated the constitutional provision ... (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 46).

Finally, added to it, there were two other factors. First, the Communists' propaganda: they were perhaps claiming that the Government had ceded the 577 metres stretch of land to India (See p. 153). Second, NCP (UML)'s tactics of the period. According to their document, it aimed at "leading peaceful movements to strengthen its organisation and to evolve as a force in competitive democracy" (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 59). This, in action, insisted Koirala to table the treaty texts in the Parliament. However, Koirala, since December 1991, kept on delaying the presentation of the treaty texts in the Parliament (Rising Nepal, "Information on Treaties" 1991 Dec. 14). This fuelled opposition's perceptions—barring, of course, NCP (United), which, in line with its tactics (See, Ch. 4 footnote 27), viewed the treaties as progressive steps (Rising Nepal, "NCP (United) Suspends" 1992 Jan. 19)—that something was at a miss in the treaties. Acting on these perceptions the Communists protested throughout 1992 both within and outside the Parliament (See, p.447). On February 29, to put to rest the opposition's demand to inform the House about the agreements, Lakshman Prasad Ghimire, Minister of State for Water Resources declared that Nepal had not ceded even an inch of land in the treaty, besides he pointed out that they were all understandings, which after study were to be

signed as treaties (Rising Nepal, “Nepal Hasn’t Ceded” 1992 Mar 1). Outside, Koirala repeated the same version (Brown 168) and as Jan Sharma writes, he argued that as understanding, which involved no sharing of resources with India, the texts were beyond the purview of Article 126 (188–9). However, their protest continued even after UML’s 30 April understanding with the Government for the smooth conduct of the election for the creation of local bodies (See p. 453).

#### 1.20. Local Elections

On 11 June 1990, the Interim Government had already changed the name of earlier Panchayat bodies into Village Development Committee, District Development Committee and Municipalities (See, footnote 165). Then in March and April the Government made these bodies elective. On 4 March 1992, it passed District Development Committee Bill. It kept intact its institutional arrangements as provided by the 1990 Act, but its Committees were restructured to represent members elected and sent from the Village Development Committees falling within the District. This indirect method of electing the members of the DDC, the Government said, was to keep the body away from the influences of vote politics. It allowed the DDC to use 50% of the land revenue collected from the district to carry out its developmental activities (Rising Nepal, “District Development Bill” 1992 March 5). However, on 11 March, in course of parliamentary discussions while passing the Municipality and the Village Development Committee Acts, Narayan Man Bijukche objected against the continuation of the provision, which since their passing in 1990 allowed the DDC with supervisory powers over the Municipalities. He said “such provisions were not there even during the Panchayat period” (22) meaning, it was an undemocratic provision. Besides, even in its changed form the Government kept intact its power to dissolve the bodies (See p.239). Then, by April, “The Local Bodies (Election Procedures) Act came into force” (Sharma, J. 162). After reaching an agreement with the UML for the smooth conduct of election for the creation of these bodies (See, p. 453), the Government on May 13, revised the pay scales of the lowest civil servants up to the Secretary. Rationalising its decision as means to provide relief to the lower

employees it even announced an extra Rs. 100/- per month increase over and above their changed scale (Rising Nepal, “Pay Scales” 1992 May 14). It cost her exchequer an extra burden of Rs. 6,410 million (Sharma, J. 158), the very burden citing which the Party had repeatedly presented its harsh posture against the 1991 June–August movement of the civil servants. This was followed by its announcement of Nepal Citizenship Regulations-1992<sup>101</sup>. In the face of impending local elections the purpose behind these measures were obvious. And this was perhaps what the UML’s Fifth Congress document hinted at when it observed, “We failed to assess their misuse of national resources and their plots before the local election” (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 44–5). The election for the formation of 3, 995 Village Development Committees and 37 Municipalities were held in two phases: first in May 28 and the other in May 30 (K. C, Nepal Communist Bhag 2 296) and when the final results were out the positions of the different parties were as follows: (See, next page)

<sup>101</sup> See, Kanun Tatha Nyaya Mantralaya, “Nepal Nagarikta” 15–7 The politics involved in the changes become apparent, because till April 20, 1992 when the government amended the 1964 Citizenship Act for the fifth time it brought no change in the Act. Hence, commenting on the nature of the fifth amendment Narayan Man Bijukche of NCP (NWPP) was pointing out that even after the amendment the process of getting citizenship was mired in corruption and the process was difficult for the villagers. See, NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Dwitiya Adhiwayshun 19–20 The change was brought only after the understanding between the two political parties in April 30. See, Rising Nepal, “New Citizenship Regulations” 1992 May 27 Thus it was done with an eye on the election. According to the paper report two changes were introduced in the citizenship acquiring process. First, the voters list prepared for the referendum in 1980 and the list prepared in 1975/76 could be used for issuing citizenship. These were the persistent demands of Nepal Sadhavana Party, which was localised in the Terai belt. Second, earlier an applicant for citizenship certificate needed the recommendation of the Chairman/Vice-Chairman of District Development Committee, or Mayor/Deputy Mayor of Municipalities or from a gazetted employee of the Government. According to the changes introduced even the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Village Development could give such recommendations.

Table 2

## Seats Won In Local Election

Sr.n.	Political Parties	Seats Won	Percentage
1	Nepali Congress	22, 306	50.4
2	UML	11, 561	26.1
3	RPP	4, 325	9.75
4	UPFN	2, 251	5.08
5	NSP	1, 309	2.95
6	Independents	2, 595	5.85

Source: Surendra K. C Nepalma Communist Andolanko Itihas (Bhag 2). Kathmandu: Vidyarthi Pustak Bhandar, 296.

Similarly, Jan Sharma writes, in the elections for 1, 081 positions in 75 District Development Committees, which were over by June 1992, the Nepali Congress won 64% of the positions (162). He further notes, “The UML suffered a debilitating set back. The capture of ... Kathmandu Municipality ... the spectacular showing in eastern Nepal ... enhanced the confidence of the Nepali Congress” (162)

#### 1.21. Fall of Koirala Government

The In July, Jan Sharma says, “Sailaja Acharya, the Minister for Agriculture, resigned ... alleging that her ministerial were ‘strangled by corruption and graft’ ... Koirala refused to institute an inquiry. In protest, the entire opposition walked out of [the] Parliament” (Sharma, J. 166). In the same month, Koirala in consultation with opposition parties decided to initiate direct talks with Bhutan to resolve the problem of refugees. Further, he pointed out that if direct talks failed then Nepal would seek Indian mediation (Rising Nepal, “All Party on Refugees” 1992 July 8). However, the issue dragged on owing to Indian attitude for Whelpton writes:

A new difficulty was presented by the flight from southern Bhutan of many ethnic Nepalese, about 90,000 of whom had, by the end of 1992, ended up as refugees in camps in south-eastern Nepal. The Bhutanese Government claimed that many of them were either not actually from Bhutan or had emigrated voluntarily ... Although India had a treaty right to exercise ‘guidance’ over Bhutanese foreign policy, India put no pressure on Bhutan to take the refugees back ... The Congress Government was widely criticised within Nepal for failing to take a

stronger line, though, given India's attitude, there was little any Government could have done (Whelpton, History 191–2).

In the prevailing situation, the issue offered yet another point for the Communists to denigrate the Government within and outside the Parliament. On 21<sup>st</sup> July Lilamani Pokhrel of UPFN blamed the Congress for its failure in initiating talks with India and Bhutan (Rising Nepal, “MPs on Bhutanese Refugees” 1992 July 22). Later, the Communists launched more protests, but there was a subtle change in their tones, which reflected their objective (See, p. 456 ). Meanwhile, Supreme Court special bench composed of five judges was in session hearing a writ petition filed by a lawyer in December 1991. The writ demanded the treaties to be tabled in the Parliament for ratification (Rising Nepal, “Tanakpur Continues” 1992 Sept. 24). Within this period, P. V Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India, visited Nepal in October. Paragraph 4 of the joint communiqué announced at the time of his departure on October 21 eased conditions for the export of commodities manufactured in Nepal. And Paragraph 10 acknowledged Nepal's sovereignty over land given by her to India for the construction of the Left Afflux Bund. Besides, it removed the link between future development of upstream Pancheswar project and the treaty promising Nepal perennial supply of 150 cusecs water and an annual supply of 20 million units of free electricity (Bhattarai, K. 91, 93–4). The changes, however, were construed by the UML as Koirala's attempt “to gloss over the mistakes that he had committed while entering into the agreement” and it observed, “even after that he dillydallied in placing the texts in the Parliament, functioning thereby, against the national interest and sovereignty of Nepal” (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 47). Thus, implying that Nepal's sovereignty and national interest could only be served if the treaty texts were ratified by the Parliament. Amid these developments, in November first week, the Government amended 1965 Civil Service Regulations. According to Jan Sharma, the new regulations “lowered automatic retiring age from 69 to 58 and empowered the Government to retire any civil servant with 30 years of service” (159). The change, which came in the wake of Administrative Reform Commission's Report seemed to

be in line with its recommendation for reducing the number of Government posts (See, p. 236), but in its application Jan Sharma writes “loyalty counted more than anything else” and the changed rules were used as “a pretext to get rid of officials known for their political neutrality” (159). Then in December 16, the Supreme Court verdict on the writ petition concerning Tanakpur directed the Government to get the treaties approved by the Parliament under Article 126 (2), but it did not say whether the same had to be ratified by a two-third majority of the members present in the joint session of Parliament or through a simple majority of the members present and voting in the House of Representatives. Further, it pointed out that in assessing the importance of the treaties the Parliament, besides considering their legal and constitutional side should devise means to judge them from their economic, technical, political and diplomatic angles (Rising Nepal, “Tanakpur to Parliament” 1992 Dec. 16). Considering the Constitutional provision, which the decision invoked the implications were clear: The signing of the texts in 1991 involved the exchange of Nepalese resources and that Koirala had entered into an agreement and not an understanding which he had so far been claiming. Echoing similar views, NCP (UML) document stated:

The decision has proved that the written text on Tanakpur issue was not simply an understanding, but a treaty, where the national resources of our country had been bartered ... It has proved that in forging such understanding the Government had transgressed the limit set by the Constitution, trampled over the rights of the Parliament, lied to the people and the nation and slyly functioned against national interest and the sovereignty of Nepal. Since Koirala had destroyed national image in the world and lied to the nation and the people of Nepal we wanted him to resign immediately from the post of Prime Minister (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 47).

The decision gave the Communists the chance to launch more protests, but this time it was for the removal of Koirala<sup>102</sup>(See p. 456 ). In February, the Government responded to the Supreme Court verdict by constituting Lok Raj Baral Committee

<sup>102</sup> See, Brown 168–69 She confuses the nature of protest by pointing out that from September the Communist protest were for removing Koirala, whereas such trend in Communist protest was visible only after the Supreme Court verdict.

(Rising Nepal, "Evaluation Team" 1993 Feb. 6). According to Gyawali and Dixit, it was given the task to assess whether the treaty had "pervasive, serious and long term"<sup>103</sup> implications (Gyawali, et al. 246). Its findings were to decide the ratification of the treaty either by simple majority, or by two-third majority of the Parliament. On 6<sup>th</sup> February, the General Council meeting of the Nepali Congress passed a resolution. It dubbed opposition's call for the resignation of the Prime Minister contrary to the spirit of the Constitution and the intent of the Court (Rising Nepal, "Resignation" 1993 Feb. 7). On February 14, Baral Committee submitted its report to Koirala. It "concluded that the Tanakpur Agreement was of a simple nature" meaning it could be ratified by a simple majority of the House of Representatives (Gyawali, et al. 247). Half of the Parliament's winter session, which began the very day, was drowned in opposition's demand for Koirala's resignation or in questioning the validity of the Baral Committee (See p. 460 ). Needless to say that the Committee's report was of no avail in resolving the problem. Some modicum in parliamentary debates was restored when the opposition agreed to an all-Party meeting to iron out the differences (Rising Nepal, "Meet on Tanakpur" 1993 Mar. 12). For the first time development issues were discussed (Rising Nepal, "Zero Hour" 1993 Mar. 12). On 12, consensus was reached on activating Parliamentary means for evaluating Tanakpur issue, but differences still existed. The question debated was whether the process should begin in the House of Representatives and end in an all-Party Parliamentary Committee or vice versa (Rising Nepal, "Consensus on Tanakpur" 1993 Mar. 13). However, the effort was lost amid renewed opposition

<sup>103</sup> See, Gyawali and Dixit 246 A treaty which fulfilled five conditions were to be considered as treaties having serious implications. These conditions were: (a) If a single treaty covered the use of several river basins; (b) if a treaty covered the entire basin of a river; (c) if it involved the construction of reservoirs necessary for producing power beyond 1000 MW capacity; (d) if a project's cost was larger than the GDP, or if it was built with foreign loans, whose burden fell even on the posterity, and (e) if projects required resettlement issues which Nepalese financial capacity could not handle. It excluded all run-of-river hydroelectric projects.

protests after May 16 (for causes see p. 461). Meanwhile, Koirala was in Germany wooing investors to invest in Nepal (Rising Nepal, “Investors Can Benefit” 1993 May 16). After his return, the Fifth session of the Parliament began on June 27 with the Speaker’s appeal to resolve problems through consensus, but with no avail (Rising Nepal, “Parliament Sufficient” 1993 June 28). The Communists continued with their protests. However, momentary respite from their cycle of protests was observed when they decided to suspend their activities from 21 July to 30 July to help the kingdom tide over the ravages of monsoon floods (NCP (UML), “7 Partyko Samyukta Press Bigyapti” 29 July 1993), which had killed “around 2000 people in the Terai” and left “thousands” homeless (Brown 169). In July, in line with the recommendation of the Administrative Reform Commission the Government reduced the number of divisions within several Ministries (Sharma, J. 160). Then, it was again besieged under fresh cycle of Communist protests. To end the disturbance, the Government entered into a 9 point agreement with the UML, but other Communist factions, because of their dissatisfaction with the points of the agreement (See p. 465), kept the cycle of protests alive. Even then Whelpton writes, “the Government was in a relatively secure position in the country as a whole” because of its success in the “local elections”. However, he notes of a gap that had existed since the end of 1991 between Koirala and the duo that is Party President, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Ganesh Man Singh. According to him, the difference between them came “mainly from disputes over patronage” and “over the relationship between the Party machine and the Party in parliament”. Disputes over patronage emerged when Koirala, in 1991, “dismissed six members of his cabinet [Cabinet] without the approval of Party president Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and its senior leader Ganesh Man Singh”. As a result, he says, there emerged “a clear division between pro- and anti-Koirala factions” in “the parliamentary Party” (191). The aftermath of the 17<sup>th</sup> agreement—claims of UML that the Congress intended to remove Girija in future—generated a “rumour” (Brown 170). Considered in the light of the personalities present in the process of signing the agreement (See, Ch. IV, footnote 46), the rumour, moving among the Congress cadres, further increased the

gap between the Congress Party and the Government and sharpened the cleavage within the Parliamentary group. So, when the Congress fielded its candidate, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, in the Kathmandu constituency No. 1 in the February 7, 1994 parliamentary by-election (the constituency which was vacant because of the death of Madan Bhandari), Whelpton says, “Koirala responded by dissociating himself from Bhattarai’s candidature and ... contributed to his defeat by the UML candidate, Bhandari’s widow” (191). Meanwhile, according to Sharma, Bhattarai and Ganesh Man began pressurising Koirala to resign claiming that “he had failed on all fronts” (Sharma, J. 217). So, to get “rid of his opponents in the Party” and to secure “two-thirds majority” in the future House “to resolve ... Tanakpur” controversy he recommended the King “on 14 February” for a “mid-term poll” (Sharma, J. 217). Outside, Bhattarai’s supporters protested against Koirala’s leadership when the Party Central Working Committee meet was trying to patch up the differences between Koirala and the duo Bhattarai and Ganesh Man Singh (Rising Nepal, “No Definite Conclusion” 1994 Feb. 19). Under such circumstances, the UML-UPFN combine registered no-confidence motion in the House on 20 February. In the face of Communist offensive, the Congress, without resolving the differences, came together (Rising Nepal, “NC Meet Put Off” 1994 Feb 22) and faced the no-confidence motion to come out unscathed (See p. 469). Following the no-confidence motion the Government was embroiled in yet another row with the opposition. According to Home Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba’s report to the House of Representatives, on 22 March, Indian policemen entered Nepal in two vehicles. Valley Superintendent of Police deputed a Sub-Inspector to accompany them. They were in search for a person, an alleged criminal, who had fled from Delhi. On 27 March, after staying for five days in Kathmandu, they raided the house of retired Director General of Commerce Department at Baneshwor. When they did not find their catch they raided another house of the same locality and left for India the same day (Rising Nepal, “Nepal Protests” 1994 March 30). On March 28, when Home Minister failed to provide full information about the incident, UPFN MPs and Narayan Man walked out of the

House (Rising Nepal, “House Raid” 1994 Mar 29). Indian Ambassador, Bimal Prasad regretted the incident and informed Nepalese Government that India would take strong disciplinary actions against the policemen from Delhi (Rising Nepal, “India Regrets” 1994 March 30). However, Communist factions reacted in full bitterness. In sum, their reactions were all pointed towards Indian insensitivity. Speaking in the House, Narayan Man said, “The incident ... has touched to the quick the sentiments of the Nepali people. Now, anti-India feeling will insidiously spread every nook and corner of Nepal. What shape it will take in future is not known” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), “Chaitau Adhiwayshun” 47). In UML’s version the incident raised issues about nationalism, Congress’s character and questions regarding the very nature of 1950 Treaty for its document said:

India should have respected our sovereignty and territorial integrity ... The incident raises doubt regarding the capacity of Congress Government in ensuring the security of its citizens. It also reflects their insensitivity towards Nepalese nationalism and their tendency to bow before India ... By not listening to our demand for the creation of an all-Party Parliamentary Commission to probe into the incident it has proved that it is tilted towards India. This incident proves that for maintaining security within Nepal the Indo-Nepal border must be managed properly and this calls for a review of the 1950 Treaty to make it mutually beneficial and in the interest of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of each other (NCP (UML), Bartaman Paristhiti: 1994 17–8).

The issue lingered on stoking Communist protests. Meanwhile, NCP (UML)’s document claims that it threatened the Government with an “ultimatum” to implement “the terms of 17 August agreement”(See, p.463). So, it says, “In the process in 2051 Asad 14 [28 June 1994] the Government appointed a three-member Commission under serving Supreme Court Justice, Trilok Pratap Rana with one member each from our Party and from the Congress to investigate the death of Comrade Madan Bhandari and Jivraj Ashrit” (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan 2052 [October 1996] 3). With the approach of July, the differences that existed among the Congress MPs ultimately resulted in the fall of Koirala Government. On 10 July (Whelpton dates it to May), when King’s July 1 speech to the Joint House was put to vote 35 Congress MPs failed to turn up. So, the policy speech was defeated when 86 votes went against it.

Koirala resigned recommending fresh elections. The King accepted his resignation and asked his Council of Ministers to continue until its replacement by a fresh Council of Ministers (Rising Nepal, “Koirala Quits” 1994 July 11). Mid-term election was slated on 13 November 1994 (Rising Nepal, “Elections on November 13” 1994 July 12). The Communists opposed the recommendation of Koirala and the decisions of the King with fresh cycles of protests (for their logic see p. 473). Confusion persisted until September 12 owing to a writ, which was filed in the Supreme Court since July 26 challenging Koirala’s recommendation for the dissolution of the House. On 12 September, the Court finally quashed the writ validating Koirala’s recommendation on the ground, that it was necessary to dissolve the House as no alternative for the formation of a new Government was available (Rising Nepal, “Court Verdict” 1994 Sept. 13). True to its tactics of exposure NCP (Masal)’s comment on the decision read:

The Supreme Court has by its verdict upheld the decision of a Parliament which drew its sustenance from fascist Girija, Girija-King and foreign reactionaries’ machination. The verdict has proved that in a reactionary system even Judiciary cannot be free from the influences of reactionaries ....

First of all our Party wishes to make it clear that even if the Parliament had not been dissolved, even if a Parliament was created after the verdict of the Supreme Court or even if the Court had held the dissolution of the Parliament unconstitutional there would be no change in our line of struggle. The pressing need of present day politics is to struggle against national and foreign reactionaries for democracy, nationalism and immediate needs of the people to ready the base for New Democratic revolution. So, the verdict of the Supreme Court is not going to change the nature of our politics ... (NCP (Masal), “Madhyawadi ... Prastao” 595).

With the legal battle over the parties began preparing for the mid-term poll. Meanwhile, in September 27, the Government again relaxed the process for acquiring Nepal citizenship. This time it was intended to override the Supreme Court July 1994 verdict, which had rejected the 1980 cut-off year as fixed by earlier amendments of Citizenship Act. According to Jan Sharma, this was because “the 1990 Constitution [had] established the cut-off year ... the day when the 1959 Constitution was promulgated” (164). However, the political implication of the Government’s act was clear.

## 1.22. 1994 Mid-Term Election: NCP (UML) in Power

In the November 13, 1994 General Election, the major participants were Nepali Congress, NDP (RPP), NCP (UML), NSP, Niranjan Govind Baidhya led UPFN (for reasons see p. 471), NCP (United), NCP (NWPP), and even NCP (Masal)<sup>104</sup> claims to have participated the election as A.N.R.J.M (See, Ch. IV, footnote 54). They fielded their candidates in 205, 202, 196, 86, 49, 34, 27 seats—there is no mention of A.N.R.J.M—respectively for the House of Representatives (Nirvachan Ayog (Election Commission) 190). The Congress slogan in the election was “stability, peace and development” (For Communist positions see p. 474). In the economic front, it proposed growth with social and economic justice in participation with private sector. For economic growth of the rural sector it proposed the establishment of cottage industries, long term agricultural policy, laws to end dual land ownership etc. In the national scale, it proposed the development of infrastructures, development of small hydro-electric units to lessen the crunch in electric supply while remaining silent on the issue of mega-projects. On foreign policy, it proposed good relationship with both India and China. Its long list of promises included uplift of deprived people, eradication of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, discrimination based on

<sup>104</sup> See, Karki and Seddon 16–17 The authors point out that NCP (Masal) participated in the election with NCP (Unity Centre), which was under Nirmal Lama, but the documents of NCP (Masal) points out that it participated the election alone through its front organisation A.N.R.J.M that is Akhil Nepal Rastriya Jana Morcha [All Nepal National Peoples Front] See, NCP (Masal), “Madhyawadi ... Prastao” 595 So, they were wrong, besides their work is full of errors. To point one of such errors, the authors contend that the Unity Centre in its formative stage was aligned with NCP (Marxist) under Sahana Pradhan. This is a gross mistake. Considering the numerous mistakes in the work one should approach this work with caution. However, if one goes through the Election Commission’s list of participating parties one will not find the name of A.N.R.J.M because it was categorised as independent since it had not participated the last election and had not established itself as a National Party securing 3% of the total votes cast. See, Nirvachan Ayog (Election Commission) 190 and, Rising Nepal, “Parties Hit Campaign” 1994 Sept. 24 but according to UML’s document, see, NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan 2052 [October 1996] 7 NCP (Masal) was able to send two candidates to the House of Representatives. Thus, UML’s 88, NWPP’s 4 and NCP (Masal)’s 2 totalled 94.

caste, creed, languages and sex, safe drinking water to 80% of the people by the end of five years and implementation of the Administrative Reform Commission's report (Rising Nepal, "NC Party Manifesto" 1994 Oct. 6). However, when the Election Commission declared the final results NCP (UML) won 88 seats; Nepali Congress, 83; NDP (RPP), 20; NCP (NWPP), 4; NSP, 3 and independents, 7 (Nirvachan Ayog (Election Commission) 191). It was a hung Parliament where the total Communist strength was 94 (See footnote 104). Explaining the sudden rise of the RPP/NDP in the elections, NCP (Masal) said: "The corrupt, anti-people policies of Nepali Congress disillusioned people regarding the nature of multi-Party democracy and it helped the RPP to gain strength" (NCP (Masal), "Tatkalik Rajnaitik Marg 13" 603). Under such condition, Koirala publicly announced that the Congress would prefer to remain in the opposition. However, the later activities of the Party was in favour of forming a stable Government as per Art. 42:1,<sup>105</sup> and the UML preferred the formation of the Government as per Article 42: 2. When the Congress failed to get a firm reply from the NDP (RPP),<sup>106</sup> it cleared its way for the UML to form the Government under Article 42:2 (Rising Nepal, "NC Clears Way" 1994 Nov. 29). The UML made capital out of Nepali Congress's effort by characterising their activities as reflection of their lust for power while describing its own activities as democratic. However, the ultimate line of its statements revealed that it too was waiting for an opportunity to

<sup>105</sup> See, HMG Ministry of Law and Justice 31 According to the 1990 Constitution Article 42: 1 enjoins the King to call the majority party in the House to form a Government with the help of other parties. Article 42: 2 enjoins him to appoint as Prime Minister the leader of the Parliamentary party that has the highest number of members in the House if a Prime Minister cannot be appointed as per Art. 42: 1. Clause 3 of the Article further enjoins the Prime Minister so appointed under 42 Clause 1 or 2 to obtain a vote of confidence within thirty days failing which the King, as per Clause 4 of the Article, is empowered to dissolve the House and to order fresh elections within six months.

<sup>106</sup> See, Rising Nepal, "NC Trying" 1994 Nov. 27 Till 26 November, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was complaining that a stable all-party Government would not be possible because the NDP (RPP) was indulging in double talk meaning they were not clear on their stand in extending their support to the Congress proposal.

form a Government for its document said:

The results of the mid-term election indicated that the people expected NCP (UML) to take lead in the formation of the Government, and the Congress was chosen to be in the opposition. In the beginning Koirala publicly announced that he preferred to remain in the opposition, but because of Congress's lust for power ... they soon began searching for options including the possibility of combining with the Rastriya Prajatantra Party [NDP] ... Considering the Parliamentary profile we also deterred from forming our own Government. We patiently waited for the operation of Article 42: 1. And when it became clear that Government could not be formed as per Art. 42: 1, then we came forward to form Government as per Art. 42: 2. *Our patience paid off* [italics added] our democratic character became public and the Congress was exposed for its lust for power (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan 2052 [October 1996] 3).

Besides, the statements implied two things: 1. A change in what the Party characterised as democratic character and 2. As in the past, use of tactics which did not match with its power position. In the past, when the Congress was far more comfortably placed the Party had tried in the name of democracy to enter into some form of understanding, if not alliance, with the Congress to run the Government. And when the Congress had spurned its proposals of consensus it had blamed Congress for being authoritarian and thus undemocratic. Presently, the Congress was weaker, but not as weak as the UML in the past. Even then when the Congress was trying to form a coalition Government it was calling Congress's action undemocratic. As regards its past tactics, it was pointed out that it was faulty, because in advocating its the then tactics it had failed in considering its power position. Similar was the nature of its tactics in 1994. It did not have enough representatives to form Government on its own and to ensure its continuity. Even then it was doggedly following the tactics framed by its Fifth Congress in 1993 (See p. 459 ), whereas the right tactics in 1994 would have been its earlier tactics. Such anachronism in the application of its tactics can either be interpreted as its failure in framing the right tactics or as a reflection of its lust for power. Possibly, it was both. Thus, in November 29, when the King invited UML Chairman, Man Mohan Adhikari to form his minority Government the Party temporarily seemed to succeed in the implementation of its anachronistic

tactics.<sup>107</sup>Next day, his Council of Ministers composed of 9 Cabinet Ministers and 6 State Ministers were sworn in. Included in the 9 member compact Cabinet was the post of a Deputy Prime Minister, Madhav Kumar Nepal (Rising Nepal, “Man Mohan Ministry” 1994 Dec. 1). Commenting on what was expected out of such arrangement, NCP (Masal) said: “Now the Congress and the RPP will try to prove the inefficiency of the UML and with it they will discredit the entire Communist movement” (NCP (Masal), “Tatkalik Rajnaitik Marg 13” 603). However, what the comment failed to indicate was that even Communist factions in the Parliament were not in favour of the UML. This became clear when a few days later political configuration began changing. Nepali Congress, with Sher Bahadur Deuba as its Parliamentary leader, aligned with NDP to elect the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the House. The post of Speaker, despite UML pitting for it, went to Ramachandra Poudel of Nepali Congress and that of the Deputy Speaker to NDP candidate.<sup>108</sup>Similarly, Narayan Man Bijukche, the leader of NCP (NWPP) began urging people to ready themselves to oppose UML rule for democracy and socialism (Rising Nepal, “Fight UML” 1994 Dec. 12)—a position which was a little different from what the Party said in one of its later documents. It said: “After the second General Election, considering the UML as a progressive force ... the NCP (NWPP) decided to critically support the minority Government” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Rajnaitik Naitikta 11). Moreover, considering NCP (Masal)’s perception towards the UML (See p. 478), the Government was perhaps not in a position to count on its unconditional support. Besides, if one takes UML’s statements, (See, p. 166), where it had stated that it was conversant with the Parliamentary profile, it would be just naïve to conclude that the

<sup>107</sup> See, NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan, 2052 [February 1996] 2 The Party hailed its success that is its success in forming the Government to the tactical position fixed by the Fifth Congress.

<sup>108</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “NC, RPP Agree” 1994 Dec. 17; Rising Nepal, “Poudel Elected” 1994 Dec. 18

Party was not aware of such possibilities. Hence, the UML initiative in forming its Government raises a question: besides its tactics, what was the other factor which had gone in its decision making process? It was probably the vacillating position of the NDP (RPP) on the issue of extending its support to the all-Party Government proposal of the Congress. In their vacillation the UML must have read the possibility of getting NDP's support in future. If the UML had formed the Government without such calculations then only one thing explained its forming of the Government—its hurry in applying its tactics, which one could interpret as its abandoning of itself to power.

On the 23rd of December, the King addressed the Party's policy statement to the Joint House of the Parliament. Then, in January, it successfully faced the confidence motion, but its explanation behind its success in the motion gave vent to its own understanding<sup>109</sup> of the Constitutional provisions while revealing the very nature of Nepalese election procedure for it said:

After election the NC and RPP [NDP] had no other choice but to give us their support. Because had confidence been denied to us then there would have been a fresh election and that election would have been held under our Government. So the NC and the RPP [NDP] were compelled to repose confidence upon us (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan 2052 [October 1996] 5).

Such understanding of the Constitutional provisions, as will be seen later, was going to cost dearly to the Party. After facing the confidence motion it set to work (See p. 169). But, its stint to power was short lived. By April 1995, opposition forces began raising their voices. In an interview to *Rising Nepal*, NDP (RPP) leader Lokendra Bahadur Chand claimed that the UML had failed to achieve any concrete result and assured the interviewer that his Party would wait for an opportune moment if ever it

<sup>109</sup> It maintained that once a government was formed under Art. 42:1, then Art 42: 2 could never be activated, because the application of Art. 42:1 was itself the result of the failure to apply Art. 42: 2. See, NCP (UML), Press Statement by ... Deputy General Secretary 1995 June 11 Bamdev Gautam says, that there can be no alternative for the formation of another government when a government is operating under Article 42: 2 after the failure of a government established after the operation of Article 42: 1

felt the need for dislodging the UML (Rising Nepal, “Interview” 1995 April 21). Meanwhile, Girija was out there condemning the UML Government for encouraging State terrorism and for misusing<sup>110</sup> national treasury (Rising Nepal, “Koirala ... Terrorism” 1995 April 30). In June 1 the Central Working Committee of NDP (RPP) decided that it would go for the formation of the Government (Rising Nepal, “RPP ... for Govt” 1995 June 2). With such decision of the NDP the fall of UML Government became imminent, because Sharma says, that “the RPP [NDP] was not interested to join the UML, because it felt that the UML would leave it once its interests were fulfilled” (275). Its obvious choice was, therefore, the Nepali Congress. Then suddenly, the Prime Minister, in June 9, recommended the King to dissolve the House and to fix a date for fresh election (Rising Nepal, “UML Decides ... Election” 1995 June 10). Explaining the sudden move of the Prime Minister, the UML document said:

On Jestha 25, 2052 [8 June 1995], seventy MPs of Nepali Congress met the King and requested him for a special session of the Parliament despite the fact that the King had already fixed the regular session of the Parliament on Asad 11, 2052 [25th June 19]... the purpose behind the request for a special session was to bring a no-confidence motion against us and to stop us from presenting a novel budget and programmes of our own ... This was not tolerable to the Nepali Congress ....

In such circumstances we had two options either to face the no-confidence motion, or to dissolve the Parliament and face mid-term election ... Considering the complexion of the Parliament ... we chose fresh election for ensuring stability... (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan 2052 [October 1996] 17–8).

As advised King Birendra scheduled fresh election on November 23, but a writ from the Congress side was filed in the Supreme Court challenging the Prime Minister’s power to dissolve the Parliament. In August, the Court upheld the writ and restored the Parliament on the ground that there were possibilities for forming a Government—

<sup>110</sup> The accusations were especially targeted against two of the Government’s programmes namely the Let’s Build Our Villages Ourselves and *Nau Sa* programmes. Koirala and other speakers pointed out that the Government had emptied state treasury in funding the programmes and in doing so it had by-passed the existing DDC and VDCs.

UML's understanding about the Constitutional provisions 42: 1 and 42: 2 was not validated by the Court's verdict. In the September 10 special session of the Parliament, Adhikari Government went down under a vote of no-confidence, which was brought by Sher Bahadur Deuba. The UML led Government received 88 votes as against 107 of the opposition. The 107 opposition votes represented MPs from the Congress, the NDP and a few from the Sadbhavana Party (Rising Nepal, "Govt Loses ... Vote" 1995 Sept. 11). Explaining why the three parties came together, NCP (Unity Centre) leader said, "The programmes of the UML were populist. Had the Party been allowed to implement their ... reforms then they would have endangered the existence of the reactionaries ... So they removed the UML from power" (Prakash 47). Following Deuba's accession to power, his Ministry came into existence on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September and it received its vote of confidence on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Initially, it was a small Cabinet of five members, where NDP and Sadbhavana had one minister each (Rising Nepal, "House Gives Deuba" 1995 Sept. 19). NCP (United) perceived in the Government the rise of "those elements ... in power who had exploited people for the last twenty years" (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Rajnitik Report: 2052 [1995] 2). And CPN (Maoist) categorised it as "a coalition Government of Panchas (i.e. royalists) and Nepali Congress, defamed in the Nepalese history for their anti-national and genocidal deeds" (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Appeal" 12). Explaining the causes behind their rise, NCP (Masal) pointed out first towards "the treachery of the Nepali Congress and the 'Left Front' in the 1989 *Jana Andolan*, and the framing of the Constitution, where the possibility of monarchical autocracy was built-in". The Party was referring to "the special powers of the King in the Constitution" (NCP (Masal), "Nirankush Rajtantrako ... Khatra" 746). Second, it blamed the Congress's policy for the rise of the RPP (NDP). It said,

The policies followed by the Girija Government were directly or indirectly responsible for the rise of the RPP. On the one hand it threw the Mallik Commission's report<sup>111</sup> in the dustbin; encouraged those

<sup>111</sup> This is important. Majority of the works argue that the issues raised by the

reported against in the report, and indirectly its anti-national, anti-people policy spread frustration among the masses. The masses lost their faith in multi-Party democracy (746–47).

The Party considered such rise of the revivalist favourable for “the increase of the influences of the expansionist and the imperialists” (746). After coming to power, Deuba was “concentrated” only in the “survival” of his Government (Whelpton, History 195). To keep his coalition intact he increased the strength of his Council of Ministers. By 13 December, its size reached a record 44 (Sharma, J. 293). Besides, he kept intact the much maligned UML’s Let’s Build Our Village Ourself programme, but with a difference. He changed its name to Village Development and Self Reliance Programme and channelled funds through the local committees (Rising Nepal, “VDSP ... Rural People” 1995 Dec. 9). Meanwhile, in response to queries regarding UPFN (Baburam faction)’s protest against police action in Rolpa district (See p. 485), Home Minister, Khum Bahadur Khadka informed the House that the actions were against those who possessed illegal weapons. He promised that his Government would soon send a Parliamentary team on a fact finding mission (Rising Nepal, “Team ... to Rolpa” 1995 Dec. 12). These were the early signs of the Maoist movement which was to begin from February 1996 (for details see chapter V)

### 1.23. January 1996 to May 1999: Period of Instability

After the formation of Deuba Ministry, until 1999 General Election the characteristic feature of Nepalese politics was instability. Several ministries were formed and dissolved without achieving any concrete results: none of the issues facing the kingdom was resolved. Contributing to this state of instability were two factors. First, the UML’s repeated use of its tactics to gain supremacy in the Parliament. Translated into action this resulted in its repeated use of no-confidence motion against

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Mallik Commission’s report were issues concerned with human rights, but reading of the Communist documents reveal that they were taking it as a means to punish and pulverise the Panchayat leaders (cross ref this with the election manifestos of 1991 election)

an installed Government. The second factor was the attitude of RPP (NDP) 20 MPs. They repeatedly changed their loyalties between two of their leaders: Surya Bahadur Thapa and Lokendra Bahadur Chand. With such changing loyalties of their MPs the two leaders virtually took the two major parties, the UML and the Congress, to ransom in their bid to form ministries. Under such condition, two important events took place. One was the signing of Indo-Nepal Treaty for the integrated development of Mahakali River and the other was the holding of elections to the local bodies in 1997. The former had its political consequence: it led to the fragmentation of NCP (UML) and the latter strengthened UML's hold over the local bodies.

As a sequel to the UML's Mahakali package proposal Pranab Mukherjee, Indian Minister for External Affairs, reached Kathmandu on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 1996. He was on an official visit to give shape to the UML's proposal. Same day, bypassing the Parliament, the Speaker of the House, Ram Chandra Poudel convened a meeting of the leaders of three major parties in the Singh Darbar Parliament building. Attending the meeting were all former Prime Ministers including Ex-Deputy Prime Minister, Madhav Kumar Nepal. They agreed on reaching a consensus (Rising Nepal, "Nepal-India ... Discussed" 1996 Jan 27). Dixit and Gyawali list twelve points on which the leaders reached a consensus. In brief, the consensus focused on securing "additional water" from Tanakpur Barrage, 50% of electricity "generated per year" from the Barrage on the condition that Nepal contributed to the completion of the Barrage (251), water for Nepal "If the Sarda canal became non-operational", water from "Sarda canal to irrigate Dodhara-Chandni" area, and with regard to Pancheswar project the consensus was on securing "the national interest of both countries in terms of utilising the border river water". For achieving such end there were five conditions. These were: establishment of "equal capacity power houses in both countries", "equal utilisation of water ... by both countries to operate" the power houses, "arrangement for bearing "the cost in proportion to the benefit acquired from the project", application of "the principle of maximum net benefit while implementing" the Pancheswar project and all "future" projects based on "the border river" and assurance

“that both countries [would] seek consensus on using the water of the Mahakali River”. Lastly, there were two other issues. One of them demanded that the projects were supposed to “Accord priority to Nepal’s needs in the utilisation of the water” (252). Three days later, the two countries reached an agreement—the Treaty concerning the integrated development of the Mahakali river including Sarda Barrage, Tanakpur Barrage and Pancheswar Project was signed by the Foreign Ministers of the two countries (Rising Nepal, “Nepal, India Agree ... River Development” 1996 Jan. 30). Same day, extolling the virtues of the Treaty NCP (UML) press release said, “This Treaty for the first time has admitted the Mahakali River as a border river. It has acknowledged Nepalese contribution in the construction of the project and as such established Nepalese right over the benefits, both water and electricity, accruing out of the project” (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 1996 Jan 26). Two days later press release of the Party was much more elaborate. It listed fourteen benefits out of the Treaty. In the main; the thrust was on extolling the additional water and electricity, which the Treaty had brought for Nepal besides pointing out that Nepal was getting those benefits as of right and not as alms from India. Considering later developments, its thirteenth claim was interesting. It said, “Pancheswar project will also be implemented only after a treaty” (NCP (UML), “Mahakali Nadiko ... Press Bigyapti” 30). However, when the Treaty provisions became public, Gyawali and Dixit point out that Clause 3 of the Treaty said, “... and hence both the parties agree that they have equal entitlement in the utilisation of the waters of Mahakali river without prejudice to their respective consumptive uses [capacity] ....” This was followed by Clause 3 of the letters exchanged with the Treaty. This precluded claims of “either Party on the unutilised portion of the ... waters of the Mahakali River”. And finally, they say, “The treaty wrest [ed] from Nepal [its power to give its] consent to build the Pancheswar High Dam, which would generate nine billion units of electricity that would be consumed mostly by India” (253). Pancheswar was, therefore, lost for ever and the Treaty in essence did not reflect the spirit of the consensus reached among the Nepalese leaders, because the Treaty by precluding either country from utilising the

unutilised water blocked the possibility of reaching consensus between the two countries on the utilisation of the unutilised water. In February 12, in a week long official visit to India, Deuba and Indian Prime Minister, P. V. Narasimha Rao finally put their initials on the Treaty. Like the UML, NCP (United) hailed the Treaty for establishing Nepal's right (Rising Nepal, "NCP (United) Hails Accord" 1996 Feb. 16), whereas the CPN (Maoist), which had condemned the Treaty in its forty-point demands<sup>112</sup> submitted to the Government in the first week of February, came heavily upon the ratification. It viewed in it the manifestation of Indian expansionism at its best where Nepal itself was a party for it said:

The blatant manifestation of domination of Indian expansionism at one hand and the total surrender to the Indian big brother at the other, is no where clearly seen than in the sell-out of Nepal's natural resources ... the ruling classes of India have been systematically harnessing Nepal's water resource at the cost of Nepal's interest and Priority ... While Kosi Agreement [1954], Gandaki Agreement [1959] and Tanakpur Treaty reflect semi-colonial mode of usurpation done almost unilaterally ... the recently concluded Mahakali Treaty represents a more subtle and more dangerous form of neo-colonial domination. While Mahakali ... does not fall under Nepal's priority but is essential for the Indian monopoly bourgeoisie, a foreign debt of Rs 250 billion ... is thrust upon Nepal as the cost of the project. And Nepal is forced to sell electricity at through (sic)-away price ... However the MIDP project was not only supported by the ruling Congress lead coalition ... but even the ... UML. This only proves that the Indian ruling classes have a better grip over the Nepalese politics than other imperialist powers. No wonder that imperialist countries like the USA ... joined hands with the ruling class to get the Mahakali Treaty ratified ... (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Mahakali ... Sell-Out" 31).

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February the Maoist initiated People's War (for the nature of the initiation see chapter V). Added to it, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February the UML submitted a memorandum to the Government. As a sequel to its second National Council meeting of 8–9 February (See p. 486 ), the memorandum condemned the Government for

<sup>112</sup> See, Pravatkalin Janasatta 1996 March 5 In its forty-point demands number two demand read: The so-called Integrated Mahakali Treaty signed in 2052 Magh 15 [29 January 1996] between Nepal and Indian Government is intended to cover up the anti-national Tanakpur Treaty and to give to the Indian expansionists the monopoly right over Nepalese water resources. Since it is much more anti-national and against the long term interest of the nation it must be revoked immediately.

having “failed in containing price rise, fulfilling demands of various classes and professional groups and in running an efficient administration”. It placed before the Government a “thirty-point demands” and “threatened to launch a movement if the demands were not met with” (NCP (UML), Gyapanpatra 1996 Feb. 21). The purpose was obvious: it was to dislodge the Government. However, it did not launch its movement; but in 11 March, 86 of its MPs requested King Birendra to convene a Special Session of the Parliament. As requested, the session was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March. NCP (Marxist) criticized the move, which the UML had initiated after its behind the curtain negotiation with anti-democratic leader Lokendra Bahadur Chand (Rising Nepal, “UML Move Draws Flak” 1996 Mar. 20). Nevertheless, Man Mohan Adhikari, the leader of the opposition tabled the no-confidence motion in the House. While tabling the motion, he blamed Deuba Government for having “chartered the country towards a direction-less, aimless and static situation” (NCP (UML), Pradhanmantri ... Deuba Upar ... Biswas Chaina ... Prastao 1). On 24 March 1996, when voting began three of NCP (NWPP) MPs just left the Parliament expressing their lack of interest in a game, which was being played for pelf and power and even Chand was not there. UML failed to muster the required votes. It received 90 votes against 106. The Government survived (Rising Nepal, “No-Trust ... Defeated” 1996 Mar. 25). Meanwhile, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, Nepali Congress elected Koirala as its new President adding a new entrant into the power game (Rising Nepal, “Koirala Elected ... President” 1996 May 10). Following the no-confidence motion, the MPs spent their time wrangling over the Mahakali Treaty. Man Mohan clarified that his Party would not ratify the Treaty without an extensive study of its clauses (Rising Nepal, “More Scrutiny” 1996 Aug. 3). With the passage of time more detractors of the Treaty came to the open. NCP (NWPP) condemned it for sacrificing national interest. In a mass meeting, its leader Narayan Man Bijukche blamed UML for being a Party in the sell out of the country’s national resources (Rising Nepal, “UML Too Responsible ... Rohit” 1996 Aug. 4). However, the Treaty, with UML’s additional conditions, was finally ratified on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, but it brought into the open the differences

that existed within the Party (See p. 486). And though the Party was able to maintain its unity for the present, signs of its fragmentation in future was there to see. Meanwhile, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December while renewing the Indo-Nepal Trade agreement the clause which required 50% of Nepalese labour and material manufactured in Nepal for their preferential entry into India was removed—Indian gift for the passage of the Mahakali Treaty. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, UML again asked the King to call a Special Session of the Parliament expressing no-confidence in the Government. In tendering such request to the King its press release claimed the support of 11 MPs of NDP under Lokendra Bahadur Chand, two MPs of NCP (Masal) and other two of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party. With them the Party claimed the support of 102 MPs (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 8 Dec. 1996). However, when the motion was voted in the Parliament 101 votes went in favour of the motion and 84 against the motion. Even then, because of Constitutional provision that is Art. 59 (3) which required a majority of 103 to win the motion the Government survived, but it turned into a minority Government. Hence, from then on UML began asking for the resignation of Deuba Government on the ground that it had “lost its moral basis to remain in power” (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 5 Jan. 1997). By-elections in five of the Parliamentary constituencies on 24 January and its results, where the UML was victorious in three of the constituencies namely Kathmandu, Sunsari and Rupendehi added further impetus to the UML’s claim (Rising Nepal, “CPN-UML Takes ... Seats” 1997 Jan 26). So, Deuba sought the confidence of the House in March, but he lost the vote and resigned. The UML claimed that it would be able to muster the required support to form the next Government (Rising Nepal, “Deuba Loses Trust” 1997 Mar. 7). On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, the King formed Lokendra Bahadur Chand led Government. He claimed the support of the UML, the NCP (NWPP), the Sadbhavana Party and his own ten MPs (Rising Nepal, “New Government ... Cabinet ... Tomorrow” 1997 Mar. 11). In the new Government, Bamdev Gautam was given the post of Deputy Prime Minister, probably to assuage his group, which had been raising voices against the Mahakali agreement and its subsequent ratification (See, p. 487). However, the UML document

of the Sixth Congress claimed that it had formed the Government to ensure “positive balance in the political power and that it was in response to its tactics of the period”. And a few lines later it said, “Being in the Government NeKaPa (EMalay) had decided to stop the tilt of power in the negative direction<sup>113</sup> and to hold the local election in a free and fair manner” (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan, 1998 29). It seemed that its eye was more in the local election than in anything else. Hence, after coming to power its press release claimed that it had been requesting the Government to hold local elections, which the Deuba Government had deferred until June. And it added, “Within a month the coalition Government has created the base for strengthening the local units and it has expressed its firmness in holding the election” (NCP (UML), Press Baktabya 9 April 1997). The base that the press release was talking about was the passing of an ordinance to hold the elections early (Rising Nepal, “Govt Ordinance ... Local Polls” 1997 Apr. 7). Accordingly, the elections for the Village Development Committees were held in two phases on 17 and 26 May. However, in many<sup>114</sup> areas elections could not be held because of the boycott policy of the Maoists (for their views see chapter V). When the results were out in 10 June

<sup>113</sup> See, NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan, 1998 85 The Party claims that it planned the fall of a rightist coalition to form Government under Lokendra Bahadur Chand. And by doing so it says that it achieved the goal set by its thirty second Central Committee decision, which was to stop the rightist Government from deferring local elections.

<sup>114</sup> There are conflicting claims regarding the number of VDCs and DDCs which were affected by the Maoists boycott call. Amid Maoist violent reactions against activists of other political parties, paper reports indicated that in 22 villages no nominations were filed. See, Rising Nepal, “Rukum’s 22 VDCs with No Poll Nominees” 1997 May 8 and Rising Nepal, “Maoist Warned Over Attack on Masal Men” 1997 June 17 However, the Maoists claim that more than 100 villages went without polls. See, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Develop Guerrilla Warfare” 2 But an article See, Sharma, S. 49 points out that the number of villages effected in Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan and Jajarkot were 83. And see, Thapa and Sijapati 89 which, based on INSEC Human Rights Yearbook, quotes the number to 87. So it would just be sufficient to understand that local polls were disturbed in Maoist areas and the number of villages effected were perhaps anywhere between 80–90. The Maoists’ claim, it seems, was an exaggeration.

UML captured 52 per cent of the total seats while the Nepali Congress won 30% followed by NDP, 13% and NSP 1%. Rest went to the independents (Rising Nepal, “UML ... Winner” 1997 June 11). Similarly, the UML captured majority of the DDCs (Rising Nepal, “UML Sweeps ... DDCs” 1997 July 21). Whelpton claims that UML’s victory was “master-minded” by Bamdev Gautam (196). Considering how the Party valued its being in power while conducting elections (See p.168 ), Whelpton was perhaps right in making such claim. After election, Bamdev Gautam tried to introduce Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Bill: 2054 (1997) in the Parliament to empower the police to tackle the Maoists<sup>115</sup>. Such initiative coming from a UML leader, whose Party had all along championed for a political solution to the problem was something quizzical. It was more so, because the same Government had in April formed a Commission under a UML MP to suggest means to resolve the problem (See chapter V). These anomalous behaviours, therefore, lend credence to Thapa and Sijapati’s claim that in the beginning the UML and the Maoist had an understanding, but it was spoiled only after the Maoists boycotted the local elections (89). However, Bamdev’s initiative was opposed. Communist factions like NCP (United), NCP (NWPP), NCP (Masal) and Rastriya Janatantrik Morcha came together in 9 August to protest against the move (Rising Nepal, “Communists Protests” 1997 Aug. 10). NCP (Marxist) followed suit. In its Nepalgunj Plenum, which was held in VS 2054 Bhadra 27–30 [12–15 September 1997], it called upon Communist factions to come together to oppose the Bill. Explaining why the Bill was being proposed, it said:

The present political culture of the country does not believe in serving the nation and the people, but in enjoying and dining. As a result there is pervasive discontent among the people against the present RPP [NDP] and NCP (UML) coalition Government. They fear that the people’s discontent may turn against them into a revolutionary upsurge. Hence, in the name of controlling the Maoist they have been trying to bring ‘the Fascist Black Bill’ in the Parliament (NCP (Marxbadi (Marxist)), Circular No: 1/8 3).

<sup>115</sup> See, Maharjan 177 The author claims that the police had expressed their inability in arresting and then in punishing the Maoists in the absence of adequate national laws. In introducing the Bill in the Parliament the Government was therefore arguing its case that the Bill was needed to empower the police.

In view of such opposition the Government backtracked. Then on 4 October (Whelpton 196, says September) it was defeated in a no-confidence motion, when the Congress in league with Surya Bahadur Thapa and his 17 MPs s voted against it (Rising Nepal, “Chand Loses Trust” 1997 Oct. 5). Supporting the no-confidence votes were 86 MPs of Nepali Congress, 17 MPs of NDP, and MPs of NCP (NWPP) [!] and Nepal Sadbhavana Party. The UML press release of the day blamed in the fall of the Government “the role of a few undemocratic MPs of the NDP”. It said, “A few of the MPs of the NDP who were in ministerial posts<sup>116</sup>went to the opposite side to vote against the existing Government” (NCP (UML), Nepal Communist ... Bigyapti 1997 Oct 4). On the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, King Birendra appointed Surya Bahadur Thapa, who claimed the support of 107 MPs, the next Prime Minister. On 13 October, he won the vote of confidence with the support of 86 Nepali Congress, 3 Nepal Sadbhavana Party, 17 RPP, and 2 NCP (NWPP) MPs. In the voting the UML members did not participate (Rising Nepal, “Surya Bahadur Thapa Wins” 1997 Oct. 14). However, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1998, Thapa suddenly recommended the dissolution of the House. Whelpton claims that he did so when he realised that a few of the MPs of the NDP were switching their loyalty towards Chand (196). Same day, 96 members petitioned the King to call a special session of the House. The King sought the advice of the Supreme Court. The Court gave the advice on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February and summoned the House on the 11<sup>th</sup>. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1998, 90 MPs registered a no-confidence motion in the Parliament Secretariat. The MPs represented the UML and Chand faction of the NDP (Rising Nepal, “No-Trust ... Registered” 1998 Feb. 7). Thapa survived with the help of Nepali Congress, NDP, NCP (NWPP) and NSP’s support. Meanwhile, UML MPs who had presented a united face in the no-confidence motion split in March. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of March NCP (ML) came into existence (for reasons see p.

<sup>116</sup> See, Sharma, J. 329 . 14 of the 19 MPs of the NDP (RPP) had changed their side.

488). Similarly, owing to mutual animosity split had also surfaced in the NDP and now there were two factions of the Party in the Parliament: NDP (Chand faction) and NDP (Thapa faction). Commenting on the split of the UML, the Maoist propaganda was at its best while saying: “The so called United-Marxist-Leninist (UML) Party, the renegade clique that was practising the worst variety of Millerandism and Bernsteinism in Nepal, has finally split into several splinter groups on March 5, 1998” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “The Renegade ... Splits” 49). The Party viewed in its split “the process of decay” which had set in the UML following “the rapid rate of development of revolutionary districts of Gorkha, Rukum, Kavre ... and the Tarai districts of Bardia, Kapilvastu, Janakpur, Sirha etc”—they were singing their own song of success (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “The Renegade ... Splits” 49, 52). Following the splits, the fractured Parliament was further fragmented. Thapa ultimately resigned in April 10, 1998 saying that his resignation was in tune with the agreement reached with the constituents of his coalition. He handed power to Nepali Congress (Rising Nepal, “Premier Thapa Resigns” 1998 Apr. 11). On April 12, King Birendra appointed Girija Prasad Koirala the next Prime Minister. However, much to Thapa’s chagrin, he decided to lead a minority Government (Rising Nepal, “His Majesty Appoints Girija” 1998 Apr. 13). Support came from an unexpected quarter: in a bid to check NCP (ML) from joining the Government the UML decided to support Koirala Government from the outside (Rising Nepal, “CPN-UML to Support Koirala” 1998 Apr. 13). However, its actual intent behind the support was revealed in one of its later document, where it said, “To check the Nepali Congress from holding election under its leadership and to force it to implement our 36 point demands concerning nationalism, democracy and the day to day problems of the people we extended our confidence in the Girija Government” (NCP (UML), Pratibedan: 20–27 Asad ‘055 [4–11 January 1999] 2). However, from the 8<sup>th</sup> of May it began threatening Girija. It announced that it would take back its support if the Government failed to fulfil its commitments (Rising Nepal, “UML Threatens” 1998 May 9), meaning the fulfilment of its 36 point demands. During this time, Girija was proposing an

ordinance to amend Offence Against the State and Punishment Act 2046 presumably to deal with the Maoist movement. Besides, there was the Kalapani issue. In the Western frontier of Nepal, Kalapani was an area in Darchula where India had stationed her army post since 1962, and the entire Communist factions were asking for the removal of the post since they viewed in it an Indian affront to Nepalese sovereignty. The kingdom was to witness another series of protests. This time it was led by NCP (Unity Centre) and eight other Communist faction (for details see p. 490 ). Meanwhile, Indian President K. R Narayanan came to Nepal on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May<sup>117</sup>. After his departure, NCP (Unity Centre) leader, Prakash claims that Koirala initiated a police operation code named “Kilo Sera two” against the Maoists and Indian ambassador to Nepal K. V Rajan gave the statement that “Kalapani belonged to India since the 19<sup>th</sup> century” (NCP (Unity Centre) 6, 8). Further, he says, “This clearly proves that within Nepal there are Indian touts hobnobbing with Indian expansionists” (NCP (Unity Centre) 7). The statement of the Indian Ambassador further vitiated the atmosphere. Nepalese Foreign Secretary handed a protest note to the Indian Ambassador against his statements (Rising Nepal, “Foreign Secretary Hands Protest” 1998 June 17). Following the incident, the movement of the Nine Left parties dragged on until August (for reasons see p. 491). In the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the Parliament the law makers discussed only two issues: Koirala initiated police action and Kalapani. In its very first session the opposition MPs of the UML, CPN (ML), and even Chand pointed out that the Government in the name of controlling Maoists was killing innocent public and activists of other parties (Rising Nepal, “14th Session ... Aberrations” 1998 June 29). The situation changed dramatically when NCP (ML), which had joined the Government in August, decided to quit on 10 December pointing at Koirala’s insincerity in implementing the agreement, which they had reached with the Government in August (Rising Nepal, “ML ... to Quit Govt” 1998

<sup>117</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Bajpayee Invites PM” 1998 May 25 The programme of his visit was announced along with Bajpayees invitation to Koirala.

Dec. 11). Next day, Koirala recommended the dissolution of the House, but soon reached an agreement with the UML to form a new Government to oversee elections. Again, Koirala Government was installed in January 14 and the Third General Election was finally slated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1999. When the results were declared, NC won 111; UML, 71; Rastriya Janamorcha, 5; UPFN, 1; NCP (NWPP), 1; NSP, 5 and NDP (Thapa)<sup>118</sup>, 11 seats. NCP (ML) won none, but its share of votes was 6.38% of the total (Election Commission, “Election Results-2056 (1999)” 14). Considering this, Whelpton observes “Had this gone instead to the UML ... the Party would have won ... a comfortable overall majority” (199). However, this time Krishna Prasad Bhattarai won from the Parsa Constituency and was sworn in as the new Prime Minister and both posts of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House went to the Congress.<sup>119</sup> Commenting on the new Government, NCP (NWPP) categorised it as the “managing committee of the bourgeois class of big contractors, zamindars, feudal forces, commission agent and black marketeers”. It said it was in the Parliament to “expose their crimes against the people and to lead the movement for the people” (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party (NCP (NWPP)) 3). Further, it said, “These two parties are in favour of bourgeois two-Party domination. Jointly they now have 2/3 majority. Since they both command 88% of the seats, in the days to come they will find easy to serve India: any treaty will be easily ratified” (NCP (NWPP) 6). And the NCP (Masal) obviously saw in it the installation of a “Fascist regime” which would “misuse power, police and its lumpen elements to subjugate activists of other political parties” (NCP (Masal), “Aam Nirvachan ... Baktabya [1999]” 647). As the new Government began functioning the UML posed a challenge. Until November, it did not allow the

<sup>118</sup> The Election Commission Results do not provide this information that the winning NDP was from the Thapa faction. The information is drawn from comment of NCP (Masal). See, NCP (Masal), “Nirvachanko ... Prastao” 650

<sup>119</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Landslide ... Bhattarai” 1999 May 20; Rising Nepal, “Bhattarai Sworn” 1999 June 1 and. Rising Nepal, “Taranath ... Elected ... Speaker” 1999 June 23

Government to function well both within and outside the Parliament (For reasons see p. 496 ). Even under such circumstances, the Bhattarai Government managed to pass the Local Self Governance Act (See, p.239). Besides, in November 30, he formed a six-member high level committee under Sher Bahadur Deuba to explore ways and means to solve the Maoist problem (Rising Nepal, “Panel Formed” 1999 Dec. 1). The activities of the UML came to a halt only by the second week of December when it had to face Parliamentary by-elections in constituencies vacated by winners in the May election. However, it lost in all three constituencies. This reduced its effective presence in the Parliament to 69 raising that of the Congress to 113 (Rising Nepal, “NC Bags All ... Seats” 1999 Dec. 13). For its loss in the elections, the UML alleged that the Congress had “masterminded the elections by using its lumpen elements ... raising grave questions against the nature of election process” (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 1999 Dec. 12).

#### 1.24. National Politics: 2000–2002

From the beginning of 2000, in the midst of the Maoist problem, outstanding issues related to *Kamaiyas* (bonded labourers), property rights for women and Self-Governance Act 2055 came to the forefront. If Human Rights bodies like INSEC and Anti-Slavery International were demanding laws to end the *Kamaiya* system, women were clamouring for Property Rights Bill. Similarly, the demand for Self-Governance Regulations in line with the spirit of Self-Governance Act-2055 was being raised by VDC and DDC functionaries. They were claiming that without new regulations power decentralisation as envisaged by the 2055 Act (1999) could not be implemented.<sup>120</sup>To some extent the influence of these issues were, therefore, visible in the UML’s proposed “package solution” to the Maoist problem. In their first visit to

<sup>120</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Separate Laws Needed to End Bonded Labour” 2000 Jan. 6; Rising Nepal, “National Federation for VDCs Demand Self-Governance Regulations” 2000 Jan. 8; Rising Nepal, “Property Rights Bill to Be Passed” 2000 Jan. 11

tender their views about the causes and solutions to the problem their suggestions were:

[1].Maoist movement is the result of Government's faulty policy.

[2].It is a political problem. Its activities are based on its ultra-left perceptions and terrorist tactics.

[3].The solution to the problem can be evolved through constitutional and peaceful struggle....

[4].One has to search a package solution to the problem. It cannot be solved superficially and by going alone.

[5].The Government should stop masterminding election processes. It should guarantee free and fair elections. It should raise people's faith in election processes, stop corruption ... stop imprisoning political activists of other parties, stop 'congressisation' in educational and other institutions ... implement decentralisation and make local bodies effective and be honest in working in the interest of the nation and the people (NCP (UML), Press Baktabya 2000 Jan. 13).

They were in a way rejecting *ad hoc* solutions in preference for a holistic approach to the problem. However, given the circumstances where they themselves were in the forefront of disrupting the Parliament and where installed Ministries were frequently under threats such reasoned approach was not on the cards. Power struggle within the Congress was so intense that in February 16 a group of 58 MPs registered a no-confidence motion against their own Government. Meanwhile, through a press release in February 23, Deuba declared Maoist leaders' readiness to participate in talks (Rising Nepal, "Maoists Ready for Talks" 2000 Feb. 24). However, the creator of Deuba Committee, Bhattarai, was not to be there, because rebellion within Nepali Congress ultimately claimed his resignation in March 16 bringing in Koirala as the new Prime Minister of the kingdom (Rising Nepal, "Bhattarai Resigns" 2000 Mar. 17). Running parallel to these events, on 28 February, the UML declared its intent to launch a phased wise protest movements from the beginning of March (For reasons see p. 496 ). In April, a Task Force, which had been formed in February to suggest

means to combat terrorist activities, recommended the Government to form an Armed Security Force. Koirala preferred its use to Army, which he considered as the last option (Rising Nepal, “‘No’ to Army Mobilisation” 2000 May 13). In resolving the Maoist problem, the basic difference in the views of Koirala led Congress and the Communist factions was that Koirala was for using security measures such as the deployment of Armed Security Force along with economic sops,<sup>121</sup> whereas the Communist factions were against the use of force. Their main argument was that the problem could be resolved politically—the components of which they did not fully explain—and by freeing the nation from the scourge of poverty, unemployment, corruption etcetera. These differences came in the way of the Government in taking decisive step. As a result, Maoist violence continued in the remote districts of Kalikot, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan and Jajarkot. The indecisiveness, which plagued the Government came to light in August when Deuba declared that the Maoist leadership had retracted from their offer for talks when his Committee was not fully authorised by Koirala Government with a “go ahead signal” until August second week. He blamed the Government for the continuing Maoist violence (Rising Nepal, “Government .. for Talks ... Deuba” 2000 Aug. 14). On 18<sup>th</sup> September,<sup>122</sup> the Maoists temporarily seized “Dunai, headquarters of the remote ... district of Dolpa ... killed fourteen policemen and made off with 50 million rupees from the bank” (Whelpton,

<sup>121</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Govt. Plans Basket Fund” 2000 Aug. 26 Using this approach the Government announce Basket Fund Approach to combat Maoist problems in Kalikot, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan and Jajarkot. The fund was named Integrated Development Fund and it was to be used in ameliorating social and economic conditions of the areas. But, along with it the Government was also using police force to contain Maoist actions. However Communist factions did not approve of the approach. The UML, the largest of them all said, “Maoist problem is fundamentally a political problem and its root lies in the socio-economic structure of the kingdom. Till those causes are not uprooted the problem cannot be solved” NCP (UML), Press Baktabya 2000 Oct. 15

<sup>122</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Govt. Very Sensitive Over Dunai Incident: Joshi” 2000 Sept. 21 for the exact date of the incident.

History 211). Then describing the Government's response to the Maoist violence Whelpton writes, "In parallel with continuing attempts at negotiations, army companies were deployed in all district headquarters, and Girija went ahead with plans to set up the Armed Police Force" (210). From November, Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee began investigating issues related with a Cabinet decision which had allowed Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation to acquire a jet on lease from Lauda Air, an Austrian Company. The Public Accounts Committee sensed irregularities in the deal and in the decision of the Cabinet (Rising Nepal, "Lauda" 2000 Nov. 25). The year came to the close when on December 28, Sher Bahadur Deuba led 56 Nepali Congress MPs registered a no-confidence motion against Koirala. While registering the motion, Deuba alleged that Koirala had failed in controlling corruption, maintaining law and order and in providing good governance (Rising Nepal, "No-Trust ... Registered" 2000 Dec. 29). However, the Party somehow averted the crisis, but "taking cue from the Public Accounts Committee's perception in the Lauda Air deal," the UML document claims that it launched "a series of protest movements demanding the resignation of corrupt Prime Minister, Koirala" (NCP (UML), "Pratibedan: VS 2058 [Aug. 2001]" 5). Amid such UML sponsored movements, which continued even in the beginning of 2001, Whelpton says, Maoists attacked "on two regular police posts at the beginning of April". In response, "the Government ... announced an Integrated Security and Development Programme". Under it, the Army was given the "responsibility" of maintaining "law and order" as well as of implementing "development projects in selected districts" (210). In the districts<sup>123</sup> where the programme was implemented, the UML document indicates that it

<sup>123</sup> See, NCP (UML), "Ekakrit Antarik Suraksha ... Partyko Dristikon" 43 The extent to which the kingdom had come under the Maoist violence is reflected in the districts chosen under the programme. There were two sets of districts: (A) Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, Kalikot and Jajarkot and (B) Pyuthan, Gorkha, Kavre, Ramechhap, Lamjung, Dhading, Dolpa, Jumla, Sindhupalchok, Sindhuli, Nuwakot, Dailekh, Baglung, Myagdi, Dolakha, Tanahu, and Achham. The first set was the most effected.

“destroyed the authority of local bodies” by “transferring power into the hands of civil and Army officials” (NCP (UML), “Ekakrit Antarik Suraksha ... Partyko Dristikon” 43). It objected against the programme for having “gone against the spirit of decentralisation and autonomy of local bodies” (44). The Party issued six directives to its district cadres. The essence of the directives was reflected in the fourth entry which said: “The Integrated Security and Development Programme is not meant for development, but for destroying the spirit of 1990 Constitution, which through decentralisation seeks to include people’s participation in the use of people’s sovereign power”. The other five directives asked the cadres to oppose every aspect of the programme (44). By its objections, the Party was exposing its usual tendency to object against any initiative taken by the Government. Then in the evening of June 1, when the royalties were together in one of the rooms of the Narayanhiti Palace, Crown Prince, Dipendra in his drunken and doped state killed his entire family. In the incident, Komal Shah, the wife of Gyanendra, who was in Pokhara then, was “also hit, though not fatally” and her son, Paras, “escaped unhurt” (Whelpton, History 211). Dipendra, who had reportedly shot himself, died on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June. Following his death, “a few hours” later Gyanendra was crowned as the new King (Whelpton, History 213). However, Whelpton points out that after the incident “a majority of Nepalese ... believed ... that ... the whole affair had been arranged by Gyanendra and/or his son Paras”. According to him, such belief was due to “Nepal’s long history of court intrigue” and by the fact that it had brought “Gyanendra to the throne” who along with his son were unpopular among the people (215). After the Maoists stand on the issue (See, below), the belief fuelled wide spread protests in the “streets of Kathmandu” in which the participants either represented “genuine royalists” or “probably Maoist sympathisers” (Whelpton, History 216). On acceding the throne, Gyanendra immediately set up a three member Inquiry Commission under the then Chief Justice, Keshav Prasad Upadhyaya with one member each from the Nepali Congress and the UML, that is, Taranath Ranabhat and Madhav Kumar Nepal respectively (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 2001 June 16). However, Nepal declined to

be in the Commission. Explaining such rejection, the document of the Party said, “Our Party declined to be in the Commission because the manner in which the body was formed would have raised Constitutional questions” (NCP (UML), “Pratibedan: VS 2058 [Aug. 2001]” 4). The Party’s objection was probably directed towards the fact that the Parliament and not the King should have constituted the Commission. However, when the report of the Commission, which was formed only to find facts<sup>124</sup> related to the incident, became public on 14 June, the UML was not satisfied, because it said that it did not provide “concrete analysis of the incident” and blamed the Government for “accepting a passive position” (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 2001 June 16). The Maoist on the other hand viewed in the incident the handiwork of American imperialism and Indian expansionism for it said:

Today, even while one is entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a medieval-styled massacre involving the entire royal family of King Birendra, has occurred in the Himalayan kingdom ... In an era of imperialism and expansionism where medieval monarchy can only exist with the blessing of these forces, some streak of liberalism and patriotism on the part of the late King Birendra in dealing against the class-conscious Maoist People’s War proved to be suicidal for him and his whole family. To sharpen the instrument of suppression the feudal hard-liner forces represented by Gyanendra, the younger brother of the late King ... and the comprador bourgeois class represented by Girija ... under the backing of American imperialism and Indian expansionism, conspired to murder the whole family so as to pave way for Gyanendra, who was in favour of suppressing the People’s War (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Royal Massacre” 11).

Besides, they said that the incident “had made monarchy redundant”, and asked people “to protest against the massacre” while demanding “the resignation of Girija<sup>125</sup> ... as one of [their] immediate demands” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Royal Massacre” 11). Explaining why they considered Birendra a liberal and patriotic King, they indicated towards his “reluctance to deploy the royal army under

<sup>124</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “His Majesty Specifies Terms of Reference of the Probe Committee” 2001 June 7 The terms of reference for the Commission was that it should submit a Report to His Majesty along with true facts about the incident.

<sup>125</sup> See, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Editorial” 2 They called Girija, “the much-hated Koirala”. This maybe because he was tough towards them.

his supreme command against the PW” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Editorial” 1). Then they called Nepal Bandh on 12 July and in the same night they struck at different places like “Lamjung, Nuwakot and Gulmi districts.” Of these, their strike at Holeri area police post of Rolpa was the most daring. They “kidnapped 69 policemen” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Royal Massacre” 11; Whelpton, History 216). And when the Government mobilised the Royal Nepal Army, to cordon Rolpa area to free the abducted policemen and to recover the looted weapons<sup>126</sup> they claimed that it showed “Girija in connivance with Gyanendra” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Royal Massacre” 11). In their words, the purpose behind all their actions was “to expose the conspirators”, the “foreign lackeys and murderer Gyanendra-Girija clique” to institutionalise “the republic born by default” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Editorial” 1). The Nepal bandh and the attack in Holeri, they claimed, were a part of their “‘shock’ programme” to destabilise the old reactionary State (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Editorial” 1–2). In the light of their so-called creativity advocated in the Prachandapath (See, p. 538), which preached the tactics of mixing general insurgency with People’s war, the destabilisation of the State was aimed at creating a situation of general uprising by blaming the expansionist/imperialist and Girija/Gyanendra collusion for the killing of a King with a ‘liberal streak’. However, the NCP (Masal) blamed “the campaign of the pro-monarchist and revivalist to bring monarchy back, and the competition within the palace for power as the primary cause behind the June 1 incident”. The statements implied the hand of pro-monarchist, Gyanendra in it (NCP (Masal), “Tatkalik ... Prastao 2058 [2001/2]” 676). Its document, which was focused on analysing the after

<sup>126</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Efforts to End Rolpa Stand-Off Continue” 2001 July 16

effects of the incident perceived in the monarchy a “weakened institution”<sup>127</sup>. In such a situation, though it also wanted to “intensify its demand for a Republican State”, yet it was not in favour of going with the CPN (Maoist), because the Maoists’ comments had evoked just the opposite reactions (NCP (Masal), “Tatkalik ... Prastao 2058 [2001/2]” 678). Commenting on their statements NCP (Masal) viewed them as pro-monarchic force, which was being used by the pro-monarchists to bring back the autocratic rule of the King for their document said:

The Maoists comment on the June 1 incident has cleared their pro-monarchic line ... according to their interpretations the incident was a plot of national and foreign reactionaries against a ‘patriotic’ and a ‘liberal’ King. Their statement proves that there was an ‘undeclared tactical unity’ between the late King and the Maoists and the pro-monarchists. The pro-monarchists were using the Maoists as an instrument to destroy the existing multi-Party system. The Maoists by their political immaturity and anarchic tendency were helping the strategy of the pro-monarchists (NCP (Masal), “Tatkalik ... Prastao 2058 [2001/2]” 679).

The statements implied that NCP (Masal) was not convinced by the CPN (Maoist)’s tactics of denigrating Gyanendra rather it viewed them in his service. In somewhat different tone, but reflecting similar perceptions the NCP (United) observed:

Considering the Maoist leadership’s statements after the Palace incident and despite their focused attack on Girija and the present King one cannot rule out the possibility ... that the Palace will use the Maoist as its instrument. The Palace will follow such policy until it will not go against its own interests and until such policy will not evoke international pressure, which it will not be in a position to handle (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Darbar Hatya Kanda: Rajnitik Pratibedan 4).

However, there was one Communist faction which analysed the Palace incident in line with that of the Maoist. It was NCP (Unity Centre), but its demand was limited only for the creation a Constituent Assembly and not for creating a situation of general uprising against the rulers, for Prakash, its leader, in an article published in Jeth 2059 (May/June 2002) said:

<sup>127</sup> See, NCP (Masal), “Tatkalik ... Prastao 2058 [2001/2]” 676 The Party was pointing out towards the widespread protests against Gyanendra and Paras to reach to such conclusion.

In fact, the Palace incident was plotted by national and foreign reactionaries to resolve the crisis of reactionary power through reactionary means. Because of the many positive, liberal attitude of King Birendra—his rejection to use Army to solve ‘Maoist’ problem, his opposition against the citizenship ordinance etcetera. But, we did not analyse him as a patriot and as a democrat against the reactionaries. In comparison to others in the Palace, it is true that his views were positive. Such views of King Birendra were not acceptable to the national and foreign reactionaries—He was not a suitable candidate in the game plan of the reactionary and Fascist forces to bring in Fascism. The Palace plot was their planned plot to end the crisis of reactionary rulers through Fascist method ... Against the killing and against the rulers brought forward after the incident there was widespread protests ... the reactionary rule had become more weak. Hence, immediately after the incident we had argued that time had come for the Nepalese to decide as to how they wanted themselves to be ruled. That argument was in fact our appeal to the people to ask for the Constituent Assembly (Prakash 343–44).

In the face of such conflicting perceptions, the Maoist tactics of arousing general insurrection failed. And according to Whelpton, the cordoning of the Rolpa area by the Army led to a “stand-off” when the Army Commander on the spot, fearing heavy casualties, did not take action. Later, the Maoists released the policemen in batches (Whelpton, *History* 218). Meanwhile,<sup>128</sup> Koirala had come up with a 14 point proposal<sup>129</sup> where he sought the support of the opposition to end violence in the kingdom. Responding to it, UML document says that it “entered into an agreement

<sup>128</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Congress ... Pledges ... to ... 14-Point Agenda” 2001 June 30

<sup>129</sup> See, NCP (UML), “Pradhanmantri Girija ... Koiralalay ... Patra” 47–9 The letter sent to UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal by Girija describes the 14 point proposal to end violence in the kingdom. Since, these proposal were intended to solve the issues facing the nation they are briefly placed here. As per the letter, the proposals were: 1. To clarify the power of the Prime Minister in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution. 2. To make transparent the relation between the party in power and the party in opposition. 3. To ensure free and fair elections. 4. Build consensus among parties in support of laws promulgated to contain violence. 5. Ban strikes at least for 10 years. 6. Contain corruption. 7. Make political parties responsible. 8. End intrusion of politics in educational institutions. 9. Solve problems related to citizenship through consensus. 10. Resolve problems related to land reform within a stipulated time frame. 11. Ensure women’s right in paternal property. 12. Take concrete policy decision to end untouchability and other social exploitation. 13. To end political influence on employees associations. 14. Build consensus among all political parties to ensure efficiency in the functioning of government organisations.

with the representatives of Koirala and refined the proposal into a 17 point agreement<sup>130</sup> on Asad 18, 2058 [2 July 2001]” (NCP (UML), “Rastriya Samasyako” 28). The Maoists misinterpreted the effort to prove collusion between Girija and Gyanendra by saying “It is worth noting that ... on the very day of the coronation [of Gyanendra] ... Bolstered by new King’s hardened attitude, Girija came out with a 14-point agenda of common understanding; an attempt to rope in all political forces to isolate CPN (Maoist) and to suppress it” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Royal Massacre” 11). However, nothing transpired out of the proposals, because Koirala resigned when the opposition continuously obstructed the Parliament demanding his resignation (Rising Nepal, “Oppn ... Demand PM Should Quit” 2001 July 19). After his resignation on 19 July Deuba came in. UML viewed in his resignation “an important achievement” of its “long drawn struggle against Fascist Koirala” and pointed out that it would place before the new Government its demand for “Constitutional amendments ... to ameliorate the deteriorating condition of the nation” (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 2001 July 20). However, the Maoists claimed that his resignation was owing to his exposure before the public of his “white lies” regarding his claims that “the ... military force” had encircled and killed “People’s Army” in the Holeri incident (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Royal Massacre” 12). In making such false claims, the Maoists were perhaps trying to portray the invincibility of their force for lies and falsification of facts (as will be seen in Chapter V) were a part of their tactics to mobilise the masses.

<sup>130</sup> See, NCP (UML), “17 Bunday Sahamati” 50–3 The 17 point agreement added three more on Girija’s proposals. The added proposals were: 15 through 17. Proposal 15 was for ensuring the impartial functioning of media. Proposal 16. reiterated UML’s often publicised solution to the Maoist problem. It raised the demand that the Maoist problem is a political problem which needs to be resolved through package programme and through dialogues. Proposal 17. proposed that for solving issues of national interest and for protecting nationalism there should be consensus.

In Deuba's coming to power, the Maoist perceived a "change" in the tactics of "the reactionary ruling class", which was trying to manage the instability that had set in following the royal massacre, which had led to the "collapse of traditional monarchy". According to them, Sher Bahadur Deuba represented a "liberal face" who was out there to enact "a drama of negotiation ... with the revolutionary forces" (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Editorial" 2). On assuming office, Deuba immediately declared cease-fire and freed 15 Maoist activists. On the same day, that is on July 28, Maoist leader Prachanda reciprocated. He expressed his opinion to respect the cease-fire and to go ahead with talks to resolve the problems of the nation. However, he demanded the Government to create a favourable environment for talks (Rising Nepal, "Govt ... to Free 15 Maoist" 2001 July 29). This meant the release of more jailed Maoist activists and public announcement about the whereabouts of a few of them. However, the UML went a step further. One of its MPs in the House proposed the Government to reject the Armed Police Force Ordinance, 2057 [2000], but the proposal was rejected (Rising Nepal, "House ... Ordinance" 2001 Aug. 7). Then its 9<sup>th</sup> August proposal to the Government warned "not to make talks an issue of propaganda, but to use it to solve the Maoist problem on the basis of consensus reached among all political parties" (NCP (UML), Prastaharu 2001 Aug. 9). However, in the face of the Maoists perceptions about the use of such talks UML's warning simply exposed its naiveté, because the Maoists were using the idea of dialogue for mobilising the masses for their document said:

The question of negotiation has always been viewed differently by different classes. The ruling reactionary class uses it as a weapon to lull the revolutionaries into inaction and surrender, or to mislead the masses against the revolutionary masses ... alleging that they are ... not for peaceful solution. For the proletarian revolutionary forces, the question of negotiation becomes relevant only when it helps in consolidating revolutionary forces ... When they decide to go for negotiation, they use it as an opportunity to put forward their ideology ... before the masses and to mobilise them for the revolution (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Negotiation ... the Reactionary State" 12).

Hence, on August 28, while asking the Government to make public the whereabouts of their activists, when the Maoists confirmed their intent to enter into dialogues from

August 30, they were only implementing their tactics of mobilising the masses. Besides, their declaration audaciously announced the subsequent dates, which were to follow the first round of talk. It was to be held on September 10—eventually held on 14 September—and on September 25 (Rising Nepal, “Maoist Confirm ... Aug 30 Talks” 2001 Aug. 29). When the Government fulfilled their demands, they participated both 30 August and 14 September talks while announcing to hold, despite Government’s protest, public rallies in September 17 and 21.<sup>131</sup> Until the second round of talks, their representative Mahara was insisting on the formation of Constituent Assembly and a republican system. By now, even other Communist factions, like UPFN and NCP (ML) were demanding radical change in the Constitution if it were required to resolve the problem (Rising Nepal, “Mahara ... for More Talks” 2001 Sept. 16). Under such circumstances, the third round of talks, according to the Maoists’ document took place on November 13, but it ended in failure and then they pulled out from more talks. Explaining the reasons behind the failure of the talks, the Maoist document blames the intransigence of the Gyanendra clique for it says,

The first round of negotiation ... was an introductory meeting ... The second round of ... negotiation was centred on drawing the agenda and the three immediate political demands put forward by our side, namely (1) formation of an interim Government (2) drawing a new constitution (3) institutionalisation of the republic. Among these demands the reactionary side understandably stuck to the question of monarchy, apparently under pressure from the Gyanendra clique, and the talks seemed to make no political headway (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Negotiation ... the Reactionary State” 12).

As regards the third round talks it says,

The third round of negotiation took place on November 13. As there was apparent pressure from the feudal-militarist clique not to concede to the demand of a republican form of state, our side made an alternate proposal for an elected constituent assembly<sup>132</sup> under an interim

<sup>131</sup> Because of Government’s pressure that such rallies would destroy the environment necessary for the talks the Maoists were ultimately forced to give up the plan of holding them.

<sup>132</sup> See, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Interview with Chairman

Government ... But the meek Deuba Government once again surrendered to the ... Gyanendra clique and did not dare to support the new proposal (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Negotiation ... the Reactionary State" 13).

There are no evidences to verify the Maoists' one sided claim, but going by the statements of NCP (ML)'s leadership in September, it seems the Maoists' claim was correct, because Bam Dev Gautam expressed the view that his Party was against Maoists' demand for a total change in the 1990 Constitution (Rising Nepal, "ML Does not Subscribe to Maoists' Concepts" 2001 Sept. 30). But, on the same day UML leader, Madhav Kumar Nepal was objecting against the Maoists' demand by saying that his Party was opposed to any move which was intended to ensure one-Party rule (Rising Nepal, "One-Party Rule ... Unacceptable" 2001 Sept. 30). However, there was nothing in the Maoists' demands which could be construed along such line. Hence, Nepal's statement was not portraying the actual demand of the Maoist. Thus, it seems that he was also objecting against the Maoist demand for a Constituent Assembly, but the question is why were they indulging in circumlocutions to oppose the Maoists' demand? There are no documentary evidences to understand their position on the issue, but considering their statements it seems that in the Maoists' proposal of a Constituent Assembly they feared the loss of their influence<sup>133</sup> and consequently the

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Prachanda" 4 In an interview given to the Times of India, published in the Maoist organ, Prachanda points out that the Party gave up its other demands but stuck to the demand for the Constituent Assembly, because it was the demand of the Communists ever since the Delhi Accord of 1951 and it was meant for transferring power to the people.

<sup>133</sup> The Party in the 1990 Janandolan period had failed to stand for the demand of the Constituent Assembly. Had the Maoists' demand succeeded then it would have meant the end of their influence. See, also Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "We Are Fighting ... in Our Own State" 19 In a telecast interview with the CNN, the transcript of which was published in the Maoist organ, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the participant in the talk claims that the demand for the Constituent Assembly was not accepted because the ruling class felt that they would lose. However, what the ruling class would have lost in accepting the demand is not clarified by him.

loss of their importance in the future politics of Nepal. Then according to Whelpton, “on 23 November, the Maoist broke the cease-fire” and “for the first time targeted the Army as well as the police” (Whelpton, *History* 218). On that day, the Maoists claim that they struck in Dang and “attacked a well-fortified barrack and arms depot ... of the royal Nepal army” besides capturing “Ghorai ... the district headquarter of Dang” which was of “strategic importance” since it controlled “Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, Pyuthan and Dang districts, the epicentre of ... PW in Western Nepal” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Earth Shaking ... by PLA” 6). Deuba Government then imposed emergency in November 26 and deployed Army throughout the Maoist affected areas of Rolpa, Baglung, Sindhupalchowk, Makwanpur and Sindhuli districts.<sup>134</sup> Reacting to the Government’s initiative, the press statement of the Maoist said that the “imposition of ... emergency” and the “deployment of the royal army” was “the last desperate act of the tottering monarchical regime”. They claimed that the measures were taken against the “heroic military actions of the People’s Liberation Army” and against their announcement in “the last week of November 2001” the formation of an “embryonic Central People’s Government” in the form of “United Revolutionary People’s Council, Nepal [URPC]” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Press Statement of CCOMPOSA” 17). The Maoist’s claim implied that ruling class perceived threat to the Nepalese State in the formation of the URPC hence it reacted with Army deployment. However, the Body was also meant for implementing its latest tactics, which sought to mix the tactics of general insurgency with that of People’s War (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “National Convention of ... URPC” 9) as declared in the Prachandapath (for details regarding the Path and the URPC programme see Chapter 5). The Government was perhaps concerned about more violence which their mixed tactics would have brought. The emergency continued: the Parliament extended it for another three months in February 21, 2002

<sup>134</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Armymen Foil Terrorists’ Attacks” 2001 Dec. 2 and Rising Nepal, “Operation on Against Terrorists” 2001 Dec. 4

with the dissenting notes of NCP (Masal), UPFN (Niranjan faction) and NCP (NWPP)<sup>135</sup>. Meanwhile, Koirala started airing conciliatory position against the Maoists: he began advising Government to hold talks with them (Rising Nepal, “Govt ... Talks” 2002 Apr. 29). However, the Government side maintained its position. Home Minister, Khadka was ready to hold talks only if the Maoists laid their arms (Rising Nepal, “Khadka Rules Out Talks” 2002 May 7). With the approach of May, Prime Minister Deuba made it clear that he was for extending emergency for three more months to allow the Army to deal with the terrorists. But, the Congress under the Presidentship of Koirala was against such extension (Rising Nepal, “Emergency ... to Curb Terror” 2002 May 23). This change in the Congress’s stand needs to be understood in light of two facts: First, Koirala had met Prachanda in Delhi in March 2002 (Whelpton, *History* 219). Second, during that time, as Krämer says, Giriya Prasad Koirala had been saying that “he wanted to become prime minister again at any price” (210). These two observations placed together suggests that Koirala was perhaps in league with Prachanda to lessen the pressure of armed actions against the Maoists. By stopping the extension of emergency he perhaps wanted to ingratiate the Maoist to gain the seat of power. However, Deuba did not tow the Party line. On the contrary, on 22 May, he recommended the King to dissolve the Ministry and on the 27<sup>th</sup>, to re-impose emergency.<sup>136</sup> Both his recommendations were accepted and emergency was extended until August 27. But, it had its fallout: Nepali Congress expelled Deuba. However, among the Congress MPs there were quite a few, thirty-three legislators, who supported his actions.<sup>137</sup> The incident ultimately led to the split

<sup>135</sup> There were 7 votes against 194. These were the combined strength of the parties.

<sup>136</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “His Majesty Dissolves the House” 2002 May 23 and Rising Nepal, “His Majesty Orders ... Emergency” 2002 May 28

<sup>137</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Deuba Gets ... Support of ... Ministers” 2002 May 24 and Rising Nepal, “NC Expels Deuba ... for Three Years” 2002 May 27

of the Party and to the creation of Deuba led Nepali Congress (Democratic) in September 23, 2002 (Rising Nepal, “EC ... Recognises Deuba Faction” 2002 Sept. 24). During this period, the Government was upbeat. It claimed improvement in security environment and the parties began pressurising it not to extend emergency any further. On 25 August, Madhav Kumar Nepal, the UML leader, led a delegation of seven Communist factions to Deuba’s residence at Baluwatar to ask him to lift emergency. Their<sup>138</sup> contention was that free and fair elections could not be held under emergency (NCP (UML), Gyapanpatra 2002 Aug. 25). The Government did not extend emergency, but they were in for a rude shock when on 7 September night and on the 8<sup>th</sup> the Maoist struck two targets. The former was launched in Sindhuli, 170 Km east of Kathmandu, and the latter in Sandhikharka, the headquarter of Arghakhachi in mid-western Nepal. In those attacks the Army lost 49 and 59 personnel respectively.<sup>139</sup> Both the Government and the political parties lost their confidence. On 29 September, Political parties advised the Prime Minister to postpone elections (Rising Nepal, “PM Advised to Postpone Polls” 2002 Sept. 30). To consider Deuba’s recommendation to postpone elections until 19 November 2003 King Gyanendra began consulting leaders from 3 October (Rising Nepal, “His Majesty Starts Consultation” 2002 Oct. 4). But, on the 4<sup>th</sup> evening broadcast to the nation he relieved Deuba from his post. In the transcript of the broadcast published a day later, Gyanendra pointed out, that Deuba’s inability to hold elections as per Article 53 (4) of the Constitution had complicated situation. So, he said, “by virtue of the State Authority as exercised by us [the royalties] and in the spirit of the Constitution ... as

<sup>138</sup> See, also Rising Nepal, “Political Parties ... to Lift Emergency” 2002 Aug. 29 In a press statement ten political parties, represented by their leaders like Girija, Bharat Mohan Adhikari (UML), Surya Bahadur Thapa, Amik Sherchan of NCP (Masal), Bishnu Bahadur Manandhar of NCP (United) etcetera, urged the Government that it should not extend emergency for it went against the spirit of 1990 democratic movement.

<sup>139</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Maoists Attack Sindhuli” 2002 Sept. 9 and Rising Nepal, “Maoist Killed 59 ... in Sandhikarka” 2002 Sept. 10

well as taking ... Article 27 (3) ... Deuba should be relieved of his office, owing to his incompetency to conduct the general elections”. Then he postponed November election, took to himself the responsibility of governing the kingdom and asked political parties to send their advice regarding clean persons to form a Council of Ministers to hold elections under a safe and secure environment (Rising Nepal, “Deuba Relieved of Office” 2002 Oct. 5). Reacting to the takeover, Maoist leader Prachanda pointed out that “the feudal palace” by its act “[had ] unveiled [its] autocratic, fascist character by attacking the fundamental rights of the people, wielding a sword of ‘royal authority’ that it did not possess”. He perceived it as “the logical consequence of ... the royal carnage” and called upon all to develop “a storm of united struggle ... to overthrow and dissolve the feudal palace ... by rejecting its illegitimate decisions” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Press Statement on Royal Take-Over” 45). It was obviously a call for bringing about general insurrection. On the other hand, the UML’s reaction to the declaration was meek. It appealed “all political parties to come together” and to form “a Government on the basis of national consensus to clear ways for holding free and fair elections” (NCP (UML), Press Baktabya 2002 Oct. 5). On the 8<sup>th</sup>, six mainstream parties appealed Gyanendra to form a Government with the consensus of all political parties (Rising Nepal, “Political Parties ... Appeal ... Majesty” 2002 Oct. 9), but to no avail. On 11 October, Gyanendra appointed Lokendra Bahadur Chand the Prime Minister of the kingdom to head a nine-member Council of Ministers (Rising Nepal, “Chand Appointed” 2002 Oct. 12). Reacting to all these events Baburam Bhattarai characterised Gyanendra’s action as the action of a “self-proclaimed King”, a “*coup d’ é tat*” which had deprived the people of “the limited democratic gains of the 1990 ... movement”. He perceived in it a “permanent threat to the multiparty parliamentary democracy in the country” (Bhattarai, B. 21). Explaining why he considered it a *coup d’ é tat*, he said it was against the “letter and spirit of 1990 Constitution”. He placed three arguments. First, he said that “constitutional monarchy nowhere exercises ‘executive powers’ and assumes ‘responsibility of governance’”. Second, he pointed how Gyanendra

castigated Deuba as incompetent, and third the manner in which he appointed Chand disregarding “the joint petition of all the six parliamentary parties” (22). To explain why it happened he first described the nature of post-1990 political development of Nepal and then pointed out that the take over was owing to the monarch’s control over the Army, but more importantly his analysis revealed what was expected out of the People’s War for he wrote:

The history of last 12 years is the history of continued contention between the semi-feudal and semi-colonial social formation principally patronized by the monarchy and a progressive bourgeois democratic transformation which had a qualitative leap with the initiation of revolutionary PW in 1996 ... And this royal coup d’ é tat has unmistakably validated the principled stand of the revolutionary Left that the 1990 political change had not consummated the bourgeois democratic revolution in the country and the feudal-bureaucratic monarchy with its continued control over the traditional Royal Army still constituted the main danger even to the incipient parliamentary democracy. In that sense the recent developments are not at all ‘unnatural’ and ‘unexpected’ as some people have claimed to be (23).

It was not a novel analysis: it echoed Tulsilal Amatya’s half a century old analysis, where he had similarly analysed the cause behind the 1960 Royal coup in the monarch’s control over the Army (See, p. 67). Rest of his work reiterated Maoist’s usual argument that the 1990 Constitution was not made by the people, but it originated from a “King-nominated committee”, which had invested in him “inherent constitutional and state authority” to make the coup possible (23). It ended with a call to “all patriotic and democratic forces” to participate in URPC’s “roundtable conference” to form “an interim Government” to carry out elections for a “Constituent Assembly to complete the bourgeois democratic revolution” (26) raising doubts regarding Maoist’s sincerity in pursuing the URPC’s programmes, which were meant for bringing about communism in Nepal. Thus, ended the Parliamentary phase in Nepal.

#### 1.25. Economy of Nepal: 1990–2002

Political activities, movements and pattern of mobilisation are not independent of the economic and social arrangement of a State. The arrangements create demands on the political system to influence the path of political activities.

Hence, to understand their impact on Nepal's political developments, the following sections first surveys her economy.

To profile the economic health of a State one cannot ignore concepts like growth and development. If growth refers to the positive quantitative changes which are primarily reflected in the GDP, development refers to the changes in the economic structures towards a growth friendly direction. A visible but sustained growth over a period of time indicates propitious change in the economic structures and, therefore, in development. This means that one can trace fluctuations in GDP and economic variables, which affect the GDP to judge whether development has taken place in a State. But, such judgement regarding the status of economic development of states based on positive/negative fluctuations in GDP has drawn criticisms on the ground that it is cold towards the human facet of development. Hence, after 1990, the trend is to measure human capability and income reflected in Human Development Index (HDI) with the assumption that positive change in the indices reflects development. But, whether one takes the GDP or the HDI one must understand that these indicators of development fail in indicating the structural malaise of an economy. In the context of Nepal, they both fail in answering two significant questions: one related to the issue of land reform and the other, the issue of external environment. With a periodic record of GDP and HDI, one can judge neither the state of land reform that has taken place in Nepal, nor can one understand the external environment with which Nepal, in its struggle for development is pitched against. Hence, an economic profile of Nepal demands emphasis not only upon the GDP (for measuring growth, pure and simple), but also upon the HDI (for understanding the human facet), and upon the description of both the issues of land reform and external environment. Besides, considering the nature of the work the profile needs to focus on another aspect: the status of Nepalese industrial sector while dealing with its spatial dispersal and the numerical strength of its workers. However, for the sake of logical consistency the following paragraphs would survey the Nepalese economy first through the lens of the GDP and the HDI followed by the description of its agricultural and spatial distribution of the industrial

sector. And finally it will deal with the perceived environmental constraints in Nepalese struggle for growth.

From 1962 to 1990 the economy of Nepal lulled under an undemocratic Panchayat regime. Under it, periodic development efforts were afflicted with distortions in “policy matters, strategies ... programs ... as well as weaknesses in implementation” (Nepal National Planning Commission, The Eighth Plan 1). As such by 1998, it spawned a number of economic obstacles towards development: a low savings rate, increased share of loan and foreign assistance, low level of industrialisation, imbalances between resource mobilisation and expenditure, between savings and investment, and between import and export and these left behind an environment of economic depravity. The annual average GDP growth rate (at 1974/75 constant price) in 1989/90 was a mere 3.4% (agriculture 3% and non-Agriculture 3.8%). This coupled with annual population growth rate, which stood at “2.1% in 1990” produced a grim situation (Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical ... Nepal: 1994 261). The per capita income growth was only 0.8% and 40–60% of the population lived under “poverty line.”<sup>140</sup> Presiding over it, the Interim Government, formed immediately after the conclusion of the 1990 pro-democratic movement, was preoccupied with the task of framing a new constitution, the 1990s Constitution and of holding a general election under the Constitution. So it deferred the launching of Eighth Five-Year plan to 1992 and concentrated more on marshalling the country’s internal resources, and in improving its fiscal and administrative structures. A marginal change was recorded. GDP growth rate changed to 4.3% without registering change in population growth rate.

The May 1991 General Election and the installation of the Nepali Congress in power galvanised the National Planning Commission to frame the Eighth Plan. The plan objectives were tailored to suit Nepali Congress’s ideological inclination, an

<sup>140</sup> As per 1989/90 prices it referred to those living below Rs 6 subsistence expenditure per day.

unorthodox variety of Democratic Socialism, which espoused an enabling role to the State. To achieve the principal goal of raising the standard of living of the deprived section, the State was expected to play a supportive role in increasing production, creating employment and in ensuring socio-economic justice. However, to facilitate the participation of all sections of the people in their effort towards the achievement of the goal, the plan envisioned a gradual sloughing off of the states' role in favour of a market driven development paradigm. In future *laissez-faire-ism* and democratic processes were visualised as the *primum mobile* of economic growth.

Linked with the principal goal, the plan identified three objectives namely sustainable economic growth, poverty alleviation and removal of regional imbalances. The thrust area was clearly visible in the decision to allocate 75% of the investment in the rural sector, and the strategy prioritised agricultural diversification, power development focused on agricultural needs, development of rural infrastructure, generation of rural employment etcetera. With a sector-wise outlay, which indicated a greater role for the private sector, and with the proper implementation of plan policies in the area prioritised, the economy was expected to witness a “5.1% per annum growth” (Nepal National Planning Commission, The Eighth Plan 101). The effort was to cost an investment of Rs. 170, 332 (102) million and for it, the plan banked on national savings (56.3%), foreign grants (11.65%) and external loans (32.05%)<sup>141</sup>. Since the central focus of the plan was to alleviate poverty, i.e., to raise the standard of living of an estimated 9 million people, (49% of Nepal's population) who lived in absolute poverty the success and failure of the Plan hinged around its performance in the agricultural sector (it supported 90% of the country's population) in generating

<sup>141</sup> See, Nepal National Planning Commission, The Eighth Plan 109 for the calculation of the foreign grants and the foreign loan percentage components of the Eighth Plan.

employment,<sup>142</sup> and in removing the regional imbalances together with its performance in checking the population growth rate. However, performance of the plan showed average “agricultural growth rate as 3%”, “non-agricultural growth rate 6.3 %” and annual growth rate as 4.74% or 5%. Though this annual growth rate in the GDP was not much below the expected growth rate (5.1%), yet the failure of the plan to reach the expected growth rate, especially in the “agricultural sector (i.e. 3.7%)” did not augur well both for accelerating the overall growth rate and also for alleviating poverty (Nepal National Planning Commission, The Ninth Plan 3). When the Planning Commission reviewed the Eighth Plan performance it imputed the failure to the fickleness of weather, and as for the occasional dip in the non-agricultural sector, the reasons proffered were internal political changes (Maoist movement, which started in 1996) and the failure of Arun Third Project to take off (Nepal National Planning Commission, The Ninth Plan 3).

With regard to the generation of employment opportunities, the plan document states, “it was expected that there would be high economic growth, which would in turn, lead to income, increased saving and investment expansion in demand and supply. This change in effect would, it was hoped, generate massive employment opportunities. But that did not happen” (Nepal National Planning Commission, The Ninth Plan 211). As such, in 1997, the rate of unemployment in Nepal was 4.9% and the percentage of under-employed was 47% . Similar story of failure in bringing about a balance in regional development in the Eighth Five-Year plan period is indicated in the Ninth Plan document (95), indicating, as usual, the Central Development region as the most developed in terms of the number of industries established, and in terms of

<sup>142</sup> See, Nepal National Planning Commission, The Eighth Plan 631–2 In 1991 the number of unemployed were 6,50, 000 and in the Plan period i.e., in the Eighth Plan period it was expected to grow annually by 2.9% i.e. 1,83, 000. The 1992 estimates pegged the annual growth rate figure of unemployment to 2, 00,000 per annum i.e. 2.3%. To meet this challenge the Planning Commission expected the Agricultural sector to create 8, 61,000 jobs out of a total of 1,449,000 jobs in the Eighth Plan period.

infrastructure and availability of services, followed by the Eastern development region, Western, Mid-Western and the Far-Western development regions. The net result of all these failures was that the plan had somewhat failed in alleviating poverty: from the available data it is difficult to say that there was an appreciable change in the number of people living under the poverty line. In 1991 the figure was 40–60%. In 1992, it was “49%” and in 1996 it was “42 %” (202–3). Considering the different yardsticks<sup>143</sup> which were chosen it would be safer to understand that the number of people living under the poverty line never dipped below the 40% mark. Of these the condition of some was so deplorable that in 1996 Nepal invented a new term—“Ultra Poor” (for explanation see foot note 146). Of the 42% below poverty line population, 24.9% were estimated as poor and 17.1% as Ultra-Poor (Nepal National Planning Commission, The Ninth Plan 203). The Table below reflects the spatial spread of poverty in 1996 indicating the concentration of poverty in the mountain and rural areas: (See, next page).

<sup>143</sup> See, Nepal National Planning Commission, The Ninth Plan 202 In Nepal different yardsticks were taken at different period of time to measure the poverty line. In 1991 poverty line was measured in terms of per day expenditure of Rs 6 at 1989–90 prices. In 1992, a study just before the beginning of the Eighth Plan computed poverty line on the basis of income. This study indicated 49% of Nepal’s population living below poverty line. The Living Standard Survey of Nepal conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 1996 based its findings on per capita consumption expenditure, which computed expenses on consumable goods. Considering 2, 124 calorie intake as per capita per day necessity, the per capita annual expenses to purchase that calorie equivalent was fixed to be Rs 2637/-. If expenses on non-food item were added the figure rose to Rs 4, 404/-. Thus, those who could not earn Rs 4, 404 a year were considered living below the poverty line. Based on this yardstick, the size of the population living below the poverty line was found to be 42%.

Table 3

Spread of Poverty in 1996 Nepal:

Region wise Description	Population Below Poverty Line (%)		
	Total	Poor	Ultra-Poor
A. According to Geographic Region			
Mountain	56	29.3	26.7
Hills	41.0	21.3	19.7
Terai	42.0	28.7	13.3
B. Urban and Rural Areas			
Urban	23.0	13.2	9.8
Rural	44.0	26.4	17.6
C. National Average	42.0	24.9	17.1

Source: National Planning Commission. *The Ninth Plan: 1997–2002*. Kathmandu: NPC. July 1998. 203

Considering these facts the Ninth Plan had no option, but to fix again “poverty alleviation” as its central goal (Nepal National Planning Commission, The Ninth Plan 105). However, from 1997 a difference is visible. The Plan document stresses on a 20 year perspective plan in every sector, which is planned with an eye upon the need for alleviating poverty. But, one must not, after going through these features of the perspective plan, ignore the fact that the planners still leaned over the agricultural sector as they did in the past, to give shape to their vision (Nepal National Planning Commission, The Ninth Plan 108). The intent was, therefore, to bring development in the rural areas. The Ninth Plan which was expected to roll the ball towards the goal fixed by the Perspective Plan fixed for itself an overall investment of “Rs 3,727,11 million” of which “70.1%” was expected from National savings and “29.9%” (113) from foreign assistance. When the Ninth Plan came to the close the performances recorded were as follows:(See, next page)

Table 4

GDP Growth (factor cost) Per Year:

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02
GDP Growth	3.3	4.49	6.14	4.71	0.82
Agriculture	3.3	2.87	4.86	4.33	1.72
Non - Agriculture	3.3	5.63	7.08	5.10	0.24

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics. *Statistical Pocket Book: 2000*. Kathmandu: NPC, 247 for figures of 97–98 and for the rest, *Statistical Pocket Book: 2002*. Kathmandu: NPC, 267.

The above figures belied the expectations of the planners. The plan, which had overtly hinged a rise in employment opportunity with accelerated growth rates failed. Consequently neither rural poverty, whose “incidence was higher among the ethnic minorities like Limbus, Tamang, Magars, Tharus, Mushars”, nor regional imbalances could be lessened (UNDP 18–9). By 2001, the country was still wrestling with its traditional economic and structural malaise, poverty and regional imbalance: the Mid and Far-Western development region witnessed a high level of “human poverty”<sup>144</sup> and “income poverty”<sup>145</sup> and even then, throughout the country “9 million” people were crawling below the poverty line.<sup>146</sup> At this point it would be refreshing to gaze the kingdom through the prism of Human Development Reports, because human

<sup>144</sup> See, UNDP 20 Human Poverty Index which measures Human poverty that is lack of capabilities, lack of political freedom, inability to participate in decision making, lack of personal security, and inability to participate in the life of a community, was the worst for Nepal in 2001 for it scored 44.2.

<sup>145</sup> It is the traditional method of calculating poverty according to income which indicates the level of consumption.

<sup>146</sup> See, UNDP 2 These 9 million were all from the rural areas of Nepal. Out of these, all of those residing in the mid-western and far-western regions were poor and had been so for generations. Of these, a section constituted “hard core” poor, because they could not scratch a bare living out of the fragile ecosystem.

development paradigm assumes the development in human capabilities and their power to make choices as a means towards the alleviation of poverty. In 1997 and 2002, two organisations<sup>147</sup> calculated the district-wise HDI of Nepal. Based upon their findings they ranked the districts as Best (B), Intermediate (I), and Worst (W) as expressive of their level of development. Out of the many areas dealt, their findings in a few of the indices were as follows;

1. Poverty and deprivation index; 2) Socio-Economic infrastructure development index; 3) educationally disadvantaged population; 4) Percentages of landless and marginal farm household; 5) per capita food production; 6) Overall literacy rate; 7) Percentages of irrigated area; 8) per capital development budget allocation; 9) Gross rural population density; 10) Infrastructure development index; 11) Overall index of development. When charted the performance of the 75 districts of Nepal were as follows: (See, next page)

<sup>147</sup> See, National Development Institute 28–1031 and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development 22–118

Table 5  
HDI of Different Districts

Districts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Achham	W	W	I	W	W	W	B	I	I	I	W
Bajhang	W	W	B	W	W	W	B	B	B	W	W
Kalikot	W	W	I	W	W	W	I	I	B	I	W
Humla	W	W	I	W	W	W	W	B	B	W	W
Mugu	W	W	I	W	W	W	I	B	B	I	W
Doti	W	W	I	W	W	W	B	B	B	B	W
Jumla	W	W	I	W	W	W	I	I	I	B	W
Bajura	W	W	I	W	W	W	I	I	B	I	W
Rukum	W	W	I	W	B	W	W	I	B	W	W
Dailekh	W	W	I	W	W	I	I	W	I	I	W
Jajarkot	W	W	I	W	I	W	W	I	B	W	W
Rolpa	W	W	I	W	W	W	W	W	I	W	W
Baitadi	W	W	B	W	W	I	B	B	I	B	W
Rautahat	W	W	W	I	I	W	B	W	W	I	W
Dadeldhura	I	I	B	W	I	I	B	B	B	B	W
Salyan	I	W	B	I	B	W	W	I	I	W	W
Siraha	W	W	W	I	I	W	W	I	W	B	W
Ramechap	I	W	I	B	W	W	W	I	I	B	W
Dolpa	I	W	B	I	I	W	W	B	B	I	W
Sindhupalchok	W	W	W	W	W	W	I	W	I	I	W
Sindhuli	I	W	W	I	I	I	B	W	B	W	W
Rasuwa	W	W	W	I	B	W	W	B	B	B	W
Dolakaha	W	W	I	W	W	I	I	I	B	I	W
Pyuthan	I	W	I		W	I	I	I	I	I	W
Mahotari	W	I	W	I	I	W	B	W	W	I	W
Darchula	I	I	B	W	W	I	B	B	B	I	W
Dhanusa	W	I	W	I	I	W	B	W	W	I	I
Sarlahi	W	I	W	I	I	W	B	B	W	B	I
Bara	I	I	W	B	B	W	B	W	W	I	I
Saptari	W	I	W	B	I	I	I	W	W	B	I
Kapilbastu	I	W	W	B	B	W	I	W	W	W	I
Kailali	W	I	W	B	B	I	B	I	I	W	I
Kabre	I	I	W	I	B	I	I	I	W	B	I
Parsa	W	W	W	I	B	I	B	W	W	W	I

Makwanpur	I	I	W	I	B	I	I	W	I	W	I
Udaypur	I	I	I	I	W	I	B	W	I	I	I
Nuwakot	I	I	W	I	B	I	B	I	W	B	I
Bardia	W	I	W	B	I	W	W	B	I	W	I
Dhading	I	W	W	I	W	I	I	W	I	W	I
Arghakhachi	I	I	I	I	W	B	I	W	I	B	I
Okhaldhunga	I	I	I	B	W	I	W	B	I	B	I
Solukhumbu	I	I	B	I	W	I	W	B	B	W	I
Surkhet	I	B	I	I	I	B	I	B	B	I	I
Banke	I	B	W	B	B	I	W	B	I	W	I
Dangdeukhuri	I	I	W	B	B	I	I	I	I	W	I
Khotang	I	I	B	I	I	I	W	W	I	B	I
Nawalparasi	I	B	W	I	I	I	B	W	W	W	I
Bhojpur	B	I	I	B	I	I	W	W	I	B	I
Gulmi	B	B	I	B	W	B	W	W	W	I	I
Rupandehi	I	B	W	B	I	I	B	B	W	W	I
Baglung	I	I	I	W	W	I	W	W	I	I	B
Panchthar	B	I	B	B	I	B	I	B	I	B	B
Gorkha	B	I	B	W	I	B	W	W	B	W	B
Palpa	B	B	B	B	I	B	I	I	W	B	B
Taplejung	B	I	B	B	I	B	W	I	B	W	B
Kanchanpur	B	B	W	B	B	I	B	I	I	W	B
Tanahu	B	B	B	I	I	B	I	W	W	I	B
Mygdi	I	B	I	I	W	I	W	I	B	B	B
Sankhuwa	B	I	B	I	B	B	W	I	B	I	B
Lamjung	B	I	I	W	B	B	I	I	B	I	B
Sunsari	B	B	W	B	I	B	I	W	W	W	B
Ilam	B	B	B	B	I	B	I	I	I	I	B
Parbat	B	B	I	W	B	B	B	I	W	B	B
Syangja	B	B	B	W	B	B	I	W	W	B	B
Morang	B	B	W	B	B	B	B	B	W	W	B
Chitwan	B	B	I	I	B	B	B	I	I	W	B
Bhaktapur	B	B	B	W	I	B	B	B	W	B	B
Terhathum	B	B	B	B	B	B	W	I	W	B	B
Mustang	B	B	B	W	B	B	W	B	B	I	B
Dhankuta	B	B	B	B	B	B	I	B	I	B	B
Kaski	B	B	B	W	B	B	W	B	B	B	B

Lalitpur	B	B	B	I	I	B	B	B	W	B	B
Jhapa	B	B	B	B	B	B	I	W	W	W	B
Manang	B	B	B	B	B	B	W	B	B	B	B
Kathmandu	B	B	B	B	W	B	B	B	W	B	B

From the chart generated it is difficult to find a consistent relation between the various indices save to state that there exists a strong relation between the poverty index (1) and the overall index (11), and some relation can be drawn between percentages of landless and marginal farm household index (4) with poverty index (1). This in itself contributes not much to the level of analysis except to highlight those areas, which have traditionally been considered as important contributor to development viz., poverty and the land. But what the chart reflects in (2) is important: it reflects the nature of the State, its commitment towards its rationale for existence. In areas where overall development index is worse, the index (2) is worse, but mark its (11) relation with (8) per capita development budget allocation. The relation between the indices in many cases are either inverse or near inverse. Then the question is what has the budget done? This speaks volume about the development effort—perhaps the answer lies in the process of spending the budget or else what could explain the situation where the overall development is worse in spite of the best allocation of budget? As such even in 2001 “large areas of the country” lacked “even the most elementary infrastructure” and throughout the country “developments efforts” had failed “to make significant changes in the lives of the ... disadvantaged group” (UNDP 2). Besides, the other fact to be noted in the development pattern of Nepal, in the period under consideration, is its failure in erasing the regional disparity among the different development regions. Though a comparison of the HDI in 1996 and in 2000, in a scale between .30–.50 (see table below) shows an improvement in the development achievement, yet there exists a glaring disparity in the HDI of the mid-Western and far-Western development regions with that of the other development regions.

Table 6

Comparative HDI Between Development Regions: 1996–2000

Development Regions	1996	2000
Eastern	.42	.48
Central	.41	.49
Western	.43	.47
Mid-Western	.35	.40
Far-Western	.37	.39

Source: UNDP. *Nepal Human Development Report 2001*. Kathmandu: UNDP. 2002. 2

But, even at the improved level the overall index of the country was 0.480. Though slightly above that of Bhutan (0.477) and Bangladesh (0.470), yet it was lower than the “South Asian” standard (UNDP 13) . Thus, if human development index measures the level of human productivity by measuring their development in health, education and skill, and if it measures the capability in reducing population by measuring the improvement in literacy and family health, then what one had here was a country, whose level of development was so poor that with such level it could neither aspire to root out poverty, nor check the rising tide of population. For reaching such a state, the UNDP Report blamed poor governance which was characterised by lack of devolution of tasks to local governments, decentralisation of power to ensure participation of the people in poverty reduction programmes and transparency and accountability in the process of using public fund. In its view these resulted in a “crisis in governance” which was reflected in “the continuing exclusion of women and disadvantaged groups from governance and mainstream development” (UNDP 11). Thus, for removing poverty, the lacuna, which needed to be addressed was the inefficiency in governance. Besides, improvements could be made in the relation between percentage of landless and marginal farm household to combat poverty. This leads the present survey to focus on the existing landforms and the tenurial practices of the then Nepal.

### 1.25.1. Existing Land-forms and Reforms

While going through the Eighth and the Ninth plan document, one is struck by the scant attention the planners give on issues related to land reform: they set no goals to be achieved. This stands in stark contradiction with the demands of Nepal Communist parties, whose documents repeatedly focus on the need for revolutionary land reform, their prescription for rooting out poverty from Nepal. If one were to consider the agricultural sectors' performance and the seeming co-relation between indices (1) and (4) of the HDI prepared, one can, without being conclusive, side with the Communist parties. But for decisiveness, one must deal with land tenure, land tenancy, holding patterns and the existing institutional setup or for that matter the possibility of agrarian reform, whose unsatisfactory implementation in the South Asian region is considered to be the bane of the agricultural sector.

Until 1950, there were a variety of landownership pattern in Nepal and the characteristic features of them all were that they encouraged the existence of feudalistic, uneconomic holdings which were at variance with the political and economic needs of modern states (For their nature see, p.32). Hence, after 1951, under guided democracy, Nepal took a number of steps such as the passing of Tenancy Rights Security Act, 1951; Land Reforms Act, 1957; Birta Abolition Act, 1959 and Land Reorganisation Act, 1962. These Acts, sought to abolish earlier anachronistic landforms except the *Guthi* system, which was continued to appease the religious sentiments of the people (Rambahadur 3). Finally, the Land Act of 1964 abolished the *Jimidari or Jimindari* system (See, Ch. II footnote 18). And since 1964, except for occasional amendments, there was no significant changes in the rules governing the land tenure and land tenancy practices in Nepal. Hence, a brief understanding of the 1964 Land Act is necessary to understand the landownership patterns that existed in Nepal until 2002.

The Land Act of 1964 made certain important provisions. It provided for (a) imposition of a ceiling on land ownership, to acquire land in excess to be allotted to the landless; (b) the abolition of *Jimidari/Jimindari* system; (c) the regulation of rents

payable by tenant farmer and it sought to secure their position; (d) the creation of a system of compulsory savings (Ministry of Land Reforms 12). These provisions were expected to divert capital and surplus labour from land to other sectors, improve the living standard of actual tillers and increase agricultural production. Based on regional variations, the Act fixed land ceiling per person/per family. It was not applicable to Guthi lands. The ceilings fixed were:

Table 7

Ceiling Imposed by Land Act, 1964

	Agriculture Land	Homestead
1. Terai/Inner Terai	16.4 Ha.	2.0 Ha
2. Kathmandu Valley	2.7 Ha	0.4 Ha
3. Hill Regions other than 2	4.1 Ha	0.8 Ha

Source: Ministry of Land Reforms. *Evaluation of Land Reforms in Nepal*.

Kathmandu: HMG. 1973. 12

Land in excess of the above ceilings was to be distributed as follows:

Table 8

Allotment of Land Acquired: Regional Ceiling

1. Terai/Inner Terai	2.7 Ha
2. Kathmandu Valley	0.5 Ha
3. Hill Regions other than 2	1.0 Ha

Source: Ministry of Land Reforms. *Evaluation of Land Reforms in Nepal*.

Kathmandu: HMG. 1973. 13.

After abolishing the *Jimidari/Jimindari* system, the Act converted the land to Raikar holdings; made the *Jimidars/Jimindars* the owners of the holdings and established a direct link between the Government and the *Jimidars/Jimindars* and reverted the tax collection function to the Government. However, the Act did not abolish the system of tenant farming—the *Mohi* system/Dual ownership system. What it tried to check were the evils associated with the system. The Act defined a tenant as one who had obtained land from land owner for cultivation with his or his family's personal labour.

After the passing of the Act, if a cultivator were to cultivate land for one crop, he was to be considered a protected tenant (owner-tenant). Such tenants were certified and could be evicted only under the court orders. He could inherit tenancy rights without subdivision and without transferring the land; ask for receipts against rent paid, and refuse to render any unpaid labour service. Lastly, the Act incorporated provisions to scale down tenant loan; settle them, and introduced a system for compulsory savings,<sup>148</sup> which was expected to meet the credit needs of the farmers. A year after, the Act was implemented, but even after 8 years of its implementation the evaluators found the following (see next page)

Table 9

Effects of Ceiling in all Nepal:

	Area in Hectares/Rupees in Millions.
1. Number of household having land in excess of ceiling	9, 136
2. Area of Land above ceiling	50, 580
3. Total area acquired	34, 705
4. Area allotted	21, 050
5. Number of allottees	10, 522
6. Total compensation payable	22.4
7. Compensation paid	0.5
8. Price paid by allottees	0.8

Source: Ministry of Land Reforms. *Evaluation of Land Reforms in Nepal*. Kathmandu: HMG. 1973. 27.

The figures indicated that “15, 875 Hectares [2-3] of excess land” were still not distributed and they were still in the hands of the declarer. Besides, if one were to add

<sup>148</sup> See, Ministry of Land Reforms 17 Under the system the tenants, landowners and the owner-cultivators deposited a given amount of their produce both cereal and cash crops to ward committees. This formed the loanable fund for credit operation by government sponsored agencies. However, the system was given up a year before the publication of this report.

to it the un-allotted area, that is, 13, 655 Hectares of the acquired land then it meant that “60 percent of the excess land” were still in “effective possession of the land owners and landlords” (Ministry of Land Reforms 27). And when the evaluators carried their studies in the sample area the picture that emerged was as follows:

Table 10

Effect of ceiling in the Sample Area:

	Area in Ha. Before Land Reform	Area in Ha. After Land Reform
1. Number of household having land in excess	10.0	10.0
2. Total area owned by them	996.8	342.3
3. Area in percent of total area owned in sample area	19.6	6.7
4. Average size of the holding affected by ceiling	99.7	33.3
5. Total area acquired by imposing ceiling		653.3
6. Acquired area in percent of total land owned in the sample area		12.5
7. Total acquired area allotted		52.0
8. Percentage of acquired land allotted		8.0
9. Number of allottees		26.0
10. Average area allotted		2.0

Source: Ministry of Land Reforms. *Evaluation of Land Reforms in Nepal*. Kathmandu: HMG. 1973. 28.

The findings indicated administrative apathy towards the implementation of the reform policy. The figures of Table 9, the delay in the launching of the programme by one year and the strategy<sup>149</sup> adopted were judged by the evaluating team as a means to

<sup>149</sup> See, Ministry of Land Reforms 29–30 The programme was launched in

buy time. The one long year delay in implementing the programme, they guessed, was perhaps intended to allow bureaucrats and the politicians to safeguard their property. Besides, the findings in the sample area indicated that there was no reduction in the number of households possessing land in excess of the ceiling. And if so then why was there a reduction in the total area owned by them after the implementation of the ceiling? According to the evaluators this anomaly was owing to the ability of the landlords to “arrange for ‘paper dispersal’ of [their] excess land [to] keep their records straight” (Ministry of Land Reforms 31). Thus, the Act had failed in achieving one of its important objective of transferring land to the landless. And since it had no objective of ending dual land ownership, the system continued. In 1972, the evaluators guessed the existence of as many as 4, 60, 000 tenants and owner-tenants in existence. By 1991/92, there were 4, 00, 600 holdings in Nepal which were partly owned and partly tenanted and 47, 000 holdings were under the condition of full tenancy (Central Bureau of Statistics, National Sample ... Agriculture 3). And Nepal’s 2.60 million Hectares of agricultural land supported 2.7 million agricultural families. Among them the distribution of land was lopsided. If 30% of the families had holdings less than 1 Ha. there were a few, 1.5% agricultural families, who had holdings greater than 5 Ha. enjoying control over 14% of the total land. In the latter’s share went 9.34 Ha. of land per agricultural family. Besides, in between the year 1961/62 to 1991/92, because of the fragmentation of holdings the average size of holdings had declined. If the average size of a holding in 1961/62 was 1.1 Ha, then in 1991/92 it was .96 Ha. Considering these facts the Government under the UML set up a Commission—High Level Land Reform (Badal) Commission on the 10th of January 1995. According to its terms of reference it was expected to investigate the existing landforms, suggest methods for ending dual control over land, and find ways to ensure the optimum utilisation of

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those areas where concentration of landlords were minimum i.e., in areas in and around the district of Kathmandu and not in the twenty districts of the Terai.

agricultural land. In its final report it identified the existence of 5, 60, 000 Mohi/tenant farmer (20% of the agricultural families) thriving upon 12% of the available agricultural land. Considering the existence of such tenant farmers uneconomic as higher yield was found associated with land under the cultivation of the owner, the Commission suggested the eradication of the system. And for doing away with the concentration of land (26% of land above 3 Ha was in the hand of 5% agricultural family) it suggested the implementation of a new ceiling which was as follows:

Table 11

Suggested Ceiling:

By Area	Ag. Land	Homestead
Terai and Inner Terai	3 Ha	4.5 Bigha
Mid Hill Region	2 Ha	40 Ropani
Mountain	4 Ha	80 Ropani
Kathmandu Valley	1 Ha	20 Ropani
Town area Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur	0.5 Ha	10 Ropani
Municipal area		
In towns outside Kathmandu	1 Ha	20 Ropani o r 1 . 5 Bigha

Source: HMG, *High Level Land Reform (Badal) Commission Report 2051*.

Kathmandu: P. B Publisher 2057 [2000]. 84.

With the implementation of the ceiling the Government expected 3, 006, 000 Ha land in hand to distribute among the Kamaiyas (bonded labourers), Sukumbasis (landless) and among agricultural families with land less than 0.1 Ha. Probably influenced by the Commission's Report, the Government on 7 February 2002 amended the 1964 Land Act and passed a new ceiling law which was as follows:(See, next page)

Table 12

## Ceiling Law of 2002

	Agricultural Land	Homestead
Terai and Inner Terai	10 Bigha	1 Bigha
Kathmandu Valley	25 Ropani	5 Ropani
Entire Hill except Kathmandu	70 Ropani	5 Ropani

Source: HMG, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. *Bhumi Sambandhi (Pachau Sansodhan) Ain, 2058*. Nepal Rajpatra. Kathmandu: HMG, VS 2058 Magh 25. 2-3.

To what extent the new ceiling law, after its implementation, expected extra land for distribution is not clear. But, all these laws remained just in paper as such neither concentration of land nor the problem of dual land ownership was resolved in the parliamentary phase of Nepal. Besides, according to Badal Commission's calculation even in 1996, Nepal had a million landless agricultural workers. These labourers, then, were of four types (a) those working on daily wages, (b) those bound by an agreement to work for a definite period of time, say a year, (c) the Kamaiyas and (d) those working for a few months. Thus, a lot remained to be done to improve the agricultural sector of Nepal—the determinant of its internal environment.

#### 1.25.1.1. Geographical Distribution, and Workers' Strength

In the 90s the geographical distribution, ownership and strength of industrial workers presented a skewed picture. In terms of industrial establishments the highest were in the Central Development Region commanding a share of 1, 31,374 employees out of the kingdom's 1, 87, 316 employees. Besides, out of a total of 3, 557 industrial establishments 97.55% were privately owned and the Government owned only 1.01% of the establishments. And considered in terms of labourers involved in these industries the areas of importance were: Morang and Sunsari in Eastern Nepal;

Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Bara and Parsa in Central region; Nawalparasi, Rupandehi and Banke in the Western region (HMG, N. P. C. S., CBS 99–189).

Lastly, for all these economic problems of Nepal Communist factions invariably cite 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty with its subsequent decennial ratification, as a stumbling block in the development of Nepal.

#### 1.26. Population and Caste Structure

The two factors which have determined the nature of Nepalese population is its geographical location and geographical make up. These factors have triggered emigration, immigration and migration within the kingdom affecting the characteristic features of Nepalese population which, at present, is divided along several lines viz., religious, linguistic, ethnic and caste. Hence, this section calls for a little understanding of the geography of Nepal.

Since 1858 (the year when its present shape came into being) Nepal has occupied a space in between two of its neighbours: Tibet (later, China) in the North and India in the South. Since then, its western side was hemmed by India and eastern side by Sikkim. But, after 1975 the eastern side also bordered the territory of India. It is, therefore, a landlocked State. From the standpoint of its geographical make up, its northern border has the Central Himalayan range of 900 Km length. Running parallel, and in order to its south are the Mahabharat and the Siwalik or Churia ranges. Further south is the Terai which is a continuation of the Indo-Gangetic plain. Flowing from the Himalayas through weak spots in the Mahabharat range are the three rivers the Karnali, the Gandak and the Kosi. These rivers; the Karnali in the west, the Gandak in the centre and the Kosi in the east, form “systems” of rivers in their respective areas (Sharma, C. K. 10). In the west the Mahakali River; which starts from Indian glacier and from Nepal’s lake, Lipulekh, marks the western boundary of Nepal. The eastern boundary is similarly marked by the Mechi River. All of these rivers ultimately flow towards the Indo-Gangetic plain.

Starting from the south, one comes across the Terai or more specifically the Outer Terai, which is a narrow strip of fertile land running all along the southern side

of Nepal. From west to east it is 500 miles long with widest north-south span of 33 miles narrowing at places to 2 miles. Intervening the northern side of Terai and the Siwalik range, there used to be a dense malaria infested forest belt called the *Jhadi* or *Bhaber*. The area in between the Siwalik and the Mahabharat ranges is referred in Nepal as the Inner Terai. It also consists of malarial forest areas and “lower hills ... and ... elevated ridges”. The lower hills or the lower Himalayan ranges gently slope towards north leading to valleys like Kathmandu and Pokhara. And the elevated ridges, “the first intimation of the high snow peaks” lead towards the Himalayan highlands with snow peaks and glacial valleys (Milleville and Majupuria 10).

Traditionally, Dor Bahadur Bista says, the regions of the land “were identified by the names of various ... communities” inhabiting the regions (Bista, Fatalism 12). According to him to the east of Kathmandu Valley and beyond the river Sun Kosi was the Kirat Pradesh, the land of the Kirats. To the west of the Valley up to the river Kali Gandaki was the Gandaki Pradesh. Further west, the region between rivers Kali Gandaki and Karnali was called Mangrant (Land of Magars). And still towards the west of river Karnali upto the western border of Nepal was the Khasan or the land of the Khas. In the north was Bhot, and Terai was called Tharuwan, the land of the Tharus. Drawing on mythical references and *Vamsavalis* (genealogical records), Bista credits the Khas, the Kirats and people with Dravidian strain as the earliest settlers of the land. According to him, the Khas were migrants from Central Asia. They arrived in first millennium B. C to occupy the western side of the land pushing the Kirats to the east. They were “pastoralists” speaking Indo-Aryan language (Bista, Fatalism 15). However, regarding the origin of the Kirats or Kirantis Bista says there are many theories. Of these, a few claim that they were always in the hills of the land and a few claim they were Mongoloid immigrants from Tibet speaking Tibeto-Burman dialect (Bista, People 32). Besides, confusion persists on the question as to which group of people are included under this generic title (Bista, People 38). In one of his works, Bista includes within the Kirats all such groups like Rai, Limbu, Yakha, Sunwar, Jirel, Hayu etcetera (Bista, Fatalism 3), but in his other work he identifies only the Rais and

the Limbus as “the two main subdivisions of the Kiratis” (Bista, People 34). The earliest Newar of Kathmandu, Bista says, are also “thought to belong to this general group” (Bista, Fatalism 3), a view which is completely different from that of Regmi who says that the Newars are a mixed race (Regmi, D. R., Ancient 14). Finally, the Dhangads represent people with Dravidian strain. With the passage of time these communities were exposed to the influences flowing from the south of the land. However, scholars have taken different stands<sup>150</sup> in describing and explaining the time and the personages to whom the communities were exposed to, but what is clear is that they were exposed to the influences of Hinduism and Buddhism, not in that order of course, by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century A. D. Before the flow of southern influences, Bista observes, that there existed a culture of “religious syncretism” there (Bista, Fatalism 21). But, in the 11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries; when high caste Hindus dodging the onslaught of Islamic invasion of Northern India penetrated, in progressive waves, the western side of the land and Kathmandu Valley, then the situation changed. The intruders, Bista says, “aggressively” (Bista, Fatalism 21) supported Hinduism at the cost of Buddhism and this perhaps included even support to Hindu caste structure.<sup>151</sup> But, the influence of caste structure was not equally visible throughout the land. According to Bista, Gorkha was not “hierarchized as much by the caste system as the areas west of it and the Kathmandu Valley” (Bista, Fatalism 26).

<sup>150</sup> See, Bista, Fatalism 19–20 Fatalism 19-20 According to him Buddhism influenced the communities first when the Licchavis held their sway in the land mass. However, See, Regmi, D. R., Ancient 275–6 Ancient Nepal, p-275-76, on the basis of historical evidences Regmi suggests that Hinduism had already penetrated the land mass first with the Lichhavis and that they came under the influence of Buddhism only later. See also, Stanley Maron et al, A Survey of Nepal Society, p-7 where the authors believe on the basis of the presence of stupas in the vicinity of Kathmandu that it was probably Buddhism which penetrated the land mass first.

<sup>151</sup> See, Bista, Fatalism 20 The author claims that caste structure was introduced by the Guptas ruling the land mass after the Lichhavis, but Regmi, on the basis of historical evidences, contends the prevalence of caste even before. See,.. Regmi, D. R., Ancient 272

However, after the creation of Nepal when effective power went into the hands of the Ranas the full force of Hinduism came to play in the kingdom changing its social structure. But, for changes in the demographic character the role was played by emigration, immigration and intra-migration. Nepal, Harka Gurung says, "... has been a population-exporting country since the beginning of the nineteenth century" (Gurung, Regional ... Migration 15). According to him these emigré were mostly from the central and eastern hills, seeking services in the army or meeting labour needs for pioneer farming in India. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, their number progressively increased, especially after 1952/53, until 1981 (15–6). And in the same period, particularly from her southern neighbour, Nepal also witnessed immigration in her Terai region. In the two decades 1961–81, calculation of census data, he says, reveals an excess of four times immigrants over emigrants (36–8). Data of 1988, according to him, still show an increasing influx. If it was 16 immigrants per 1,000 in 1981, it was 28 per thousand in 1988 (38). As regards inter-migration, he says, "Population migration in the past was primarily directed eastwards along the hill corridor [middle hills]. Since 1950, with malaria control in the lowlands [Terai and Inner Terai] migration ... has been ... towards the south" (Gurung, Social Demography 17). The net result of all these was change in Nepal's demographic pattern, particularly in the dispersal of its people identified in line with their caste, ethnic, religious and language affiliations. This division became apparent when, for the first time, 1991 census data were collected on the basis of such markers. However, the 1991 Census data was confusing because it did not clearly distinguish between the caste and the ethnic groups. It presented the entire population under "caste/ethnic" nomenclature. In it caste groups, though not defined, meant those with a hierarchical social structure practising Hindu religion (Gurung, Social Demography 40). But, what characterised the non-caste group was not clear.<sup>152</sup> Hence, the Government of the day appointed a Task Force in

<sup>152</sup> See, Nepal Janajati Mahasangh, "Nepal Janajati Mahasanghko Bidhan-2047" 1 Although it says it represents the nationalities it does not characterise them.

December/January 1995 to identify and define the Nationalities of Nepal. It presented its report in April/May 1996 (Sarwangin Vikas Adhyayan Kendra (I. I. D. S) 3). Subsequently, in June 1997 the then Government formed a National Committee for Development of Nationalities, which accepted the report of the Task Force. Since, then the non-caste group came to be regarded as the nationalities of Nepal. According to the Task Force, Nepal had 61 Nationalities<sup>153</sup>. It defined them as groups having “their own mother languages and traditional culture” and as those who did not fall “under the traditional four-fold Varna classification of Hindu Varna system”. Besides, they were expected to have the following characteristics:

- [1]. Those who have their distinct cultural identities.
- [2]. Who have their traditional languages, religions, customs and cultures.
- [3]. Whose traditional social fabrics are based on equality.
- [4]. Those who have their own geographical and demographical areas in the country.
- [5]. Those who have written and/or oral histories of their own.
- [6]. Those communities who have the notion of We/Us.
- [7]. Those ethnic groups who have no pivotal or decisive roles to play and exercise in the polity and administration of modern Nepal.
- [8]. Those who are the indigenous or native people of Nepal.
- [9]. Those who call themselves ethnic peoples (Ukyab and Adhikari 4).

Such group composed 35.6% of the total population of 1991. On the basis of ecological regions they were spread as 0.7% in the Himalayan region, 25.1% in the Hilly region, 1.1% in the Inner Terai and 7.9% in the Terai. Of these the Magars constituted 7.2%; Tharus, 6.5%; Newars, 5.6%; Tamangs, 5.5%; Rais, 2.8%;

<sup>153</sup> See, Gellner, “Ethnicity ... in Nepal” 1825 Later, in February 10, 2002 the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs published an official list of 59 Janajatis reserving seats in the political, administrative and educational institutions of Nepal. These days, they are all represented by the umbrella organisation of the Janajatis, the NEFIN (See, footnote, 86).

Gurungs, 2.5%; Limbus, 1.6% and the rest of the nationalities were below 1%. Viewed in relation with the caste group, the nationalities, as per 1991 census, exceeded in the Mountain and in the Inner Terai, but were less than the caste group in the hills and in the Terai. And in the 26 districts of Nepal their population was equal to or more than 30% (Gurung, Social Demography 57–8). Emanating mainly from this caste/ethnic dichotomy there existed in Nepal two other divisive binaries, namely, those who were Hindus/non-Hindus; and those speaking and not speaking traditional languages—the language of the nationalities.<sup>154</sup> By religion the 1991 census revealed the existence of 1,59,96,953 (86%) Hindus; 14,39,142 (7.78%) Boudha; 6,53,218 (3.53%) Islam; 7,561 (.04%) Jain; 31,280 (.17%) Christians; 3,18,389 (1.72%) Kiranti and 44,554 (.24%) others/not stated categories of people (Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Pocket Book: Nepal: 1998 20–1). And out of a population of 1,84,91,097 the number of those speaking non-traditional languages such as Nepali constituted 50.31%, followed by those speaking Maithili, 11.85%; Bhojpuri, 7.46%; Avadhi, 2.03%; Urdu, 1.09%, Bengali, .15%; Marwari, .09% and English and others 2.74%. The rest 24.24% spoke the traditional languages (Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Pocket Book: Nepal: 1998 23–4). Before, 1985 these differences saw either in the Newar, or Bahun-Chettri/Thakuri (Hindu/Nepali language speakers) the exploiters<sup>155</sup> of other groups. But, from 1985 new dimensions were added. One

<sup>154</sup> See, Gurung, Gurung and Chidi 3 The authors contend that language is the most significant attribute that distinguishes social groups, particularly the non-ethnics from the ethnic or the nationalities of Nepal

<sup>155</sup> See, Sarwangin Vikas Adhyayan Kendra (I. I. D. S) Summary and 128–36 The Report claims that exploitation against Janajatis began since 1603 after the entry of Brahmins and the Chettri in the 12–14 centuries into Nepal. Thereafter, when Prithivinarayan Shah began consolidating his kingdom from 1769, the nationalities were forced to accept the Hindu way of life to get government jobs, besides their land was taken away and distributed to the Brahmins and Chettri/Thakuris as birtas and jagirs. The exploitation continued even in the Rana period. It imposed one culture, Nepali culture; one language, Nepali language; and one religion, Hindu religion upon them. Socially, the Mulki Ain of 1854 differentiated between the higher Hindu caste and the Janajatis. For, anti-monarchic activities they were given death penalty, but the

posited the Hill people (Pahadi) exploiting the Terai people (the Madeshis) and the other, the Hindus<sup>156</sup> as exploiters of the Mongoloid, the Buddhist and the Muslim combine (Bista, *Ethnicity ... Prospects* 6–8). With the advent of the 90s the nationalities began pointing at the higher caste Hindus, Brahmin-Chettri/Thakuri combine, the Khas, as their exploiters (Akhil Nepal Janajati Sammelan, “Janajati Awaz: Anka 4” 20). These perceptions took on political colours producing demands for linguistic and religious recognition and for regional autonomy (See p. 142).

### 1.27. Political-Administrative System

If a State’s Constitution provides the institutional and political arrangement where it seeks to achieve the ideals for which it stands, its administrative arrangement realises the goals set by those ideals. Therefore, the present section surveys the November 9, 1990 Constitution of Nepal and her administrative arrangements to find if they were at tandem. But, such survey must begin with the acknowledgement that

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caste Hindus were just banished from the kingdom. In the Varna order a few Janajatis were considered impure and were enslaved. The Kamaiyas represented such groups in Dang, Banke, Bardia, Kailali and Kanchanpur region. The report indicates that they are a marginalised group in the government services, political parties and in the parliament (For a counter argument, see, Gellner, “Ethnicity and Nationalism” 26 The author, as if he were in support, quotes another author to present the view that in 1991 Parliament Brahmins were over represented by 194.5%; Limbus, 162.5%; Gurungs, 41.6%; Newars, 33.8% and Thakalis, 214. 2% to point out that the ethnic minorities’ representation were not as worse as they were usually projected. ) . For such state the report blames the prevalent political culture. Besides, they are alienated from their land forming the bulk of the landless or the Sukumbasis and 85% of their population falls below the poverty line. See also, Akhil Nepal Janajati Sammelan, “Janajati Awaz: Anka 5” 3–11 The Janajatis argue that even under the Parliamentary system the State of Nepal discriminates them linguistically and religiously by ensuring the dominance of Nepali language over their languages and by not declaring Nepal a secular state. In their version the solution lies in creating autonomous regions within Nepal, where they can freely and equally enjoy economic, political, linguistic and cultural rights and where the state is so organised as to provide them a say in the decision making process.

<sup>156</sup> For graphic details of Hindu exploitation, political, economic and social see, Pradhan 172–226

Nepal's 1990 Constitution was a compromised document (See, p. 133). It compromised people and King's desire to be recognised as its source. So, its Preamble failed to suggest clearly the Constitutional source when it declared:

WHEREAS, we are convinced that the source of sovereign authority of the independent and sovereign Nepal is inherent in the people, and therefore, We have, from time to time, made known our desire to conduct the Government of the country in consonance with the popular will;  
 AND WHEREAS, in keeping with the desire of the Nepalese people ... to bring about constitutional changes, we are further inspired by the objective of securing to the Nepalese people social, political and economic justice long into the future... (HMG Ministry of Law and Justice 1).

However, the Preamble did suggest that the Constitution was meant for setting up a "Parliamentary System of Government, Constitutional Monarchy and the System of Multi-Party Democracy by promoting ... the spirit of fraternity ... liberty and equality" (1). Towards this end it provided for a bicameral legislative body. Its Upper House was named National Assembly and, Lower House, the House of Representatives. With His Majesty, it formed the Parliament [Art. 44]. The House of Representatives was composed of "two hundred and five members" [Art. 45] elected from "administrative districts ... treated as election districts" [Art. 45: 2], which returned seats from districts assigned to them based on their population ratio to that of the nation. The National Assembly consisted of "sixty member" [Art. 46]. Of these, the King chose ten persons of repute. The House of Representative, based on proportional representation by single transferable vote, elected rest of the thirty-five members of whom three had to be women. Finally, fifteen more were elected by an Electoral College. The electoral college was composed of "Chief, Deputy Chief of the village and Town level Local Authorities; Chief and Deputy Chief, and members of the District level Local Authorities" [Art. 46: c]. While electing the fifteen members the College sent three members from each Development Region. The members of the Lower House were elected for five years, and the members of the Upper House, for six years. The latter was a continuous House with one-thirds of its members retiring after every two years [Art. 46:2]. To complete the Parliamentary system the

Constitution vested executive powers of the kingdom in “His Majesty and the Council of Ministers” [Art. 35: 1]. Under it, the King exercised powers “upon the recommendations and advice and with the consent of the Council of Ministers” [Art. 35: 2]. The Council was composed of members of majority Party in the House of Representatives and their leader whom the King appointed “as the Prime Minister” [Art 36: 1] of the kingdom.

It recognised multi-Party democracy when its Article 12:2 (a), (b), (c) by way of giving rights like “freedom of opinion and expressions; freedom to assemble ... (and) freedom to form unions and associations” implicitly recognised the right the people to form political organisations. Article 112:1 reinforced the recognition by declaring: “Persons who are committed to common political objectives and programmes ... [are] entitled to form and operate political organisations or parties of their choice ... Any law ... which restricts any of such activities shall be inconsistent with this Constitution and shall be void”. However, there were a few conditions, which the Constitution imposed upon parties or organisations competing for positions in the Parliament. It empowered the “Election Commission to withhold recognition of any political organisation or ... of a Party ... if it [had] been formed ... on the basis of religion, community, caste, tribe or region” [Art. 112: 3]. Besides, it enjoined upon them to field at least five percent women candidates out of their total contestants for the House of Representatives [Art. 114]. Finally, the Constitution made it compulsory for the parties to secure a minimum of three percent of the total votes cast in the election for the Lower House [Art. 113:2 (d)]. Failure to secure the three percent criterion barred the parties from being recognised. And if ever members of such Party were elected to the Lower House, then the Election Commission could classify them as independent candidates.

The spirit of fraternity, liberty and equality which the Preamble declared as ideals to be pursued were enshrined in its Articles 11 through 23. These Articles declared all citizens equal before the eye of law under a non-discriminatory State. However, this did not bar the State from framing laws for the protection of the

interests of weaker sections of the society including those who were economically, socially and educationally deprived [Art. 11:2-3]. As already indicated Article 12: 2 Sub-clauses a through e provided a list of fundamental rights. However, to enjoy them one was not supposed to “undermine the sovereignty, integrity or law and order situation of the kingdom” [Art. 12:2]. In similar vein it provided Press and Publication right, right regarding criminal justice, right against preventive detention, right to information, right to property, right against exploitation, right to Constitutional remedy, cultural and educational right and right to religion. The cultural and educational right allowed each community to preserve and promote its language, script and culture. Under this right each community was allowed to operate its own school up to primary level in its mother tongue [Art. 18: 1–2]. Finally, the right to religion allowed every person the freedom to profess and practice his religion, but it rejected forced conversion [Art. 19: 1–2]. The directive principles and policies of the State contained in Part 4 of the Constitution, though non-justiciable, was also meant for promoting fraternal relation among the citizens for it directed the State to improve its economy while ensuring social justice. To protect the fundamental rights and to judge the legality of the laws made by the legislators, the Constitution provided a “three tier” [Art. 85] judicial structure. It consisted of the Supreme Court, Appellate Court and the District Court. The Supreme Court, the highest Court, was provided with a Chief Justice and thirteen judges. The Chief Justice and the judges were appointed by His Majesty. He appointed the Chief Justice “on the recommendation of the Constitutional Council” [Art. 117],<sup>157</sup> but the thirteen judges “on the recommendation of the Judicial Council” [Art. 93].<sup>158</sup> However; either by inclusion, or

<sup>157</sup> This Council was composed of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice, the Speaker of the House of Representative, the Chairman of the National Assembly and the leader of the opposition in the House of Representative.

<sup>158</sup> This Council was composed of the Chief Justice, the Minister of Justice, two senior most judges of the Supreme Court and one distinguished jurist nominated by His Majesty.

by exclusion, the document left issues unacceptable, to the kingdom's existing social and political forces. Falling under such category were issues about language, secularism, the Raj Parishad, the Royal Army, and citizenship. About languages the document maintained the unique position of Nepali language. It declared it as "the language of the nation ... the official language" [Art. 6: 1] of the kingdom, while categorising others as "national languages of Nepal" [Art. 6: 2]. Similarly, disregarding the demand of the *janajatis* (nationalities) for a secular State it declared Nepal a "Hindu" [Art. 4: 1] State. And rejecting Nepali Congress's demand for discontinuing the institution of Raj Parishad, which reminded of erstwhile Bhardari, it allowed its existence as an advisory body. It was to be staffed with 22 high officials to advise the King on issues related to regency [Art. 34]. Likewise, though it brought the Royal Nepal Army under the control of National Defence Council consisting of the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister and the Commander-in-Chief [Art. 118: 1], yet it failed to free the establishment from the influence of the King. He was still the Supreme Command of the Royal Nepal Army [Art. 119] which he could operate with the recommendation of the National Defence Council [Art. 118: 2]. About citizenship, Article 9:4: (a) still required 15 years residential proof from aliens to acquire Nepal citizenship—a condition which perhaps was what the Terai immigrants considered an unjust stipulation.<sup>159</sup>Besides, three provisions of the Constitution were worth noting. Of them the first was Article 97. It empowered the King to appoint a Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority on the recommendation of the Constitutional Council (Art.97: 1–2). The second was Article 115. It gave King the power to declare emergency if he considered threat looming over the kingdom's sovereignty and integrity. He could declare emergency on his own, but the Constitution enjoined the House of Representatives to approve the declaration within three months (Art 115:2).

<sup>159</sup> See, Gaige 93 Such stipulation for getting citizenship was what Gaige guessed as the cause behind Terai movement for citizenship when the 1962 Constitution asked for 12 years residential proof for getting citizenship from foreigners.

If approved by 2/3 majority of representatives present then the emergency could continue for 6 months. In the absence of the House of Representatives the Constitution gave these powers to the National Assembly (Art. 115: 6). The last was Article 126. This Article enjoined “a majority of two-thirds of member present at a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament” to ratify treaties and agreements of His Majesty’s Government with another State. And such condition was applicable when the treaties dealt with issues about peace and friendship; defence; boundaries of the kingdom, and its natural resources (Art. 126: 2). But, for ordinary agreements the concurrence of simple majority was all that was needed.

#### 1.27.1. Administrative System

Despite its deficiencies the 1990 Constitution tried to establish a democratic Government wedded to social justice. But, for ensuring social justice at the material level the country needed fast economic development. However, the administrative arrangement of the kingdom was not ready for such an end.

Until 1990, the kingdom had experienced two different phases of political developments. From 1950 to 1960 it experimented with guided/limited democracy, where it sought to remove the influences of century old Rana regime: the kingdom tried to restructure and reform its administration.<sup>160</sup> After 1960, there was a complete break in the kingdom’s political orientation: it sought to concentrate power in the King. Therefore, the administrative arrangement also reflected similar orientation.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>160</sup> See, Poudyal 35 Administrative Reforms began in Nepal only after the end of the Rana regime in 1951. Earlier administration was aimed at maintaining law and order and for the collection of revenue. In the changed context efforts were made to fulfill the material, intellectual and physical needs of the people. Towards this direction the first effort was made in 1956 by establishing Administrative Reorganisation and Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of Tanka Prasad Acharya. Besides, many Indian and foreign experts were called for studying and suggesting means to improve the nature of Nepalese administration.

<sup>161</sup> After the Royal take-over, the King filled top civil service posts with Army personnels disregarding earlier practice of filling them with candidates recommended by the Public Service Commission.

Structurally, Local Administration Ordinance of 1965, which turned into an Act in 1966, divided the kingdom's field<sup>162</sup> administrative units into district and Zonal levels where districts were the most important unit of area administration. It was the unit for generating revenue; for implementing planned development and for maintaining law and order. In all, the Ordinance created 75 districts and 14 Zones, where each Zone consisted of a number of districts. They functioned above districts as their links with the Centre. Then in 1972, the kingdom was segmented into 4 Regions,<sup>163</sup> which became five by June 1981 (Poudyal 156). Under the arrangement, since 1965, each of the 14 Zones was placed under an *Anchaladhis* [Zonal Commissioner] who was a politically appointed functionary (135). He was the chief administrator of a Zone, and his main task was to maintain law and order in the Zone. Besides, in line with the same Act, each of the 75 districts was placed under a civil servant, the Chief District Officer. From 1975, the New District Administration Plan, which sought to implement the spirit of integrated district administration, gave him two tasks. These were: to maintain law and order and to carry out developmental activities in the district (Shrestha, T. N., "Nepal's District ... Performance" 22). However, in carrying out his law and order maintenance function he depended upon authority delegated to him by the Zonal Commissioner. And for all such actions he had to keep the Zonal Commissioner informed (24). For developmental works the Plan brought all HMG development offices of the district under a District Office, which was placed under the

<sup>162</sup> The Government's administrative structures which were in the Zones, Districts and beyond were its field units.

<sup>163</sup> See, Shrestha, T. N., Nepalese Administration 167 In the beginning the kingdom was vertically segmented into four development regions namely, the Eastern, the Central, the Western and the Far-Western Development Regions. Later, the Mid-Western Development region was added to the list. These segments included within them groups of Zones, which topographically represented areas extending from the heights of the Himalayas to the Terai. In creating the segments the intentions were to decentralise power for effective implementation of development planning which were expected to reduce regional disparity and ensure socio-economic unification of the kingdom.

supervision of the Chief District Officer. In identifying developmental works, the Chief District Officer (henceforth C. D. O) functioned as a link between Regional Development Centre and the District Panchayat. There were two types of developmental works. One depended upon funds received from the Government and the other on funds generated by the Panchayat body. In the former, the District Panchayat played minimum role: its Assembly endorsed what the Regional Development Centre identified as priorities. In the latter, the decisions of the District Assembly determined the priorities and the manner in which the works were to be carried on. In all these processes the C. D. O functioned as a communication link between the Regional Development Centre and the District Panchayat. After finalisation of the works, the responsibility of implementing the works fell upon his office (22–4). In the villages the Plan introduced Multipurpose Development Workers. Their functions were to act as link between the Government and the villages and to coordinate village development activities (34). For coordinating village development activities, the Plan visualised him as leader of village development agencies. To reduce the number of such agencies, the Plan suggested a set of agencies for 3 to 5 village Panchayats in the hills and 7 to 10 village Panchayats in the Terai regions. However, even after a decade or so the District administrative arrangement did not evolve satisfactorily. The C.D.O could not coordinate development activities, because the ministries generally failed to delegate him the power to control the district development officers. Besides, the introduction of Local Development Officers at the District level in 1981 lowered the prestige of the Chief District Officer, because the Local Development Officer enjoyed similar status. And when he was given the responsibility of handling development officials the spirit of integrated development in the districts was diluted. Similarly, in the villages, the Multi-Purpose Workers had failed in coordinating development activities owing to the lack of “guidance from ... district level development offices”, as visualised under the Plan (34). Moreover, even in the 80s there was not a single example of a set of development agency controlling developmental activities of village Panchayats (37). Thus, HMG development offices

sprawled throughout the districts and villages and since most of the district and village level development works were funded by the Centre, the Centre exercised maximum grip over their activities. Therefore, when the Nepali Congress came to power it formed a *Prashasan Sudhar Ayog* (Administrative Reform Commission), which began working in VS 2048 Aswin 17 [3 October 1991] under the President-ship of the then Prime Minister, Girija Prasad Koirala. It finished its task on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1992. Its goal was to suggest changes in the arrangement to make it “democratic and development friendly” (HMG 5). With such goal in mind its terms of reference were fixed to suggest changes which would make the arrangement simple, economic, accountable and efficient in serving the masses. Hence, its suggestions were focused on curtailing expenses, improving the morale of the employees, devolving powers, rooting out corruption and in making the National Planning Commission responsible for framing developmental policies by freeing its energy from administrative preoccupations (5–9). The descriptions of these suggestions clarify the state of Nepalese administration at that point of time. The following paragraphs, which describe the Commission’s suggestions, will, therefore, profile the administrative arrangement of the kingdom in the 90s, because except a few majority of its suggestions were not implemented.

Commenting on the state of the then administrative set up of the kingdom, the Commission characterised it as “overextended”<sup>164</sup> (3), “unwieldy” and “highly centralised” (4). Its Ministries at the Centre were plagued with “multiple layers of functionaries” (5). The set-up was, therefore, sluggish: issues before turning into decisions had to pass through several bureaucratic layers. And the entire administrative arrangement staffed with “unenthusiastic employees with low morale” was bereft of sense of economy and “accountability” (3, 5). At the Centre there were

<sup>164</sup> See, Poudyal 176 Studies in the 80s showed that Nepalese bureaucracy had grown by more than 50% either to provide employment opportunity, or to gratify the wishes of the influential forces of the kingdom.

22 Ministries, 48 Departments and 49 Departmental level offices. In the Regions there were 108 offices, in Zones, 64 and in the districts and below there were 9, 203 offices. They had been opened in different areas just for ensuring the presence of the Departments without considering their needs. Hence, for cutting down administrative expenses the Commission suggested the removal of superfluous establishments. Its first suggestion was for reducing the Ministries from 21 to 18 by closing down Ministries which duplicated the functions of existing ones. In case of Departments it suggested amalgamation wherever possible for example; it suggested the creation of a single Department out of two existing Departments like Cottage and Small Scale Industries Development Department and Cottage and Village Industry Development Department. For implementing development works, it preferred the creation of cells within respective Ministries to maintaining Regional Supervisory Offices. Finally, for reducing offices of the District level it suggested one district to look after the needs of contiguous districts, which were properly linked with the supervising district by transport and communication facilities.

Structurally the Civil Service was divided into two broad groups: Administrative and Technical where the posts were gazetted or non-gazetted. Besides, both the gazetted and non-gazetted officials were divided into four classes. In the gazetted level there were: Special class, Class I, Class II and Class III officials. Similarly, the non-gazetted level was classified into Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV positions. At the gazetted level the Administrative group consisted of four services namely, Judicial, Administrative, Auditing and Rastriya Panchayat Services. Similarly, the Technical service was organised into six groups namely, Agriculture, Education, Engineering, Forest, Health and Miscellaneous Services. In the gazetted Administrative services there were two more sub-groups the Accounts and Foreign Service group, but there were multiple sub-groups within each of the gazetted Technical groups. The non-gazetted level was also divided into technical and non-technical groups without sub-groups. The Commission suggested the creation of more sub-groups within the gazetted Administrative services on the basis of the employee's

skill and training. It noted that in the absence of such sub-groups an employee, on the event of promotion, was often placed in services where his training and skill became useless. In the Technical Services promotional avenues in some groups were many whereas in others there were few. As a result, in some even juniors were promoted to higher grades whereas in others even seniors remained in lower posts. Hence, the Commission favoured creation of posts where promotional avenues were absent. Besides, the division of services in the gazetted and non-gazetted groups had developed a sense of inferiority among those in the non-gazetted groups. So the Commission suggested unified service to foster a spirit of team work among the employees. Its suggestions for improving the efficiency of the service were: to create methods to judge employees' yearly performance and to create means to communicate the job responsibilities of employees. For improving their morale it suggested the creation of an organisation where they could represent their grievances and the removal of the 1965/66 Civil Service Rule 7.1 (3) which gave the Government discretionary powers to retire employees who had served for 20 years. To tackle the problem of overstaffing the Commission suggested outright reduction of permanent posts by 25% within 1994–95, reduction of bureaucratic layers within the ministries within June 1992, removal of superfluous offices in the Regions, Zones and Districts within June 1992, stalling of fresh recruitments in the services in the year 1991–92, and removal of employees who were employed in the past disregarding the service rules. For simplifying the decision making procedure it suggested removal of bureaucratic layers in accordance with the nature of issues. In all cases the Ministries and Departments were asked not to utilise more than 3 layers for reaching decision. To give effect to the Constitutional provision of Article 46: 1 (b) which envisaged the inclusion of the people in the developmental activities of the kingdom the Commission sought to devolve powers to the elected bodies of the villages, towns and districts. And for such devolution the Commission considered the districts as centres since planned developments in Nepal were implemented with districts in focus. However, taking experience into consideration where districts had failed to support

towns included within their area, the Commission suggested town administration under elected Municipalities and Corporations. But, in implementing programmes where the involvement of both the district and the town administration were required it suggested the establishment of temporary coordination committee consisting of elected representatives of the areas.

The Commission suggested transfer of powers to the elected bodies of the districts, towns, and villages for implementing a variety of works. These included works which demanded coordination among governmental, quasi-governmental and non-governmental agencies functioning in the areas, works which could be accomplished by using local skill and resources, works which were necessary in the area, works which had been promised by the elected bodies to the subjects of the area, and works which could be accomplished only with the help of the local population. It expected creation of legal framework for transferring such powers. And to increase their financial capabilities it suggested the Government to transfer them the rights to collect taxes from areas untouched by Central Government. Besides, it suggested the Government to provide districts and towns with three types of grants: grants for institutional development, commendation grants to districts or towns which succeeded in raising more taxes and grants for carrying on programmes of national importance. However, for funds the villages were made to depend on the districts, but if the elected representatives of the villages could furnish viable projects then they were to be given loan out of a village fund of Rs 20 crores created for such purposes.

For removing corruption from the system the Commission suggested both preventive and corrective measures. Out of its many suggestions the important ones were: to ensure transparency in the administrative functions, to link employees pay packets with inflationary trend of the economy and to strictly implement the norm which required the employees to declare their properties. And if any employee's property was found disproportionate to his income then for necessary action it was to be reported to the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority.

Finally, commenting on the past functioning of the National Planning Commission and the Government, the Reform Commission stated,

In the present system there is no link between the decisions making processes of the Government and the working of the Planning Commission ... As a result in the past there used to be contradictions in the decisions taken by the Government and the policies framed by the Planning Commission. This situation needs to be avoided (HMG 46).

Therefore, it drew attention towards the necessity for framing sound development policies. To enable Planning Commission to frame such policies the Reform Commission suggested the staffing of Planning Commission's Secretariat with experts hired on contracts; creation of policy framing cell in each Ministry consisting of concerned Planning Commission's member, the Ministry's Secretary and necessary experts, and freeing the Planning Commission from all administrative functions. Besides, the Planning Commission was expected to provide suggestions to the Ministries in implementing the policies while carrying on the evaluation of their implementation. Thus, existing administrative arrangement of Nepal needed much to be achieved, but it was not achieved because successive governments cold-shouldered the Reform Commission's advice. They could not maintain the momentum of reform which was visible in the aftermath of *Jana Andolan*.<sup>165</sup> In June 11 1990, the Government passed the Municipality Act, the District Development Committee Act and the Village Development Committee Act. According to these Acts a Municipality was to be constituted in towns with "more or less 9,000 population". It consisted of "a President and a vice President heading a committee of 33 members" to look after the development of the Town (Kanun Tatha Nyaya Mantralaya, "Nagarpalika Ain" 3).

<sup>165</sup> See, Rising Nepal, Dist. Committees, Municipalities Constituted 1990 June 14 After the dissolutions of the Panchayat bodies, the District Panchayats, Town Panchayats, and Village Panchayats the Interim Government established District Development Committees and Municipalities and Village Development Committees throughout the kingdom. See also, Rising Nepal, Zonal Commissioner's ... Close Down 1990 July 12 The King was forced to order the close down of all Zonal Commissioners Offices. The Commissioners had already tendered their resignations on May 9, 1990

Financially, it was dependent upon “taxes raised within the town” and “cash transferred by the Government” (9). However, it could be dissolved by the Government if the Committee failed to function according to the provisions of the Act (15). Similarly the District Development Act provided for an 11 member committee headed by a President and a Vice-President to carry development activities in the 75 districts of Nepal (Kanun Tatha Nyaya Mantralaya, “Zilla Bikas ... Ain” 24). It was empowered to supervise even the activities of Village Development Committees and Municipalities falling within its area (27) . Financially it was dependent on the taxes raised from the districts and cash transferred by the Government (29). However, there were a few provisions which were not in tune with the principles of power decentralisation. Its Committee was expected to take decisions under the supervision of the D.D.O of the respective district (28). Besides, like the Municipality the Government could dissolve the DDC if it failed to dispose its duties in the judgement of the Government (32). Finally, the Village Development Committee was composed of 11 members identified by the DDC under a President and a Vice-President to carry out development activities of the village (Kanun Tatha Nyaya Mantralaya, “Gaun Bikas ... Ain” 36). Financially, it depended upon tax accruing from the village and upon cash given to it by the Government and the DDC (42). However, like the Municipality and the DDC it could be dissolved by the Government on similar conditions (50). Later, in April/May 1992 the Koirala Government made these bodies elective (See, p. 154). So, throughout the 90s the nation witnessed political bickering on issues related to the autonomy of the local bodies since they could be dissolved by the Government of the day. However, the Krishna Prasad Bhattarai Government passed an Act removing the deficiencies of the earlier Act in 1999. It removed the control of the Government and of the higher bodies over the lower, but because of the Maoist movement the provisions of the Act could not be implemented (Kanun Tatha Nyaya Mantralaya, “Sthaniya Swayatta Shasan [1999]” 10, 76, 155).

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- . "Govt. Revises Pay Scales," 1992, May 14.
- . "Govt Should not Close Door for Talks: Koirala," 2002, Apr. 29.
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- . "His Majesty Dissolves the House of Representatives," 2002, May 23. 1+.
- . "His Majesty Makes Royal Proclamation to the Nation," 1990, Apr. 7.
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- . "HM Forms Constitution Commission," 1990, May 12. 1+.
- . "House Gives Deuba Vote of Confidence," 1995, Sept. 19.
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- . "Koirala Quits, Recommends Fresh Election," 1994, July 11. 1+.
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- . "Koirala Warns of 'State Terrorism'," 1995, Apr. 30. 1+.
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- . "Man Mohan Ministry Sworn In," 1994, Dec. 1. 1+.
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- . "Maoist Warned Over Attack on Masal Men," 1997, June 17. 1+.
- . "Maoists Attack Sindhuli," 2002, Sept. 9. 1+.
- . "Maoists Confirm Participation for Aug 30 Talks," 2001, Aug. 29.
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- . "Meet on Tanakpur Gets Down to Specific Issues," 1993, Mar. 12. 1+.
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- . "ML Does not Subscribe to Maoists' Concepts: Bamdev," 2001, Sept. 30.
- . "More Scrutiny of Treaty: Man Mohan," 1996, Aug. 3. 1+.
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- . "NC Expels Deuba from Party for Three Years," 2002, May 27. 1+.
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- . "NC Hopes for Early Solution of Crisis," 1990, May 13. 1+.
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- . "NC, RPP Agree on Speaker, Deputy Speaker," 1994, Dec. 17. 1+.
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- . "NC Will Fight Polls Alone: Girija," 1990, Nov. 25. 1+.
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- . "PM Advised to Postpone Polls Over Security Reason," 2002, Sept. 30.
- . "Political Parties Forward Appeal to His Majesty," 2002, Oct. 9. 1+.
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- . "Politicians Appeal for Best Use of Freedom," 1990, Apr. 10.
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- . "Premier Thapa Resigns," 1998, Apr. 11. 1+.
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- . "Resignation Issue Irrelevant," 1993, Feb. 7.
- . "RPP (Chand) Meet Disturbed," 1991, Mar. 11. 1+.
- . "RPP to Go for Govt If Necessary," 1995, June 2.
- . "Rukum's 22 VDCs with No Poll Nominees," 1997, May 8. 1+.
- . "Sahana Says Interim Act Imperative," 1990, June 22.
- . "Separate Laws Needed to End Bonded Labour," 2000, Jan. 6.
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- . "Supreme Court Verdict," 1994, Sept. 13.
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- . "Tanakpur Goes to Parliament," 1992, Dec. 16.
- . "Tanakpur Hearing Continues," 1992, Sept. 24.
- . "Taranath Ranabhat Elected Unanimously as Speaker," 1999, June 23.
- . "Team to Be Sent to Rolpa Soon: Khadka," 1995, Dec. 12.
- . "Thapa Workers Caught," 1991, May 11.
- . "UML Decides to Go for Mid-Term Election," 1995, June 10.
- . "UML Emerges Winner in 52 Per Cent Seats," 1997, June 11. 1+.
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- . "UML Too Responsible for Signing Treaty: Rohit," 1996, Aug. 4. 1+.
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## Fragmentation in Communist Movement of Nepal

## Chapter 3

### Evolution of Communist Movement in Nepal till 1990

#### Early Years, Development after 1960, Splits within the Movement

##### 1. Formation of Communist Party of Nepal: Its Initial Documents

As described (See p.43), disillusioned by Regmi's activities Pushpalal left for Calcutta. On reaching there, he says, "His contact with Nripen Chakraborty and Ratanlal Brahmin and ... his belief that the International Communists would instantaneously support the launch of a Communist Party in Nepal encouraged him to open Nepal Communist Party" (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 32). Further, he notes, "Revolutionary friends from Kathmandu Valley and from Eastern and Western Nepal were also conferring with me on the issue" (35). From then onwards, describing the formation of Nepal Communist Party, he writes:

On 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1949 a meeting was held among Pushpalal, Niranjana Govind Vaid, Narayanvilas Joshi and Narbahadur at Shyambazar, 28, Naveen Sarkar Lane, Calcutta. Meanwhile, Durgadevi had also arrived from Kathmandu so she was also included as the founding member in the organisational committee of the Party. This committee appointed Pushpalal as the general secretary of the Party and gave him the responsibility of organising the Party at the Central level. The responsibility of organising the Party in Bara, Parsa and Rautahat was given to Niranjana Govind Vaid, because he had played an active role in Birganj area during the 1947 Satyagraha movement. Narayanvilas and Durgadevi were asked to look after Kathmandu Valley and Narbahadur was given the responsibility of working among the workers of Biratnagar and Jogbani (35).

However, there exists a controversy regarding the exact date when the Party was formed and regarding the number of founding members. The date controversy stems from one<sup>1</sup> of Pushpalal's articles and one later document<sup>2</sup> of the Party. In both these works, he points out that the Party was formed on 15 September 1949. However, in another article, Pushpalal writes, "The Party was formed on 22 April 1949 and it was

<sup>1</sup> See, Shrestha 32 In this article the author points out that the Party was formed on 15 September 1949.

<sup>2</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), "Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha" 10 This document also declares that the Party was formed in September 1949.

formally declared on 15 September 1949” (Pushpalal, “Nepali ... Ek Samiksha” 186). Confounding the issues further, there exists a signed statement of three founding members, who in the 70s were in one of the later factions of Nepal Communist Party, NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)). In their statement, they point out that the Party was formed “On 22nd April 1949, the date which coincided with the birthday of Lenin, and there were only four founding members of the Party namely, Pushpalal, Narayanvilas Joshi, Narbahadur and Niranjan Govind Vaid” (NCP (Masal), “Partyko Janma Diwas Barey ... Baktabya” 804–5). Besides, Anirudha Gupta writes, “... some Nepalese met at Calcutta on 15 September 1949 and founded the Communist Party” (200), and if one goes through the footnote related to the statement then the reference is to the document “Jatiya Aandolanma Nepal Communist Party”.<sup>3</sup> Surendra K C points out to Leo. E. Rose’s<sup>4</sup> similar statement, which was based on the same document. Then he quotes, the document which only says, “When the Party was formed on 15 September 1949 there were only 5 (Niranjan Govind Vaid, Narayan Vilas, Narbahadur, Durgadevi and Pushpalal) members”. Then, he argues, on the basis of other documents, that on 15 September 1949 there was no meeting in Calcutta. Besides, he points out that the process of forming the Party had already started on 22 April 1949. Hence, he blames both Gupta and Rose for supplying the name of the city on their own (K. C., Nepalma Communist 56–7). Besides, he argues that they had disregarded the importance of April 22, 1949 in the Party formation process. However, for all these controversies he identifies three factors. First, Pushpalal, in his lifetime, did not clearly state that on 22 April the organisational committee of the Party was formed and that it was a step towards the formation of Nepal Communist Party. Second, because of fragmentation of the Party in later years the members of different factions tried to sully the names of Pushpalal by arguing that he even kept

<sup>3</sup> See, K. C., “Jatiya Andolanma” 201–13 This is the document of the Party which the author has placed in the Appendix to his work.

<sup>4</sup> He quotes Leo. E. Rose in Scalapino 346

the date of Party formation a secret. Third, both Anirudha Gupta and Leo E Rose spread wrong information. Then he concludes, “Documentary evidences suggest that the Party was formed on 15 September 1949 [the day its manifesto came out] ... but the process started in Calcutta on 22 April 1949 where there were 5 members” (61).

On 22 April 1949 the Party brought out its first document. Analysing the world situation and its influence in Nepal, it stated: “After the Second World War the influence and prestige of the socialist world is on the rise. No country can keep itself away from the influences of this new world, the socialist world. Even in Nepal the socialist wind is very strong...” (NCP, “Nagarik Swatantrata ... Banaw!” 47). But, instead of analysing the historic stage of Nepalese development it described the state of democratic rights in Nepal. And doing so it drew the relation between the Rana regime, Nehru and the Anglo-American imperialists for it stated:

The Ranas have the freedom to meet their God, the Anglo-American imperialist whenever and wherever they want. For jointly exploiting the people of Nepal the Ranas can meet Indian business tycoons: the Tatas, the Birlas, the Singhanias and the Goenkas whenever they want. The Ranas can meet Nehru to send our illiterate but brave youths outside Nepal to protect the wealth that the tycoons have amassed by exploiting the people of India. But, for us, the working people of Nepal there are no rights to organise against hunger, unemployment and the increasing exploitation of the Ranas. By curbing our rights to protest, the Ranas have stopped us from raising our voices against their design which in collusion with American imperialist and Nehru’s undeclared policy of neo-colonialism is trying to convert Nepal into a theatre of war against Soviet Union, China and all freedom movements of Asia... (NCP, “Nagarik Swatantrata ... Banaw!” 47).

And by way of explaining why the Ranas feared the transfer of democratic rights to the people it identified its enemies and allies. It stated, “The Ranas do not want us to enjoy democratic rights, because they know that under such circumstances we will raise our voices against the Zamindars, usurers, capitalists ... and against the imperialists who are exploiting us” (48). Then, indicating forces whom it considered as its allies, it stated, “They know it well that if we get our voices then we will organise our *majdoor* (working class), peasants, students, youths and all democratic forces against them” (48). So, its tactics then was aimed at destroying the Ranas, and “to fight for freedom” (48). This freedom was then to be used “by the labourers for

asking higher wages; by peasants to win their rights over land, by students for getting cheaper education and by women to end their exploitation” (48). But, while giving its call for action, which could be both ‘violent and non-violent’, it did not mention the classes upon whom it relied. It bundled them simply as ‘people’ and called upon them to form ‘revolutionary committees’ and if need be to ‘go underground’ for it stated: “To achieve these ends the people must organise themselves in every lane, village, town ... and every industrial establishment as revolutionary committees. If need be they should adopt even violent means and go underground” (49). However, in such action it ruled out the participation of Nepali Congress, whom it identified as “lackeys of treacherous socialist leaders of India and as a force habituated to ending struggle into compromises [impression which Pushpalal carried from 1947 see p.41] with the Ranas” (49). But, its strategy was clear it wanted to move towards communism for it said, “After destroying the Ranas the struggle should continuously move towards socialism and finally towards communism” (50).

Later on 15 September 1949<sup>5</sup> the manifesto of the Party was brought out. After the Second World War, the document viewed the world divided into two camps: “the camp of imperialism, reaction and World War led by [the] U. S and British monopoly capital and the camp of anti-imperialism, democracy and peace led by the Socialist Soviet Union” (NCP, Manifesto 3). In it, the Party perceived Anglo-American imperialists engaged in aiding and abetting reactionaries worldwide to instigate war against Soviet Union to avert their—the imperialists’—internal economic crisis for it said:

The Anglo-American imperialist warmongers<sup>6</sup> are actively helping the reactionaries throughout the world against the rising tide of democratic forces inside every country, [and] are arming and leading aggressive war against liberation struggles in the colonies and semi-colonies. They are making hurried preparations for instigating a Third World war

<sup>5</sup> See, Pushpalal, Itihas 43 The Manifesto was brought out as ‘cyclostyled’ copies.

<sup>6</sup> See, NCP, Manifesto 3 The party argues that American involvement in Nepal is chiefly guided by its goal of converting Nepal into an anti-Soviet military base.

against Soviet Union and people's democratic states in an attempt to escape the impending capitalist crisis and safeguard their bankrupt capitalist system of inhuman exploitation (3).

Under such circumstances, the document viewed the Ranas as Nepalese reactionaries, whose policies<sup>7</sup> were aimed at "offering Nepal as a war-base in the service of U.S. war mongers", "offering Nepal's man power to defend British imperialism"<sup>8</sup> and in "Handing over Nepal's trade and commerce to the Indian bourgeoisie and their Nehru Government" (4). In their view, the last intent not only allowed Indian capitalists to exploit Nepal, but also 'reinforced' feudal exploitation to burden Nepalese under a system of 'dual exploitation' for their document said:

The Indian big business [es] protected and spearheaded by their own Govt. in New Delhi is 'opening' up Nepal in a big war. Birla, Singhanias and Chaudharias have already opened jute, textile, cotton and sugar mills in Nepal. Nehru Govt. itself has taken up the Koshi Project. Major portion of capital invested in Nepal today belongs to the Indian capitalists. These Indian capitalist sharks are out to exploit cheap labour and natural resources of Nepal to fatten their own money-bags and not to industrialise Nepal ... Thus Nepalese people are being put under double yoke-feudal exploitation is being reinforced by capitalist exploitation (4).

Such a doubly exploitative society, in their view, was in the 'feudal' stage of historic development where a few areas had come under capitalist mode of production. In it, the peasant class was the most burdened, because it suffered from the exploitation of

<sup>7</sup> See, NCP, Manifesto 3 The Ranas were following such policies to strengthen their position against the rising tide of democratic movement in Nepal. The Party statement implied that Rana policies were meant for ingratiating themselves with the Anglo-American imperialists and the Indian Government to seek their support in maintaining Rana rule.

<sup>8</sup> See, NCP, Manifesto 2 and 4 The Party sees the Ranas as British friends from the day they came to power in Nepal. As British friends, the Ranas ensure the supply of Nepalese youths to fuel its war efforts. In this relation Nehru government helps the British in recruiting Nepalese soldiers. To substantiate their argument the NCP points out the November 9, 1947 Treaty which was signed in Kathmandu between Nepal, India and Britain. In this Treaty, they argue, that in one of its clauses Nehru has agreed, as British friend, of course, to allow the British to maintain British recruitment centres in Indian soil in Gorakhpur and at Ghoom, a cantonment in Darjeeling of West Bengal, till alternative arrangements are made.

the feudal forces and shouldered the responsibility of maintaining the system for its document said:

Feudal despots rule over Nepal ever since 1385 [sic]. The changes that have taken place during the course of the centuries have only gone to strengthen despotism of the Ranas. Although capitalist mode of production has been introduced in certain parts of Nepal, feudal mode of production and administration has still the decisive influence.

Self-sufficient natural economy still prevails in the country, though in a dying form. The peasants produce not only their own food but also the most of the articles they use. The Ranas, landlords, *Dwarays*, *thalus* (big-courtiers) and the *Mukhias* spend away the rent extorted from the peasants for their own personal enjoyment. Formerly these rents were not used for bartering. But now even though bartering system has been introduced by this [these] feudal parasites, it has not yet any decisive effect.

The feudal ruling class – the Ranas, *Sahebjews*, nobles, landlords, *gurujees* (royal priests) and rising middle classes own most of the land. The peasants owned a very small portion of land or non-at all. The peasants use their own tools to plough the land of their overlords and have to part away with three-fourths of their crops to satisfy the greed of their masters....

The peasants are not only to bear the intolerable burden of exploitation by the whole breed of Ranas and the feudal overlords, but also to maintain the entire feudal bureaucracy and the anti-people Armed Forces of the state by paying tributes, taxes and forced labour (1–2).

On the basis of such analysis, the document then identifies the enemies of the people in the “foreign imperialists” (2), and the “Indian bourgeoisie” whom “The Maharana [Ranas] is inviting [has invited] ... to strengthen his position against the rising tide of democratic movement in Nepal”. For them, the ruling class of Nepal was “a puppet of Anglo-American imperialism and the Indian satellites”. Under them, it sensed the problems of the people of Nepal to “multiply and intensify” (3). So, it called upon the people to follow the path of destroying feudal order; imperialist-capitalist domination over Nepal and to establish a democratic State moving towards the goal of people’s democracy and socialism under the leadership of the working class, which it expected to grow numerically in future for it stated:

The people of Nepal must pave a different path [not the Third Path of Nehru, see p. 268]—the path of completely overthrowing the existing feudal order and the imperialist-capitalist domination over Nepal in active alliance with the world democratic camp and establish a democratic state of the toiling people led by the working class, a state system where people will own the wealth of the nation and develop it for their own benefit. The people of Nepal must fight to blast their way to people’s democracy and socialism. The experience of the land of victorious socialism – the USSR, the experience of people’s

democratic states of Eastern Europe, New China, North Korea, the marching ranks of the colonial people are daily inspiring them in this glorious struggle, as they are inspiring the enslaved people everywhere. In the struggle for the overthrow of feudal order and imperialist domination over Nepal, the working class is historically destined to lead the vanguard role. Though small in number today the working class of Nepal's daily growing stronger both numerically and politically in the very process of intensification of capitalist exploitation (NCP, Manifesto 4–5).

Then it called upon its allies “the workers, peasants, soldiers, toiling middle classes and the entire democratic minded people of Nepal” to wage their struggle against the system (5). However, such statements of theirs create a problem in understanding their strategy. From the classes identified as allies, theirs was an anti-capitalist strategy—there is no mention of the bourgeois class—but by the tenor of their argument, which is anti-imperialist and anti-feudal, the Party should have chosen anti-imperialist/anti-feudal strategy taking the national bourgeoisie as one of its allies. The fact that they were appealing to the people to struggle for the establishment of people's democracy and the fact that during this time Ranadive, one of the leaders of Communist Party of India was also advocating the same strategy it appears that Pushpalal might have picked up the strategy from Indian Communists. The doubt is further strengthened when one comes across Windmiller and Overstreet's observation on Ranadive's “formulation of ‘people's democracy’”, which they say, “implied” an anti-capitalist<sup>9</sup> stance (288). Naturally, under such situation their strategy was bound to conflict with their tactics. Their tactics mixed anti-capitalist stance with anti-imperial and anti-feudal stances. It criticised Nehru's nascent ideas on non-alignment as a ‘third path’. It categorised it as a reactionary path, which the exploiters of Nepalese people had chosen to cover up their alliance with Nehru. And since the path, according to the

<sup>9</sup> See, Windmiller and Overstreet 288–9 During this time Ranadive was critical of pre-1947 view of people's democracy. In his reformulation of the strategy he argued that Indian economy had already reached a high-stage of capitalist development and was ready for conversion to the socialist revolution. The authors argue, that such stand implied that in India democratic revolution had virtually been completed—that imperialism had been practically eliminated and the bourgeoisie had come to power. So, the bourgeois capitalism was the main enemy.

NCP, ultimately ended under the umbrella of the ‘imperialist-bourgeois-feudal’ camp, it asked for its rejection by observing,

To cover up their treachery to the exploited people and subservience to the exploiting classes, they have raised the false slogan of ‘Third Path’. But there can be no ‘third path’ no ‘middle-of-the-road’ policy in a world sharply divided into camps – the camp of capitalism led by Anglo-US monopoly capital and the camp of socialism, led by the USSR and the International working class. Everyone must choose between these two camps, two paths. The cry of ‘third path’ is a political camouflage to hide the alliance with reaction, to hide the face of treachery. The ‘third path’ of Nehru is a damning proof in point. Nehru began with ‘Third Path’ and within a few months has landed himself in the camp of imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine, in the camp of Anglo-American warmongers. Such is the inevitable destination of ‘Third Path’. This is the foul banner of international social democracy – the banner of treachery to the working class (NCP, Manifesto 7–8).

However, the incident, which illustrated Nehru’s Third Path ending in the camp of the imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine is not clearly indicated. The Party was perhaps referring to the 9 November 1947 treaty between Nepal, India and Britain (See footnote 8). Nevertheless, the statements were enough to reflect its tactical position. At the international level, it decided to forge an active alliance with the world democratic camp and within Nepal it called upon its allies “to unite in a common front against feudal autocracy” (5). This common front; which excluded the NNC (both Regmi and Koirala group), the representatives of “the thin strata of the rising middle class oriented towards reaction and the disconcerted Ranas”, was to be led by the working class to establish a democratic State (7). Then, in tune with its strategy, it listed a 12 point programme on the basis of which the front was expected to unite. Of these, the first called for “complete abolition of feudal autocracy and foreign domination” (5). The second, by focusing on the need for “A democratic Govt. representing workers, toiling peasants and oppressed petty-bourgeoisie ...” partially clarified its definition of a democratic Government (5). The third, eighth, eleventh and twelfth called for “A Constitution based on adult suffrage ... [which discouraged] privileges and discrimination [based] on caste, race and community”, “Repeal of all repressive legislation”, “the right to free education”, and “equal ... rights to women” (6). The remaining programmes raised voices for “Abolition of landlordism and all

forms of feudal exploitation ... land to the tillers ... living wage for agricultural labourers”, “industrial ... nationalisation”, “Economic plan to develop country’s resources ... Control of profits in the industries in private hands”, and the tenth programme called for “arming of the people and the establishment of a people’s democratic army” (6). Thus, the tactics then was focused on the fight for democracy, for the economic freedom of the nation and in creating a common front. However, if one goes by Gupta’s observations then it appears that its activities then were also influenced by the perceptions and guidance of Cominform for he states: “The ... Party set before itself the task of organising Nepalese peasants and workers into militant bodies and starting peace movement in Nepal as part of the Communist directed world peace movement”. However, he writes this to argue that the Nepalese Communists had chosen the tactics out of their “dogmatically held ... view that more than fighting the Ranas its primary task was to fight for world peace” (200), but such conclusion about NCP’s the then tactics is proved neither by existing documents nor by memoirs of Pushpalal. Hence, it would be more prudent to understand their peace movements as initiatives linked with their tactics of creating a broad front, and as Joshi and Rose write, as moves for enlisting the support of the intellectuals for they say:

Tactically, it attempted to organize numerous front organisations and to unite all ‘progressive forces’ into a broad ‘People’s Front’ to fight the Rana Congress coalition Government. It concentrated its attention on three groups in the capital — students, intellectuals (mainly writers and poets), and peasants. A pro-Communist student organization, the ‘Vidyarthi Federation’, was set up, and the Nepal Peace Council, with international Communist affiliations, was established to solicit the support of the intellectuals. A peasants’ organization (Nepal Kisan Sangh) was organised, as well as a women’s organization (Nepal Mahila Sangha) and a labour organization (the All Nepal Trade Union Congress)... (129).

Following the declaration of its manifesto, absence of documentary evidence bars one from describing NCP’s activities in between September 1949 and the beginning of 1950/51 revolt. As regards, their role in the revolt there exists conflicting evidences: both written and oral. These evidences, at one end, reject the Party’s participation in the revolt; at the other end, they credit the Party with participation. In between exist opinions, which neither accept nor reject the Party’s participation in the revolt leaving

space for much speculation. In the first category of such evidences comes one of the later documents of the Party, which categorically denies its participation in the revolt for it observes:

The capitalist democratic revolution was led by the Nepali Congress. But the decisive forces were not the Nepali Congress, but the King and the Indian capitalist class. The King had been made inconsequential by the Ranas so in the democratic transformation of Nepal the King and the Indian capitalists turned out to be an active force. In that revolt the peasants could not participate because it was under the autocratic regime of the Ranas. Therefore, the participants were the petty bourgeois class, the liberal-feudal elements dissatisfied with the familial role of the Ranas and the middle class of the cities (NCP, Rastriya ... Mulbato 5–6).

In the middle comes the finding of Surendra K. C who, on the basis of interviews with Communist leaders like Rayamajhi, Kamalraj Regmi and based on D. P Adhikari's writing concludes: "Though the Communists did not formally participate in the revolt, yet it informally took part in the revolt" (91). But, spreading across Pushpalal's writings are his claims which credit the Party with active participation in the revolt for he says: "... though the Communist Party was at its fledgling stage, yet it supported the revolt and declared that it would convert it into an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist movement" (Pushpalal, "Nepali ... Ek Samiksha" 190). Then in yet another work he writes, "It ... adopted the policy of leading the movement to its successful conclusion ... to convert the revolt into a long drawn armed peasant movement" (Pushpalal, Itihas 62). His comments on the role of the Communist in the revolt simply bolsters his claims (See p. 47). And if one goes by his claims then it amounts to believing that what precluded NCP from participating fully in the revolt was not the decision of the Party, but the machination of the Nepali Congress and the Government of India for he writes:

Immediately after the start of the armed movement the Nepali Congress in collusion with the Indian Government unleashed a policy of confrontation against the NCP. The revolutionary Government in Morang jailed Man Mohan Adhikari and Narbahadur. Similarly, the Indian Government jailed Tulsilal Amatya, Kedar Upadhyaya, PN Rana in Raxaul, an Indian town bordering Birganj, and issued warrant of arrest against Pushpalal in West Bengal (Pushpalal, Itihas 61–2).

After the conclusion of Delhi Accord, the Communists began repudiating the outcome

of the revolt when their intended goal was not fulfilled. Hence, the Party's later document which disowned its role in the revolt was perhaps its expression of its denigration of the revolt. As for Surendra K. C's conclusion one has to agree that they are based on opinions and writings of leaders whose positions within the Communist movement in Nepal are viewed with suspect. Moreover, the opinions were expressed much later hence they could be thought over opinions about the revolt. Hence, they need to be taken cautiously. But, one cannot, on similar basis, doubt the claims of Pushpalal, because they were his immediate reactions on the nature of the movement. Besides, historical facts also attest to his views that there was Indian complicity in the revolt. Hence, his perceptions cannot be brushed aside. Even then, his claims cannot be fully accepted because of the presence of the counterclaims. Hence, it would be better to leave the question unanswered until decisive evidences come to light.

For the balance of the period, Communist activities were concentrated in protesting against Indian interference whenever situations favoured them or in opposing the Rana-Nepali Congress coalition Government (See p. 56) and in creating common fronts for such purposes. One such front, as reported by Surendra K. C was the Jatiya Janatantrik Samyukta Morcha. According to him, it was formed on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1951, when NCP combined with the Praja Parishad (K. C, Nepalma Communist 91). But, evidence<sup>10</sup> indicates that the Front was already in existence, and on the 7<sup>th</sup> the parties involved in the Front were just broadening it to include more groups. These groups, according to Devkota, were “the NCP, Praja Parishad, Nepal Yuvak Sangha, Akhil Nepal Kisan Sangh, Akhil Nepal Majdoor Sangh, Akhil Nepal Vidyarthi Federation, Samaj Sudhar Sangh, and Pragatishil Aadhyayan Mandali” (106). The manifesto, which the Front brought out on the occasion, included, for the

<sup>10</sup> See, Gupta 277–9 Appendix A letter sent by Pushpalal to Tanka Prasad Acharya dated VS 2008 Asad 20 (4 July 1951) points out that the Front had already come into existence when the two parties had combined to protest against Nehru on his visit to Nepal. In it Pushpalal asks Tanka Prasad to re-forged the Front to include other progressive forces.

first time, the national bourgeoisie among the classes that it sought to represent. Besides, it clearly announced its strategy. It was an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal strategy aimed at establishing “true democracy” in Nepal for it said:

The objective of our United Front is to establish complete democracy where the true democratic forces, the Nepalese *majdoor*, peasants, middle class and national bourgeoisie will be represented. To fulfil this goal the unity among the different classes of Nepal will prove a powerful tool. If we do not sharpen this tool we will be unable to root out Anglo-American imperialist, Indian capitalists and feudalism from Nepal (Jatiya Janatantrik Samyuktamorcha 64).

However, going by the document of the first conference of the NCP, the other objective behind creating the Front was “to create a substitute for the Nepali Congress” with whom the Party had aligned in the past only “to be betrayed” (NCP, “Naya Janabadko Nimti ... Bato” 2). Announcing the objectives of the Front its manifesto listed a series of 30 point programmes divided into two sets. Of these the first set declared that it intended to “free the kingdom from the hold of Anglo-American imperialism, Indian capitalism and feudalism by establishing a democratic system which represented true democratic forces—the workers, peasants, middle class, intellectuals and national bourgeoisie”. Its other important objectives in the set included “land reform by destroying feudal system”, “ending of loans given by feudal exploiters to the peasants”, “industrialisation of the kingdom by encouraging national bourgeoisie”, “fixing of workers’ labour hours to eight hours”, “giving equal rights to women” (65), “ending all forms of exploitation based on religion”, “guaranteeing of all fundamental rights of the citizens”, “creation of elected judiciary amenable to recall” (66). The other set highlighted the immediate programmes of the Front. It included such demands like “barring the entry of Anglo-American capital while encouraging the flow of capital from India, China and from other democratic countries provided they were in the benefit of the kingdom’s policy of industrialisation”. Its political objective included “the creation of an United Advisory Council composed of members representing various progressive political parties and class organisations”. It expected the Council “to elect from among its members a Council of Ministers who would form a legislative body responsible to the Council” (66). Its other political

objectives included “rights of workers to go on strike”, “quashing of all suppressive Acts including the Public Security Act”, “the creation of an independent judiciary” (67) and finally the “ending of Indo-Nepal military pact which allowed Britain to recruit Nepali youths in British Army” (68). In essence, the first entry in the list of the Front’s programme reflected its inclination towards Mao’s New Democratic strategy this was perhaps due to Nepal Communist Party’s influence over the Front. With the coming of September, Shaha points out, that the Front combined with the Nepali National Congress (Regmi group)<sup>11</sup> to launch a struggle against the implementation of “the Public Security Act”<sup>12</sup> and for the release of all political prisoners including ... Regmi” (261). On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September, it launched “a successful strike ... in the valley”. Following it, on the 24<sup>th</sup>, political leaders, 11 in all, were arrested under the Public Security Act. Prominent among them were Tanka Prasad Acharya, Rishikesh Shaha, of the Nepali National Congress and Tilak Raj Shahi of the Communist Party (Shaha 261). The movement came to an end and the Communist Party began focusing on holding its First Conference.

### 1.1. First Conference

From 27 September to 2 October 1951, the NCP, under the leadership of Pushpalal, held its First Conference in Calcutta. In the document of the Conference, the Party, like Mao in his writing on New Democracy, perceived a bipolar world after

<sup>11</sup> See, Shaha 260 Dilli Raman Regmi, the President of NNC (Regmi group) was in prison for publishing an article. Caught under the Public Security Act, the court had labelled contempt charges against him.

<sup>12</sup> See, Shaha 260 Dilli Raman Regmi, the President of NNC (Regmi group) was in prison for publishing an article. Caught under the Public Security Act, the court had labelled contempt charges against him.

<sup>13</sup> See, Joshi, et al. 157 After the formation of Rana-Nepali Congress coalition Ministry the government had passed two laws. Of these, one was the Public Security Act. It gave the government discretionary powers to arrest a person and hold him in custody for a period of six months without trial in the interest of the nation’s security.

the Bolshevik revolution and drew attention to “the existence of a new world situation where the forces of democracy, under the leadership of the USSR were more powerful than the forces organised under the imperialists” (NCP, “Naya Janabadko Nimti ... Bato” 1). Thereafter, it analysed the economic situation of Nepal reflecting its feudal characteristics for it stated:

95% of our population is composed of the peasants. The produce of their labour... needs to be submitted to the big Zamindars ... and feudal lords ... Three-fourths of the peasants do not have their own land. Though they somehow lead their life by working in the fields of the Zamindars and usurers, yet their condition is no better than that of slaves... (4).

Then, it stopped at that leaving aside the task of identifying its enemies and allies. In the name of tailoring Maoism, Leninism and Mao Tse Tung’s thought to the objective condition of the kingdom it desisted from placing communism as its final goal. It rather focused on tactical aspects, which essentially reflected its position on replacing the Interim Government by an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal Government of non-Communist forces for it stated:

Marxism, Leninism ...and Maoist thoughts are not a body of philosophy to be copied. We have to implement it after understanding our situation. For this reason, in the present situation, the Communist Party is not keeping before the people its ultimate goal of Communism. Considering the political and economic underdevelopment of our nation such programme cannot be practically implemented.<sup>14</sup>But, even in such condition we can install an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist Government of non-Communist forces which is democratic. It will be a Government which will free the peasants from the shackles of the feudal lords; protect the rights of the workers, end imperialism and develop independent national industries by helping the national capitalist class... (7).

From then onwards, for establishing such a Government, the document prescribed the path to be followed. However, the path reflected multiple logical inconsistencies

<sup>14</sup> See, Windmiller, et al. 306 The extent to which Nepal Communist Party leadership was influenced in its choice of its strategy and tactics by the activities of Communist Party of India is reflected here. The CPI, whose All India Party Conference was also held in October 1951 under the General Secretaryship of Ajoy Ghosh, used similar phrases to explain the status of possibilities of establishing communism in India.

bringing home the state of confusion that prevailed among the Communist leadership of the then Nepal in framing the Party tactics. Proposing the method for their variety of Government, the Party document listed a fourteen point programme and appealed the people of the country to form a front for implementing the programmes. Important among them were:

1) Expulsion of Mohan Shamsher and his group from the Interim Government; 2) Establishment of *Janatako Rajnaitik Chalfal Samiti* composed of all the democratic parties, groups, citizens and classes; 3) Establishment of a united Government which would represent all the democratic parties, groups, citizens and classes and which should be established According to recommendation of *Janatako Rajnaitik Chalfal Samiti*; 4) The Government so formed should snatch all the economic and political rights which are being enjoyed by the Ranas; 5) Distribute land belonging to the Ranas and their lackeys among the peasant cultivators; 11) Remove interference of Nehru's Army and of the American imperialists, and 14) give back land captured by the peasants in the 1950 revolt ... (8).

Then it said:

Without implementing the above programmes, a parliament representing the true opinion of the people cannot be formed. So our Party thinks that before the formation of the parliament the 14 point programs must be implemented. After the formation of the parliament, the New Democratic Government should function according to the 14 point programmes (8).

Thus the Party knew, as it claims, that its final goal was to establish Communism, and from its statements it is also clear that it was aware of the fact that New Democracy is the transitional stage that the country had to go through. However, it was trying to establish it through a non-revolutionary path composed of a series of steps. First, it consisted of the establishment of a non-Communist structure, *Janatako Rajnaitik Chalfal Samiti* (Deliberative Political Committee), composed of democratic parties, groups, citizens and classes. This *Samiti* or Committee was then supposed to recommend a Government, which in turn was expected to implement the 14 point programme. The implementation of the programmes was expected to change the political situation to help people express their opinion freely and the parliament formed after such change was the New Democratic Government. Moreover, for forming the *Chalfal Samiti* the Party was appealing the people to form a front. How could such a front be created and how could it ensure the representation of the groups,

which the Communists wanted to be represented in the *Chalfal Samiti*? If this was possible then why was it not possible to form the Parliament which the Communists wanted, at the first go? And why did they want the *Chalfal Samiti* not to represent the Communists? These are questions which cannot be answered and as such they perpetuate confusions. Further, the democratic parties, groups, citizens and classes who were expected to be present in the *Chalfal Samiti* cannot be classed, because of the broad manner in which they identified them, as the representative of any Communist strategy; neither anti-capitalist nor anti-imperialist, yet the *Chalfal Samiti* representing them was expected to carry out programmes; which were anti-feudal, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist. So, while trying to apply Marxism to the Nepalese situation, Nepal Communist Party distorted the entire exercise in producing a document which at its best was naïve: it leaves one wondering as to how the changes could be brought about without the representation of a Party—a conscious agent functioning within the *Chalfal Samiti*. However, the document did succeed in clarifying that they were against imperialism; Indian control over their industries, the continuation of feudalism and the then Interim Government. Beyond these it served nothing more than reflecting the tactical confusion which informed the Communist leadership then. However, before the Party could implement its tactics, it was banned on the 24th of January 1952 (See p. 59).

## 1.2. Communist Activities in Its Banned Phase: The First Congress

In its banned state, the Party was involved in underground activities. According to Pushpalal, by that time the Party headed a number of organisations such as “Akhil Nepal Kisan Sangh ... Akhil Nepal Trade Union Congress ... Akhil Nepal Mahila Sangh ... Nyuna Vaitanik Karmachari Sangha (Low Paid Employees’ Union) ... Gairha Nepal Shanti Samiti (External Nepal Peace Committee) ... and Jana Adhikar Suraksha Samity” (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 82). Of these the Nyuna Vaitanik Karmachari Sangha (Low Paid Employees’ Union) was functioning “a year before 1952” (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 80) and Akhil Nepal Kisan Sangh was formed “...at Mohammadpur village bazaar at Rautahat district ... on 29 May 1952” (Ram 16).

According to Rajendra Ram, these organisations, during its banned state, served “the revolutionary purpose of the Party” (9). However, there are no documentary evidences which describe the nature of their activities. Even in case of Jana Adhikar Suraksha Samity and Nyuna Vaitanik Karmachari Sangh one has to go by the statements of either Shaha or Joshi and Rose. In case of Nyuna Vaitanik Karmachari Sangh Joshi and Rose write, “Shortly after the revolution [1950/51], a ‘Union of Low- Grade Government Employees’ had been established in Kathmandu ... The promoters of the union were associated with the ‘popular front’ organizations of the Communist Party” (Joshi, et al. 101). This organisation, according to them, presented their list of demands to the Matrika Government in May 1951 (101–2). “When their demands were not fulfilled even after a year”, Pushpalal says, “on May 16, 1952 the organisation threatened to go on strike on June 1, and they did launch the strike” (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 80). Then commenting on the scenario related with their strike Joshi and Rose write,

Members of opposition political parties, together with students, provided the strikers with both moral and physical support ... On June 2 Government press communiqué notified all striking employees of their dismissal. The strike continued until King Tribhuvan intervened with a Royal Proclamation on June 6, under whose provisions Prime Minister M. P. Koirala announced revised pay scales for Government employees, beginning with a minimum salary of thirty rupees per month (Joshi, et al. 102).

Taking the fact into consideration, that the Communist Party was at the back of the formation of the Organisation, writers of the past and the present have concluded that the strike was a success owing to the Communist infiltration and “Communist penetration into the Government services” (Shaha 277). Surendra K.C even goes to the extent of saying that “the movement carried importance, because it occurred under the Party’s banned stage when it was functioning underground” (96) meaning that the movement reflected the organisational strength of the Communist Party. As for its effect Joshi and Rose write, that it “contributed to the deterioration in the position of the M. P. Koirala Government that led finally to its resignation” (102) an unsubstantiated opinion, of course, in view of two facts: the Government fell two

months later and the immediate event preceding the fall was the intra-Party differences between Matrika and B. P Koirala led Nepali Congress and not the movement (See, p.60). After the end of the Councillor's regime in September 1953, the NCP was engaged in denying its participation in the Bhim Datta Pant revolt of Western Nepal. Besides, its performance in first Municipal election of Kathmandu, considered in the light of the ban, was impressive (See, p.64).

However, during this period, the Party fell victim to intra-Party wrangle—a phenomenon which was common among the non-Communist forces of Nepal—for Rajendra Ram points out to the existence of a “bitter feud ... [within the Party]”, which he says “led to the removal of Pushpalal from the General Secretary-ship of the Party in June/July, 1952” (9). However, he fails to describe the nature of the feud, which in Maheshmani Dixit's view was caused by the influences of the changing line of the Communist Party of India for he writes:

... From 1942 Man Mohan Adhikari was closely associated with the Indian Communists ... [but] by 1952/53, the CPI sloughed off the Rajeshwar Rao's line of armed peasants' revolt. In Rao's place they [i.e., the CPI] placed Ajay Ghosh as the General Secretary and passed the Dange-Ajay document, which averred Indian independence as true independence ... [and] then Indian Communists accepted the path of democratic change ... and gave up armed peasants' revolt which included forced removal of landlords to implement ceiling laws.

Furthermore, the NCP's Central Committee came under the dominance of such reformists like D.P Adhikari, Radha Ghimerey, Kedar Khanal, Keshar Jung Rayamajhi, Kamalraj Regmi, Kamar Shah and Krishnaraj Verma. These leaders feared and doubted the path of armed peasants' revolution... (85).

Under these circumstances, Sailendra Kumar Upadhyaya, D.P Adhikari, Keshar Jung Rayamajhi and Man Mohan Adhikari, who were influenced by the changes in the tactics of CPI, conspired against Pushpalal. Then in the Bateshwar meeting in June/July 1952, they removed Pushpalal and placed Man Mohan Adhikari as the General Secretary of the Party (Dixit 86).

However, there are no documents which support Maheshmani's views. Hence, to test the veracity of his description one has to take a detour: consider the tactics of Indian Communists during the period and compare earlier documents of the NCP with documents available during the period when the Party was under the stewardship of Man Mohan Adhikari. Authoritative study on Indian Communists like that of Overstreet and Windmiller indicates that Ranadive was removed by Andhra leaders in

May 1950 bringing in Rajeshwar Rao (297–8). Rao represented the Telengana line which was for violent agrarian movement. But, immediately both Dange and Ajoy Ghosh attacked the line as adventurist and when their views tallied with those of London Communists then the Party in its April 1951 Politburo meeting removed Rajeshwar Rao and placed Ajoy Ghosh as General Secretary. The new leadership, in line with the direction of London Communists, eschewed violent revolution for the time being (302–6). However the authors do not talk about the Dange-Ajoy document which sought to line up Indian Communist in favour of Parliamentary practices. Factual errors apart, considered in line with the findings of Overstreet and Windmiller, Maheshmani's description, in spirit, conforms to the changes going on in the Communist movement of India, at least, in their tactical line. As regards the documents of the Party published under the leadership of Pushpalal one comes across a consistent line. They do not rule out the use of violent means (as in the manifesto), they seek to represent the peasant class and the strategy progressively tilts towards an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist strategy that is the New Democratic strategy. Compared to it, the document of the First Congress considerably dilutes its stand to reflect change in the Party's strategy and tactics: it does not talk about New Democracy or about revolution. Besides, it gives up the strategy of socialism and negates the role of peasants in its prescribed movement for change (see below). Thus, it seems that Maheshmani's description about the cause of the feud was correct. As for his other descriptions, there are neither any document, nor any expert commentary which supports or rejects his claims. Hence, until further evidences come to light they should be taken with caution.

On 30<sup>th</sup> January 1954, the First Congress of the Party was held in an underground situation in Patan, a suburb of Kathmandu. Organised for nine days under the leadership of Man Mohan Adhikari, the Congress passed two documents titled "Communist Partyko Karyakram"<sup>15</sup> and "Nepal Communist Partyko Karyaniti".

The former document, without analysing the historic stage of Nepalese development, gives up the strategy of socialism and opts for the establishment of a democratic Government by saying:

Considering the present stage of Nepal, Communist Party does not talk of socialism. Such strategy is not suitable today. Hence, Nepal Communist Party sides with the foremost demand of the present day Nepalese: 'there should be a democratic Government. Nepal Communist Party advocates change in the political set up of the country'. It stands firm on its position that in place of autocratic Government there should be democracy and Constitutional Government (K. C., "Partyko Karyakram 1954" 232).

And for achieving such change it says:

To solve the political problems a meeting of all democratic forces, individuals and of professional organisations should be called. This meeting should frame a minimum programme to give immediate relief to the people and for holding election for the creation of an Interim Ministry. Then the Interim Ministry should hold election for the formation of a Constituent Assembly" (232).

But, the document maintains silence in naming the agency responsible for calling the initial meeting, which was to pave way for the creation of the Interim Ministry. Perhaps, the Party was banking on its tactical line to initiate the process, because its tactics then calls for a united front of workers, artisans, middle class and national bourgeoisie to solve the political as well as the peoples' problems for it states:

The main problem of our revolution is to end the feudal autocratic rule and to establish, on the basis of adult franchise, a parliament which would frame a democratic constitution to solve the urgent needs of land reform, problems of the working class, artisans, middle class, and national bourgeoisie. For it we have to form a democratic front of the progressive classes, parties and forces (232).

The points to be noted in the above formulation of the strategy and tactics are: 1) the manner in which it gives up its strategy of socialism and 2) the absence of peasants in the class among the classes whose interests the Party sought to represent. Such a change in the Party line supports Maheshmani's claim that Man Mohan Adhikari and

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<sup>15</sup> See, K. C., Nepal Communist 227–37 Appendix-3 for the original version of the document.

other leaders were against the New Democratic strategy and against the Rajeshwar line which advocated peasant uprising. Besides, its economic programme was tilted in winning the support of the national bourgeoisie for it stated:

The country's economy is suffering because of the competition thrown by imports of commodities. To ensure the rapid development of Nepalese economy the fundamental of our economy should be based on the development of national capital. Hence, the policies of democratic Nepal should be to: 1) Protect national industries; 2) develop transport facilities for conveying raw materials; 3) encourage national bourgeoisie; 4) provide cheap long term loan for the development of small scale industries; 5) provide quotas to small scale industries, and ... 8) allow foreign capital in the development of industries where the participation of foreign capital should be limited to the tune of 49% (K. C., "Partyko Karyakram 1954" 236-7).

In its other document, which was focused on *Karyaniti* (tactics) of the Party, it talks about the need for forging a united front both from above and below, and prescribes that such fronts should be formed on the basis of a minimum programme agreeable to the leaders of democratic parties without defining the parties falling under such category for it states:

While forming united front we should make effort in both directions, from above and from below. While forging such fronts we should negotiate with leaders of other political parties on the basis of minimum and agreeable programmes, and along with their workers we should carry on united movements. Only such struggle would help us in building true democratic front (NCP, *Partyko Karyaniti 1954* 3).

Thus, during this period, the strategy of the Party was anti-feudal, where the Constituent Assembly was thought to be the agency for such change. It was, therefore, a peaceful path where the tactics was united front from above and below for the materialisation of the initial meeting for the creation of a Constituent Assembly. Having passed the documents, the underground Congress was on the verge of completing its business, but then "the police came to know" about its activities. So, Pushpalal says, the Party "changed the venue and held a small meeting as its Second Conference". In the meeting he says, the Party "formed a group under Rayamajhi" and gave him "the responsibility of exploring ways and means for legalising the Party". But, then he rues, "it proved to be a suicidal step" (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 95). It was a

suicidal step because after that the Party, he says, progressively lost its ideological orientations (see below)

Throughout this period (1954-56) the underground NCP carried on its political activities through its “front organizations”, “the Kishan Sangh” and “the Jana Adhikar Suraksha Samity”. During this phase, Shaha says, its activities were centred on moves for the lifting of the “ban imposed on it”, and in “organizing” anti-American and anti-Indian demonstrations (304). On “18 August 1953, its wings in Birganj and Janakpur observed the day as the ‘Removal of Ban Day’” (K. C, Nepalma Communist 102). On 8 August 1954, its Kishan Sangh “ staged an anti-American rally complaining against American Imperialist activities in Nepal ... [and] on 21 September its Jana Adhikar Suraksha Samity organized the day as anti-Indian Interference Day” (Shaha 312). Then in January 1955, it participated in a Satyagraha campaign against Matrika Government (See, p. 67). Describing its activities in November 1955 Surendra K. C writes:

[When the Government did not pay heed to its demand for legalising it] ... the Party plenum, held in Kathmandu from 21st of November to 25th of November 1955, decided to take legal course. It gave the then Party General Secretary, comrade Man Mohan Adhikari the responsibility to file a case against the Government. But, the decision could not be implemented, because on the very day [that is in November 21, 1955] the Government issued a gazette notification which barred the Supreme Court/High Court from hearing any issue concerned with the fundamental rights of the citizens ... As such the Party was left with only one option—to take the issue to the public (102).

The moment came in April 1956. It was the month scheduled for the King’s coronation where heads of the states of China and the USSR were invited. The Party decided to use the occasion to pressurise the Government on the understanding that a mass movement then would embarrass the Government. The Party perception was right. Parleys began after its General Secretary; Man Mohan Adhikari’s press statement, which clarified the stand taken by the Party. The text of the press statement dated VS 2013 Baisakh 3 (5 April 1956), as quoted by Surendra K. C, ran as follows:

We have come to understand that in view of our repeated requests to the Government to remove the ban imposed on us, the Government

wants us to clarify our policy on this matter. We have appointed Shri Sambharam and Shri P. N Rana to take part in the dialogue and our policies are as follows:

The Party believes that it can realise its goal of socialism through peaceful means. In the present situation, the Party shall campaign for its ideology of socialism, while recognising the Constitution under the King. Until now the Party was carrying on its activities peacefully, and within the Constitutional norms. It shall do so even in future. Today, the most important task in the nation is to forge unity among all the democratic forces. The Party has always believed in this line of action (103).

On April 16, 1956 convinced of the Party's stand, the Acharya Government lifted the ban. Immediately after, there was a meeting of the Party's Central Committee. In this meeting, Surendra K. C writes, the Politburo expressed its dissent over the Party's earlier stand and passed a resolution rejecting the 5<sup>th</sup> April press statement. As quoted by him the resolution read:

Communist Party is a Republican Party; hence it is natural on its part to reject monarchical system of Government. It is a fundamental position of its ideology. Hence, in the interim period, as well as in the period that follows, it shall oppose the King's undemocratic moves, and shall go on spreading the ideals of republicanism. There is no illusion within the Party, on this issue (K. C, Nepal Communist 114).

There are no documents, except conjectures, to explain why the Party in the first place issued the 5<sup>th</sup> April statement and accepted to function under Constitutional Monarchy. Given Rayamajhi's pro-King tilt, Man Mohan's statements then was probably influenced by the ideas of Rayamajhi (See, below). But, equally surprising is its later politburo resolution which suggests that Man Mohan's earlier statement did not have the support of the Party. The conflicting statements, therefore, reflected the existence of a breach within the Party, a view which finds its support in the statement of Pushpalal for he says that the incident signalled "the sacrifice of the Party's fundamental ideological position: it accepted King's Constitutional leadership and the peaceful path towards socialism". As a result, he says, "there was a major clash of opinion within the Central Committee. A few supported Constitutional Monarchy, and a few, Republican Nepal" (Pushpalal, Itihas 96).

Meanwhile in 1956, China invited a delegation of Nepalese Communists to participate in the Eighth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. The NCP sent a

team headed by the then General Secretary, Man Mohan Adhikari. After the departure of the team, Dr Keshar Jung Rayamajhi was given the post of acting General Secretary of the Party. Commenting on the Party's orientation under Rayamajhi, NCP (Ekta Kendra (Unity Centre)), a later faction of the movement, observes: "After that the Party programme progressively tilted towards the King ... it advocated election for forming the Parliament, and gave up its earlier stand that elections should be held for the sake of forming the Constituent Assembly ... the Party lost its revolutionary character" (NCP (Ekta Kendra (Unity Centre) 72). A more elaborate description of the changes that came in the Party programme after the change of guard is expressed by Pushpalal in the following terms:

Among the Communists of Nepal, this change in the leadership brought forth a period of ideological controversy ... the movement witnessed two distinct ideological trends. One group embraced republicanism; advocated proletariat led revolution ... and New Democracy. In the process, they were to destroy the feudal economic and social system; expose the capitalist political parties ... organise united front from below; pressurise the King to hold elections for the creation of a Constituent Assembly, and stymie the concentration of power in the hand of the King ... The other group stood for Constitutional monarchy; advocated bourgeois participation in the revolt for the establishment of Capitalist democracy. They argued that bourgeois partnership in United Front was necessary to staunch the growing dictatorial tendency of the monarch. Besides, they proposed that for taking the bourgeoisie in the united front the Party programme should be amended to accommodate their interests. The programmes should be stripped off of peasants' movement; the policy of land to the tillers, and New democracy. If these are not done, then the Communist movement will lose their support and the King will take further advantage (Pushpalal, *Itihas* 97).

But, these changes, especially the Party's tilt towards peaceful path, were already visible in the document of the First Congress. Perhaps, what Pushpalal meant to say was that the trend became more conspicuous after the change in the leadership of the Party.

### 1.3. Party's Second Congress, May–June 1957

After the removal of the ban imposed on it, the Second Congress of the Party was openly held from 28 May to June 1957 at Fohora Palace, Kathmandu. However, the General Secretary of the Party, Man Mohan Adhikari, could not attend the Congress, because he had stayed back in China to treat his leprosy. So, the Congress

was held under the leadership of acting General Secretary, Dr. Keshar Jung Rayamajhi, but its meeting started amid controversies for Pushpalal writes, “before the start of the Congress, despite Pushpalal’s opposition, the politburo of the Party, composed of Rayamajhi, Kamar Shah, D.P Adhikari, Tulsilal Amatya and Pushpalal, had brought out a document titled Party Karyakramma Parivartan Kina” (Pushpalal, Itihas 97–8). Based on the document, he further says, “The majority of the Central Committee of the Party prepared the political report of the Second Congress. But, this report was opposed by other members of the Central Committee, namely Sambhuram, Hikmat Singh, Krishnalal, P.N Rana, Mohan Bikram and Pushpalal” (98). Even then, he says, “the document was placed in the Congress, where it was vehemently opposed and rejected unanimously ... and a new report was prepared with a decision, that the Central Committee should publish the report and circulate it among its Party members. But it was never done” (Pushpalal, Itihas 99). This brief account of the Second Congress activity raises three important questions: a). Why was the first political report rejected? (b) What were the contents of the second political report? c) Why was the second political report not published? Unfortunately, there are no documents to answer the first question. As regards the second and the third questions Hikmat Singh’s letter, which was circulated only among the Party worker has this to say:

Considering the existing class divisions in the kingdom the proposal did not fix socialism or communism as the strategy rather it chose republicanism ... to oppose the institution of monarchy; to de-mystify the falsity of divine nature of the King, to expose his class character and the suppression linked with the institution (Singh, H., Chithi Number 1 5).

According to him, the proposal viewed “the main contradiction in between the vestiges of medieval feudalism; its ally the monarchy, and the peasants, intellectuals, democratic forces, middle class, proletariats and national bourgeoisie. So, the Congress decided in favour of a bourgeois democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat...” (Singh, H., Chithi Number 1 11). Then he says,

The tactical line adopted was to expose the policy of compromise followed by the so-called democratic parties ... it was to expose their reformist, monarchist, bourgeois democratic propaganda to isolate them from the masses. Therefore, the Congress decided that under the Interim arrangement the Communists should lead a mass movement demanding General election (Singh, H., Chithi Number 1 11).

In sum, the letter confuses strategy: sometimes it says that the strategy was republicanism and sometimes bourgeois democratic revolution. Perhaps what Hikmat was trying to convey was that the strategy was bourgeois democratic which included republicanism. But, then he says, “The Rayamajhi group simply wanted republicanism as the stated strategy without a matching tactics” (Singh, H., Chithi Number 1 11). According to Hikmat Singh, the Rayamajhi group advocated such position because they argued, “Though monarchy is detrimental to the interest of the kingdom’s progress, yet people have their faith on it as a symbol of national unity. So, any move which rejects the institution would go against the interest of the Party. So, the Party should opt for Constitutional monarchy” (Singh, H., Chithi Number 1 21). Finally, his statements on the state of affairs after the Second Congress seems to answer the last question as to why the document of the Second Congress was not published for he says, “The majority group did not implement the decision on the contrary, attracted by the power of the palace, they eulogised monarchy just like any other pro-King democratic parties” (Singh, H., Chithi Number 1 21). Thus, if the content of the letter is taken as it is then it seems that the Rayamajhi group was not interested in exposing the monarchy, because in such tactics they feared the loss of mass support to the Party. In the Communist movement of Nepal, Rayamajhi is often dubbed as a revisionist and an anti-revolutionary for taking such stand which is considered pro-King, but considering the manner in which the August 1957 Democratic Front shunned the Communists (See, p. 71) it seems Rayamajhi’s reading of the then prevailing environment was correct. However, with the passage of time these differences had its effect in the activities of the Party: it could never function as a united body. The first instance of such disunity in its activities surfaced in November 1957 when its Central leadership had to take a decision regarding the role of the Party on the proposed civil

disobedience movement of the Democratic Front. In its “9–19 November 1957 Central Committee meeting”, the Party passed a resolution. The resolution, as quoted by Surendra K. C. reflects, that the Party “welcomed the movement” and “with the intent of making it wider” it proposed “the Front to make it a joint movement” (113). But, according to Bhim Rawal, “Pushpalal and Tulsilal opposed the decision; raised the demand for the creation of a Constituent Assembly, and stayed away from the movement” (47). However, despite being shunned by the Democratic Front, when the Front’s Satyagraha movement began from “7 December 1957”, Surendra writes, the Party, on its own, decided to support the Satyagrahis from 11 December (114). But, on that day when its activists under the “leadership of Dr. Kesharjung Rayamajhi” reached “the site of the movement” that is “the Supreme Court” to launch its *dharna* [picketing], scuffle broke down between the *Satyagrahis* and the police ending in the “arrest of Rayamajhi” (K. C, Nepalma Communist 115). According to Surendra K. C, the Government tried to blame “the Communists for the scuffle”. Hence, he says, “the Party Politburo on December 12, 1957 averted the plot of being banned again by declaring that its participation in the movement was only for seeking solution to the then political problems by adopting peaceful means” (K. C, Nepalma Communist 115). To what extent such reiteration of the Party’s faith in peaceful means for solving the political problems of the kingdom affected the equation among its leaders remains open to assessment. Rayamajhi was released on 15 December, the very day when the King announced the day for the holding of the General Elections. But, the whole incident left two questions unanswered. Why did the Communists support a movement which was simply for an election? And why did the King choose to hold election at that point of time? Going by the description that one has regarding the outcome of the Second Congress then the answer is simple: the Party leadership did not want to attack the monarch (with the demand for Constituent Assembly) for the fear that such attack would lessen the Party’s appeal among the people. However, Hikmat Singh’s second letter provides some fresh insight on the issue and his expressions give the feel that the election issue and the ensuing movement was just a

face saving device for the parties, including the Communists, for he writes:

From 1950 onward, the political parties were the victim of King's machinations which turned him into a powerful monarch and helped him in defaming political parties. Under such circumstances, the parties supported the King for the sake of winning his favour and to be in the Government. But, even with such tactics they realised that they had just become his puppet with an insecure position. Meanwhile, they had lost the spirit and the strength to go for the people's movement, so they saw in the election issue a chance to pressurise and blackmail the King in the name of creating people's movement. And by then ... the Communists had also come to the understanding that election was the only solution to end the political impermanence of the system (Singh, H., Chithi Number 2 2).

The real import of his last statement becomes clear when he says: "In lieu of developing a united democratic movement under the leadership of the Communist Party, the leadership stood by its proposition that it will be suicidal to lead the movement alone. As a result it failed to ... solve the real problem ... to forge an alliance in favour of a Constituent Assembly" (Singh, H., Chithi Number 2 7-8). These statements implied that the Communists should have mobilised forces for creating a Constituent Assembly, but it did not do so, because other parties were in support of General election. Hence, it tailored its position in line with the position of other parties diluting all differences between a Communist—which viewed in its demand for a Constituent Assembly a revolutionary trend—and a non-Communist Party. So, under the new leadership it had become just like any other party, hence its activities, that is its support for election, were also meant just for blackmailing the King. As regards the answer to the second question, Hikmat points out that the King announced the election to avoid the possibility of people's dissatisfaction turning into a demand for the creation of a Constituent Assembly for he writes:

Because of continuous change in the Government there was no economic development in the kingdom ... the people were dissatisfied ... under such a context the King feared the convergence of people's dissatisfaction with that of the political parties ending in the demand for a Constituent Assembly. So, he declared the election (Singh, H., Chithi Number 2 2-3).

Meanwhile, Surendra K. C points out that in the context of the 1959 election, "Kathmandu Municipality Election office declared second Kathmandu Municipality

election”. It was slated on 20 January 1958. He further writes, in the election the Communists tried to “capitalise on” how the earlier Government had “mistreated the Party by arguing that earlier Municipality under a Communist could not implement its development plan because of the attitude of the then Government and of other Party representatives” (105). But, in the election, he says, the issue concerning which language, “Nepali or Newari?” should be the official language of the Municipality proved to be quite contentious. And in the outcome of the election for its 18 wards, it left its mark. Though the Communists won 4, one of their prominent losers was Sambhuram Shrestha. He lost against an independent candidate who was in favour of “Newari language” (106). Concluding his analysis of the results, he then says, “the outcome was an ominous signal for the Communists since majority of its candidates had lost” (107). Thereafter, the Central Committee of the Party held its meeting at Patan, Kathmandu in September 1958, “to discuss Party policies in the ensuing General Election” (K. C, Nepalma Communist 119). And it also decided to participate in the Advisory Assembly created for the interim period (See, p. 73). According to the Party circular of VS 2015 Jeth 24 (May 28, 1959)<sup>16</sup>, “the Party decided to send Pushpalal and Kamar Shaha as its representative in the Assembly”. But, Surendra K. C indicates that ultimately it was “Kamar Shaha and Kamalraj Regmi”, who went there and observes, “there are no evidences to account for the non-participation of Pushpalal in the Assembly” (118). Perhaps, it was because Pushpalal did not wish to be a party in the structure created by the King.

In the February 18, 1959 election, held six days after the declaration of the Constitution, the NCP was guided by its tactical decisions reached in the September 1958 Patan meet. Of the six decisions reached, the sixth, as Surendra K. C puts it, had decided on the use of “students” and “adoption of an attitude, which aimed at

<sup>16</sup> See, K. C, Nepalma Communist 160 The author argues that this date is wrong, probably a misprint because the first Advisory Assembly meeting was held in October 1958.

increasing the Party base particularly among the peasants”. It signalled a change in its earlier decision taken in the Second Congress where it had erased peasants’ role in its tactics. Unfortunately, no document explains this change. Besides, the same meeting, Surendra says, had also released the Party’s election manifesto (119). It highlighted how successive Governments in the past diluted gains of 1950 revolution. It blamed them for their involvement in “deferring the creation of Constituent Assembly”, in “undermining the independence of Judiciary,” and in “weakening the importance of fundamental rights” (NCP, “Chunao Ghoshna-Patra 2051” 255). In sum, it argued that the kingdom’s foreign policy, economy and labourers were still in their earlier status, battling with nepotism, favouritism and corruption—the dominant governing culture of the kingdom (256–8). So, if voted to power, the Party promised to annul the 10-year agreement between Nepal and Britain which allowed the latter to recruit Gorkha soldiers. Besides, it promised to annul the 1950 Treaties between Nepal and India, and to stop American intrusion in the kingdom. In the economic front, it noted that its focus would be “on reconstructing Nepal by industrialising her economy; by implementing land reform and by generating employment opportunities” (258). It promised equality for women and for the untouchables (260). But, for such change it reasoned that “peoples’ creative force must be in the lead to strengthen the democratic arrangement” (262). In short, it said vote us “to empower the Parliament to amend the entire Constitution, to remove the Upper House, to ensure the independence of Judiciary, to implement secret voting in all layers, and to strengthen the bases of democracy: the Municipalities and the district boards” (262–3). But, their promises, whose fulfilment were premised on the democratisation of the kingdom’s political structure through the election was itself at fault. One wonders how the Party could repose such faith in the election outcome, which was being held under a Constitution that concentrated power in the King. As it is, there were few takers of its promises because the May result proved disappointing. In its four seat victory only one, Tulsilal Amatya represented its politburo. So immediately after the rout, to survey the causes behind the debacle, its politburo meeting of May 1959, as Surendra K. C puts it,

“decided to hold two separate meetings ... one of the Central Committee and other of the Central Plenum in July. But, they were simultaneously held from June 23 to 27 in Janakpur” (126). However, there is no document to reveal the content of the survey. Hence, Surendra K. C quotes an interview (taken in 1990) with D. P Adhikari, a member of the politburo. The quoted text points towards “the ideological differences which had destroyed organisational unity of the Party ... and the failure of the Party to forge alliances with democratic forces” as the causes behind its debacle (127). Similarly, Bhim Rawal quotes an interview with Bharat Mohan Adhikari where the interviewee blames “Rayamajhi’s leadership for encouraging factionalism within the Party, his failure to come up with a clear policy regarding the election, and the sapped spirit of the cadres” for the failure (51). Taken at face value, both the leaders, in essence, blame the organisational status of the Party which echoes the observations of Joshi and Rose which says:

The Communists were ... restricted territorially, having ... centres of ... strength only in Kathmandu Valley, two to three districts in the Terai, and a few places in the hills. The Communists were further weakened by serious internal disputes that aborted all efforts to form electoral alliances with other parties or political leaders (279).

Perhaps, news about internal dissension within the Communists was not confined within its confidants. After the formation of the Koirala Ministry, the Communists decided to lead the revolutionary forces to unmask the Government. It started with its criticisms of the budget proposal followed by its opposition against the Government’s decision to import *Dalda* from India (For reasons see, p. 76). On the 11<sup>th</sup> of September it held a protest rally which signalled the beginning of the use of extra-parliamentary measures to counter the dominance of the Congress in the Parliament. Describing their activities then, B. P Koirala says, “The Communists always arrived before Singha Darbar (the Secretariat) with processions, sometimes with *Dalda* issue and, at times, with other issues. The decision to import *Dalda* was taken ... in the Parliament ... when I was convinced that it would improve our balance of payment status with India” (Sharma 269). Perhaps, it was not an issue at all except the fact that involved in it was India, for Joshi and Rose write, “... [It] was a spurious issue

contrived skilfully by the Communist Party...” (321). Anyway, their movement died down when the ban was reimposed. However, in case of the amendment of the 1950 Trade and Transit Treaty there are no documents to record their reactions except those of Pushpalal’s belated comments in 1970 (See p. 77). But, in case of the Gandak Treaty of December 1959, the Party was quite vociferous in condemning the Treaty. After an initial reaction in its organ, on 21 January 1960 its representative in the Pratinidhi Sabha, Tulsilal Amatya, as Joshi and Rose put it, asked the Government “the cancellation of the Treaty and its replacement by a new Treaty. He suggested a change in the project site so that it would be ... beneficial to both the countries, and maintained that the Government had compromised with Nepal’s territorial integrity by handing over the project area to India” (331). To garner public support for its cause the Party then organised a public rally in Kathmandu on 13 February. There, Joshi and Rose say, “Some even compared India’s attempts to foist its terms on Nepal with the practices of the British East India Company [which had] two centuries earlier conquered India by force or duplicity” (332). When the movement tapered, the December 15, 1960 coup took the Communists by surprise. At that time, Pushpalal says, “only three politburo members were present in Kathmandu Central Office viz., Pushpalal, Tulsilal Amatya and D. P Adhikari and Dr. Rayamajhi, Kumar Shah, Hikmat Singh and Sambhuram were in Moscow to attend the International Communist conference ... Man Mohan Adhikari was in Biratnagar” (Pushpalal, “Nepali ... Ek Samiksha” 110). So, he says, “a meeting of the politburo was held and it appealed the people to fight for their democratic rights and directed Party members to go underground”. Meanwhile, probably by the end of February, “the Moscow team had returned and were in Darbangha and the Party was functioning under two centres: one in Kathmandu and the other in Darbangha”. To remove the “two-centre confusion” and “in the context of political situation within the kingdom a plenum was called in Darbangha” (Pushpalal, “Nepali ... Ek Samiksha” 111). According to Surendra K. C, it was held in “March 1961” and it lasted for “a month” (143). The meeting, according to Mohan Bikram Singh, after “assessing the past activities of the

Party blamed its leadership for following a pro-King policy” (Singh, M. B. 96). Besides, on the basis of interviews, Rawal points out that the plenum thought over three political lines (53). These were:

1 Restoration of Parliamentary system: the majority of the central committee members favoured it and it was the position of Rayamajhi.

2 Restoration of the dismissed Parliament: this was the proposal of Pushpalal.

3 Election for the formation of Constituent Assembly: this was the proposal of Mohan Bikram group.

Of these, the answer to the question as to which tactical line received the maximum votes is enmeshed in controversies. According to Anand Bahadur Khatri [Mohan Bikram Singh], it was his tactical line which had won the day (Khatri 67). But, Pushpalal’s follower, Balaram Upadhyaya<sup>17</sup> claims that winning votes went in favour of Pushpalal’s line.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the Plenum adopted Rayamajhi’s line owing to the provision of the Party constitution, which barred the supersession of decision taken by a higher body. In this case, the decision of the Plenum was overridden by the decision of the Second Congress, the higher structure of the Party. And one of the writings of Pushpalal, though not very clear in its logic, reveals the politics that was involved in accepting the line of the Second Congress. Giving reasons as to why the political line was accepted, Pushpalal says, that during the period “the King” was in a position where he could not “be covered ... without an organised force”. In such a situation, “the Nepali Congress” was not in a position “to defer the requirement of unity among the democratic forces”, so the Communists “needed a slogan to attract the Party workers of the Nepali Congress, because when the Party workers get attracted the leaders will be forced to enter into a democratic alliance”. Since the “slogan” for restoration of the Parliament did not “state the type of

<sup>17</sup> See, Upadhyaya 40–1

<sup>18</sup> This seems to be the right claim, for reason see p. 295 .

Parliament, whether of the snatched one or of the one created after fresh election” the Nepali Congress leaders, he says, “will not be able to use us in their machination in collusion with the King” (Pushpalal, “Paus Ek Gateyko ... Bykhya” 28). Hence, the line was accepted. In revealing such perceptions, which he claimed were the perceptions of the NCP, Pushpalal probably meant to say, had the Communists taken the line of restoring Congress led parliament then they would have placed the Congress in an advantageous position. That would have allowed them to enter into compromises with the King at the expense of the Communists’ interest, but the line which advocated the establishment of Parliament without stating its nature would force the Congress to take NCP’s views into consideration. However, despite the lack of clarity in his statements the essence of his arguments boils down to this: the NCP did not want to place Nepali Congress in an advantageous position and the implied purpose behind such tactics was to unite with the Nepali Congress only to destroy the enemy while keeping the decision regarding the nature of future Parliament in abeyance.

#### 1.4. Developments after 1960, Splits: Darbangha Plenum to Third Congress

Despite the adoption of Dr. Rayamajhi’s tactical line, the Plenum characterised him as a pro-King element and divested him of his Party position for the NCP document states:

Considering Dr Rayamajhi’s tilt towards the King and his policy for compromise, he was removed from his post of general secretary, and in lieu of him the Plenum created a three-member Secretariat<sup>19</sup> And the Plenum decided that the Party should fight for:

- (a) Release of political prisoners.
- (b) Reinstatement of fundamental rights.
- (c) Removal of ban on the functioning of political parties and *Jana Bargiya Sangathans* (professional organisations).
- (d) Reinstatement of parliamentary democracy in Nepal (Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 18).

<sup>19</sup> See, Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 18 The three-member Secretariat consisted of Dr. Kesar Jung Rayamajhi, D.P Adhikari and Sambhuram Shrestha. The Plenum accused the first two for being pro-king and gave the Secretariat the power of one Politburo member to prevent even the Secretariat from entering into compromises with the feudal forces.

To implement these decisions the Party sectorised the whole of Nepal into five zones<sup>20</sup> with each zone under the control of a P.B.M [politburo member] and a committee. The P.B.M was to provide leadership in the zone and if need be, he was empowered to restructure the committees' functioning within the zone to give fillip to the Party activities (Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 18).

The Secretariat, Rawal says, was “to function from Kathmandu” (55). And according to the Party document, “under one of the members of the Secretariat a sub-headquarter was to be created in Darbhanga to coordinate the activities of the five Zonal committees” (Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 18). Besides, Tulsilal Amatya [the later General Secretary of the Party] states that “the Secretariat was given the responsibility to organise the Third Party Congress within nine months after the conclusion of the Plenum. In the Congress the Party was expected to sort out the differences of opinions existing among the Party leaders” (Amatya, Nepal ... Matbhedharu 15).

However, question arises regarding the formation of the Secretariat. Why was Sambhuram, a supporter of Pushpalal taken in as a member of the Secretariat? Existing Party documents do not provide a definitive answer to the question. However, on the basis of an interview with Rayamajhi, Rawal writes:

According to Rayamajhi D. P. Adhikari was taken in because his view conformed to that of Rayamajhi and Sambhuram was inducted to represent P. L [Pushpalal] to save Party fragmentation ... In the end the three-member Secretariat consisted of Keshar Jung Rayamajhi, Sambhuram Shrestha and D. P Adhikari... (55).

And if this interview were reflecting the true picture then it also seems to answer the question as to whose line was the winner in the Plenum. The possibility of Party fragmentation comes when voice representing the majority is disregarded. Thus, if Sambhuram was included in the Secretariat to save the Party from fragmentation, then

<sup>20</sup> See, Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 28–9 The five zones were the Eastern Koshi Zone, the Western Koshi Zone, Eastern Gandak Zone, North Gandak Zone and Far-Western Gandak Zone or Karnali Zone.

it means that it was probably Pushpalal's line which had won the voting in the Plenum. But, the process created an anomaly: it created a lopsided Secretariat, where two members represented the same political line and one, the other<sup>21</sup>. As a result, it proved to be a bane for the future activities of the Party. Immediately after the conclusion of the Plenum, in Gorakhpur, Rayamajhi is said to have declared that an "agreement with the King could be hammered out, if fundamental rights of the people were respected" meaning, that the Communists would welcome even Panchayat democracy, if the King offered fundamental rights (Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 19). Such a statement was against the decision of the Plenum, the decision to fight for parliamentary democracy, and the Party document points out, that the Party Secretariat, thereafter, failed to function according to the plans chalked out by the Plenum for it states:

After some time Dr Rayamajhi, Com. D. P, Com. Malla and Com. Shah suddenly disappeared from Darbhanga and appeared in Kathmandu. As per the decision of the Plenum, Com. Malla was responsible for looking after Western Kosi-Gandak zone [Western Kosi and Western Gandak]. Com. D. P or Com. Majhi, the Western Kosi zone, and as a CCM [Central Committee member] Com. Shah was also expected to work in Western Kosi zone. But why were they in Kathmandu? Later on it came to the notice of the Party that they were there, without Party permission, to parley compromises with the King (Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 19).

Why were they doing so? The document alleges "that their intention was to be in the Council of Ministers, which the King was planning to create" (20). Later developments failed to vindicate the allegation—they were not included in the Ministry. But, if the allegation were made in the spirit of proving their good relation with the King then it was perhaps correct, because describing the post-plenum incidents in Kathmandu, Joshi and Rose write,

... Intriguing was the Government's sudden arrest of the leaders of the 'pro-monarchy' faction of the Nepal Communist Party ... Whatever the reasons may have been, the Government reversed itself quickly, for

<sup>21</sup> Sambharam represented Pushpalal, who had floated the political line of restoring the parliament.

scarcely one month later Rayamajhi was released from prison and without having signed the usual declaration of loyalty to the King required of political prisoners (451).

Along with him, three other members<sup>22</sup> of the Central Committee, the pro-Rayamajhi members, were also released. In September 1961, Rayamajhi left for Moscow for medical treatment. Emboldened, perhaps, by the increase of the Rayamajhi groups' members in the Central Committee, it threatened Pushpalal group [Pushpalal, Hikmat Singh, Rajman and Tulsilal Amatya] of expulsion from the Party in a meeting, which was held in November/December 1961 in Kathmandu. Thereafter, Joshi and Rose write, Pushpalal and his group left for India "to avoid detention by the authorities" (452). Meanwhile, according to the Party document, the situation changed. After the Sino-Nepalese agreement for the construction of Kathmandu-Kodar (gateway to Tibet) Road in October 1961 the two members of the three-member Secretariat, D P Adhikari and even Sambhuram issued statements appealing the people to support King Mahendra in implementing the agreement (Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 23). Besides, by this time, for reason which was obvious, the Secretariat formed by the Darbangha Plenum had taken no initiative to call the Third Congress. Under such situation, the document of the Antar Zonal Samanjasya Samiti states, "The Party was in complete disarray ... and there was a need for a coordinating structure—a structure to coordinate the activities of the five Zonal committees" (35). Besides, the document says, "the Party had to be activated; the decisions of the Plenum implemented and the Third Congress convened to bring unity among the leaders" (36). To do so, there was a joint meeting probably in January/February 1962<sup>23</sup>, "in Darbangha among Tulsilal,

<sup>22</sup> See, Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 26 and 32 The document claims that there were six jailed members. Out of them three belonging to Pushpalal group were not released.

<sup>23</sup> There is no document that gives the exact date of the event. Based on an interview, Rawal suggests V.S Bhadra 2018 [Aug 1961]. But this is not acceptable because till then the nine month period fixed by the Darbangha Plenum had not elapsed and the December 1961 Central Committee meeting, which had threatened Pushpalal and his group with expulsion had not taken place. The idea of Coordination

Com. Hikmat and Com. Mohan Bikram” (Pushpalal, Itihas 113). “This joint meeting formed the *Antar zonal Samanjasya Samity*” (Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 37). It elected Tulsilal Amatya as the General Secretary and empowered the *Samanjasya Samiti* (Coordination Committee)<sup>24</sup> to function as the organising committee of the Third Congress. The Committee then convened the Third Congress and as per Tulsilal, it was “the Requisitioned Congress”<sup>25</sup>, which was held from 16 to 27 of April 1962 in Varanasi. Amatya claims that “It represented almost all the districts of Nepal, that is, districts where the Party was active, and the number of representatives were more than 50% of the total membership of the Party” (Amatya, Nepal ... Matbhedharu 21). But, Rawal writes “there were only three members of the Central Committee and none from the three-member Secretariat formed by the Darbangha Plenum” (58). Further, based on interviews with Tulsilal Amatya and Bharat Mohan Adhikari, Rawal states:

The Congress created a National Council of 51 members. From among them, a 17 member Executive Council [National Executive Committee]<sup>26</sup> and a seven-member Secretariat were formed. Tulsilal

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Committee surfaced only after December 1961. The Appeal of the Samanjasya Samity was published on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, 1962. Hence, the probable date for the event is Jan/Feb 1962.

<sup>24</sup> See, Adhikari 77 It is claimed that the Antar Zonal Samanjasya Samiti was formed by merging the two Zonal committees of the party namely Purva Koshi and Paschim Koshi.

<sup>25</sup> See, Amatya, Nepal ... Matbhedharu 20 Though the provision of calling such Congress was in the Constitution of the Party, it was Ajay Ghosh, who reminded the NCP leaders to make use of the provision. Under the Constitution the process was as follows: First a demand was to be made from below to the Central Committee to hold a Congress. If after the request the Central Committee failed to call the Congress, then Lower Committees commanding at least 1/3 of the total membership of the Party could call a Congress. Such Congress was called Requisitioned Congress

<sup>26</sup> See, NCP, Bidhan 1962 6 There was no structure by the name of Executive Council. The structures were: National Council, National Executive Committee and a Secretariat.

Amatya was elected as the General Secretary and along with him Man Mohan Adhikari, Pushpalal, Hikmat Singh Bhandari, Krishna Raj Verma, Mohan Bikram Singh and Com. Regmi were elected as the full members of the politburo. Bharat Mohan Adhikari, Punyapratap Rana, Bharatraj Joshi and Jai Govind Shah were elected as the alternative members of the politburo (59).

Joshi and Rose point out that the Congress then took “seven resolutions” among which “the most important” was the one, which “called for a revolution against the Royal regime”. A second resolution “expelled ten moderate members of Central Committee— including Rayamajhi, Sambhuran Shrestha, Kamar Shah, D. P Adhikari and PB Malla ...” (453). The Party document characterised them as “opportunist and liquidationist leaders<sup>27</sup> ... who had violated the decision of the Darbangha Plenum”. The new leadership also took the decision of launching “a nationwide peaceful movement linking the burning national questions<sup>28</sup> to the democratic movement” (NCP, Report of Third Executive ... Committee 9). It was to start from November 11, 1962.

After deliberations, the Congress passed its political proposal. In it the Party decided to struggle for the creation of a “supreme sovereign parliament”<sup>29</sup>In the voting that followed the line of supreme sovereign parliament secured the highest votes. The line was expected to work towards the establishment of “National Democracy”. To do so the document states,

In the present circumstances, to establish National Democracy the military dictatorship [military was under the control of the King] of King Mahendra is to be destroyed ... the rights snatched from the citizens should be restored ... in the absence of democratic system

<sup>27</sup> See, p. 362 Kendriya Nucleus explains that they were supporting the nationalism of the King.

<sup>28</sup> Though the document does not explain what were these issues, yet in the context of Nepal this phrase always conveys Communist’s idea of nationalism which is against the treaties signed between Nepal and India.

<sup>29</sup> See, Rawal 59 Footnote. In the Congress there emerged three political lines. Tulsil Amatya represented the line for supreme sovereign parliament, Pushpalal, restoration of Parliamentary democracy, the line of the Darbangha Plenum and Mohan Bikram group, Constituent Assembly.

National democracy cannot be achieved (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 49).

Why did the Congress decide that it should fight for the establishment of a supreme sovereign parliament and snatch the power of the King? Explaining the rationale behind, Amartya writes: “The Congress felt that the earlier parliamentary system was destroyed by the King because he monopolised power,<sup>30</sup> so they decided to fight for a parliamentary system where the body would be all powerful and not in the control of the King” (Amartya, Kun Bato ? 21–3; Amartya, Nepal ... Matbhedharu 22). Further he writes, “the demand for transferring the power to the people was, therefore, an integral part of the demand for a supreme sovereign parliament”. And the Congress also realised that “both the demands could be achieved after a democratic revolution” (Amartya, Nepal ... Matbhedharu 23). So, the process envisaged was to carry out democratic revolution for the establishment of a supreme sovereign parliament, which was to work for the establishment of National Democracy. But, the Party did not opt for a “Republican” State (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 51). To carry out such a struggle the Party proposed the tactics of a “united front”. A united front of the “proletariats, peasants, middle class town people, revolutionary intellectuals and the national bourgeoisie” (53), where the proletariats and the Communist Party were to be the leaders for the document states:

In today’s democratic movement, the question as to what will be set up, capitalist democracy or National Democracy, would be decided by the role played by the Communist Party and the proletariat class in the process of a struggle. Under the leadership of the bourgeois class, even a united front of revolutionary classes would set up capitalist democracy ... but under the leadership of the working class, the outcome will be National Democracy (56).

Why was it so? The answer to the question lies in the document of the *Antar Zonal Samanjasya Samiti*. Here the Party states:

<sup>30</sup> See, Amartya Kun bato? The argument of the entire work is that the King in Nepal has been able to remain in power owing to the armoury and the army which have always been under his control.

Parliamentary democracy is not always capitalist democracy. It can also be National Democracy or People's democracy ... So to establish National Democracy in the country, the weaknesses of parliamentary democracy should be weeded out ... Parliamentary democracy should be made a representative of the revolutionary class. Then and only then the goal of National Democracy will be achieved (Antar Zone Samanjasya Samiti 16).

In such a Parliament, Amatya claims that the Third Congress decided not to include the Nepali Congress because it was “a bourgeois Party linked with the imperialists, foreign capitalists and the feudal forces” (Amatya, Nepal ... Matbhedharu 23). But, the document of the Third Congress did not rule out the possibility of aligning with the Nepali Congress, the Party with “dual character” when the struggle was against the King's autocratic rule.<sup>31</sup> However, in such tactics the NCP was to follow a policy of “unity and struggle”<sup>32</sup> vis-à-vis the Nepali Congress. The policy was to be followed in a front, probably a front from above, which was expected to lead the movement for the establishment of a supreme sovereign Parliament and “the unity forged in the process [was] to be used to establish National Democracy” (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 52). Defining the character of National Democracy, the document states:

National democratic countries are those who keep intact the political independence; oppose all imperialistic military organisations ... oppose neo- colonialism and the entry of imperialistic capital within

<sup>31</sup> See, NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 59 The Party characterises Nepali Congress as a bourgeois party. But it is a party of the Nepali bourgeoisie which is not directly linked with the party of the Indian bourgeoisie [Congress Party of India]. Since Nepal is an underdeveloped state its bourgeois class is weak so this type of bourgeois class is bound to have its relation with land further it has relations with imperialists, foreign monopoly capitalists especially Indian bourgeois class. So it has dual character. (a) Since it is a bourgeois party it is revolutionary in its relation with the dictatorial King. (b) Since it is linked with the imperialists and Indian capitalists, it does not have the capacity to free the nation from the web of the Indian capitalists and imperialists nor does it intend to free the country from the vestiges of feudalism. Hence, it can be relied in the struggle against the King's autocratic rule, but it cannot be relied in the solution of the ultimate problem of the country.

<sup>32</sup> See, NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 59–60 This tactics prescribed unity with Congress in its revolutionary ideology of fighting feudalism and the King, but struggle against its policy of compromise with Indian monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

the country ... support peoples' democratic rights and independence; support freedom of press, organisation, political parties and social organisations ... implement revolutionary land reform and ... allow the parties and social organisations in the process of forming policies (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 45).

Under such a political system, the Party felt that the major problems of Nepal, namely, the feudal structure with its attendant features like “lack of land reforms”, “absence of citizens’ freedom”, “exploitation of villagers” (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 45) will be removed and there will be development of “national trade and industry which would free the country from all imperialistic and foreign interests”. And the “Gorkha recruitment centres” will be removed and all “unequal treaties” would be ratified. Further, “unemployment of all types” would be removed and “all the areas of the nation democratised” (45–6). However, the programme of National Democracy was “so framed as to represent even the interests of the bourgeois class ... and national bourgeoisie” raising question whether it meant the interest of Nepali Congress (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 57).

In the light of the classes identified (See p. 300 ) for the revolution, it is clear that the Party then advocated an anti-imperialist strategy<sup>33</sup> where the Parliament, a bourgeois instrument was visualised as a machinery for bringing about a change, and in this process the Party tolerated unity even with the bourgeois class, the Nepali Congress and the national bourgeoisie. Was this a strategy of People’s democracy as identified by Rawal (60) and even by the NCP (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 81)? Certainly not, because the strategy which was devised by the USSR for Communist regimes established in Eastern Europe after World War II did use the Parliament; “temporarily tolerated bourgeois parties” and “proceeded cautiously with the gradual expropriation of the bourgeoisie, both urban and rural” (Windmiller, et al. 258). But, in the strategy of National Democracy adopted by the NCP though there was toleration towards the

<sup>33</sup> See, Windmiller, et al. 5 There are two basic strategies the anti-imperialist and the anti-capitalist. In the former a Communist Party aims at leading the four main classes of the community—the proletariat, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie.

bourgeoisie and also the idea of denying and therefore expropriating the Nepali Congress after the end of the struggle against the autocratic rule of the King, yet there was no idea of gradual expropriation of the national bourgeoisie, because national bourgeoisie was one of the classes that the strategy relied on. Hence, it would be wrong to equate the strategy of National Democracy, as adapted by the NCP, with that of People's democracy simply on the ground that they were both anti-imperialist strategies. Besides, while adopting the strategy of National Democracy the Party failed to consider the age for which the strategy was meant: National Democracy was a strategy meant for countries which had achieved "freedom from the imperialist" and had "remnants of feudalism" to deal with (See, p. 305). However, these situations did not inform the then conditions of Nepal. Rather than dealing with remnants of feudalism, history had posed upon the Party with the task of dealing with entrenched feudalism, because even one year after the holding of the Third Congress the Party, while criticising the Panchayat system, identified feudalism as the main hurdle in Nepal's progress towards an independent economy. Further, it held feudalism responsible for the sustenance of imperialism for it stated:

Today throughout the Asian and the African countries the main national problem is regarding the implementation of revolutionary land reform for the peasants to establish the foundation of an independent economy for rapid industrialisation ... our country [Nepal] which was exploited for centuries by the imperialists and the feudal forces wishes to progress in the path of industrialisation by destroying this vice. But this Panchayat system completely overlooks the task of destroying the hold of feudalism, which when done will make the peasants the owner of their land .... In the absence of revolutionary land reform the country will not be able to generate the zeal for independent economic development and it will be forced to invite foreign capital.... [At present] to do this [independent economic development] the Government has invited foreign capital. The Government has no policy to save national business from the competition unleashed by the entry of Indian capitalism and imperialist exploiters... (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao 1963 18–9).

This, however; is not to argue that the anti-imperialist strategy of National Democracy was not suitable for eradicating feudalism, or anti-imperialist strategy cannot be used against feudalism, but to point out that while adopting/adapting the strategy no fine thinking was resorted to: it was not clarified whether imperialism was dependent upon

feudalism or vice versa or whether they were intricately related with each other. But, the attempt was made after the adoption of the strategy indicating, thereby, the scant attention paid to the objective conditions of the nation at the time of adopting the strategy. Moreover, when the classes involved in the strategy are considered, and given the confusion that was involved in distinguishing the bourgeoisie from national bourgeoisie of Nepal, then the strategy hardly differs from the Maoist New Democratic strategy raising, thereby, a question regarding the rationale behind the adoption of the National Democratic strategy by shunning aside the Maoist strategy, which was current in the NCP documents of the 50s. No document of the NCP answers this question, the National Council's meeting of 16 June 1964 did think of addressing the stand of the Party regarding the Sino-Soviet ideological rift (NCP, Rastriya Parisadko Baithakma ... Pratibedan 21); but since the meeting failed, for reasons discussed later, there exists no authentic source to throw light upon this question except to point out, that while adopting the strategy of National Democracy, the NCP was swayed towards the Soviet side presumably to adopt and adapt a strategy that allowed for peaceful transition towards socialism: a conclusion, which is vindicated by the Party's categorical statement, that "the strategy of National Democracy was not aimed at establishing a Republican State" (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 51). This indicates that the Party was averse to a struggle which entailed a headlong collusion with the King—the kingpin of feudalism in Nepal—which would have, in all probability, necessitated a violent revolution. However, in search for a peaceful path for transition to socialism the NCP created an ambiguous strategy—a strategy which on the one hand aimed at snatching the power of the King, and on the other hand sought to keep intact the institution of monarchy to strengthen the conclusion that the NCP was aiming then at nothing more than the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. Was this all? Or were there any other reasons which prompted the NCP in adopting the strategy of National Democracy? To answer this one needs to understand the strategy as perceived by the NCP in the light of the problems faced by Nepal. The strategy of National Democracy focuses on the

situation prevailing in the world after the liberation of the many Asian, African and Latin American countries from the yoke of imperialism (Fajardo Section IV). There, the document points out that even after their liberation the liberated countries are being colonised and “the United States is the mainstay of colonialism”. So, in these countries “a determined struggle is [to be] wage[d] against imperialism and the remnants of feudalism by all patriotic forces ... united in a single national democratic front”. Thereafter, pointing out the characteristic features of a National Democratic State the document observes:

In the present historical situation ... International conditions arise in many countries for the establishment of an independent National Democracy, that is, a State which consistently upholds its political and economic independence, fights against imperialism and its military blocs, against military bases on its territory ... a State in which the people are ensured broad democratic rights and freedoms ... the opportunity to work for the enactment of an agrarian reform ... and for participation in shaping Government policy ... the Communist parties [in such states ] are working actively for a consistent completion of anti-imperialist, anti- feudal, democratic revolution.... They support those actions of national governments leading to the consolidation of the gains achieved and undermining the imperialists’ positions.

Thus, in fixing the line of supreme sovereign parliament the objective of creating an institution capable of framing State laws according to the wishes of the people certainly seems to have influenced the leaders of the Third Congress in adopting the line. Besides, what the strategy listed as the characteristic features of National Democracy, namely, National democratic State as an upholder of political and economic independence, as a State that fights against imperialism, and as a State which allows its citizen to frame policies for agrarian reform had also appealed the NCP, in believing that National democratic State would resolve its problem. So it stated:

Such National Democracy is able to solve the problems of Nepal. In the context of the present historical evolution of Nepal the following are the main goals of National Democracy: 1. (a) extermination of the feudal system and the implementation of pro-peasants land reforms. (b) Freedom of its citizens from feudal exploitation. (c) Freedom of the village peasants from ... the control of usurers. 2. Development of national trade and industry after freeing the nation from all types of imperialist and foreign interests ... 3 Closure of all Gorkha recruitment centres. 4. Abrogation of all uneven treaties ... 5 Deepening of the

Party's relationship with socialist countries ... 6 Preservation of the independence and sovereignty of Nepal, and 7. The development of the language, literature and culture of its different ethnic groups keeping in mind the interest of the nation (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 45–6)

And why were these programmes necessary? Answering this the document says:

For quite long Nepal is under the clutches of the imperialist. Along with other things, imperialism is a hurdle in the development of our country ... After freeing ourselves from it we can build our nationalism. To strengthen and to ensure the permanence of Nepal's nationalism the following things are necessary viz., early industrialisation, end of all uneven ... treaties with India ... treaties on Kosi and Gandak projects ... treaties on trade and transit ... and end of all treaties which allow the establishment of Gorkha recruitment centres. After doing this the nations should develop its trade; develop its art and culture; deepen its relationship with socialist countries (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 32).

The conformity of the programmes itemised under National Democracy especially under item 2, 4, 5 and 7 with those of the items necessary for strengthening nationalism in Nepal clarifies that the other reason, which prompted the NCP in adopting the strategy of National Democracy was its desire to strengthen the nationalism of Nepal. However, such nationalism was not simply anti-imperialist. It had other components as well, but for understanding them one has to go through one of the later documents of the Party, where the Party while dealing with the nature of programme necessary after 1960, states:

In the struggle against the dictatorial rule of the King we should consider two important issues. Firstly, we should remove from the minds of the people the delusion<sup>34</sup> that they have regarding the King. Secondly, we should strengthen the feeling of nationalism and sovereignty which is in them (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao 1963 4–5).

The same document, further clarifies the nature of nationalism which it was referring to when it states:

After the 1950–51 revolt, because of the effort of the Communist Party, and because of the changes which came in the national and international sphere, on the one hand there arose among the people of Nepal the desire to parry the pressure of Indian bourgeoisie and the

<sup>34</sup> The people were deluded in thinking that the king, because of his pro-Chinese activities, was a nationalist. They were impressed by his initiative for the construction of Kathmandu-Kodar Road.

influences of the imperialist to strengthen the nationalistic desire of national sovereignty, and on the other hand after the freedom of Tibet there grew among them the desire to improve economic relation and friendship with China to strengthen the nationalism of Nepal (4).

Therefore, for the Communists, moves which were aimed at culturing economic and friendly ties with China was also a component of Nepalese nationalism<sup>35</sup>. Besides, they advocated democracy and nationalism<sup>36</sup> as complementary ideals for they stated, “by snatching the democratic rights of the common people, nationalism cannot be strengthened. Nationalism can grow only when more and more rights are given to the people” (NCP, Rajnitik Prastao [Antar Zone] 34). However, their documents of the period do not explain the relation fully. Hence, at this point of time, the perception which guided them into seeing a relation between democracy and nationalism can perhaps be explained by their statement that the people desired a better link with China. Since, people desired such link democracy was perhaps felt necessary by the Party to bring the people’s desire into play by allowing them the freedom of expression and action. So, democracy was necessary for nationalism and so was National Democracy. But, the question is why nationalism was so important? The answer lies in what the Party had to say while analysing the behaviour of King after the 1960 coup. It stated,

The present King, Mahendra, succeeded in misleading the people even after the royal coup ... Illusions were created among the masses that the Panchayat system was suited to the soil of Nepal, that he was the symbol of neutral foreign policy and nationalism....

Realising the weakness<sup>37</sup> of the Nepali Congress ... his main opponent, on Nepal-China relations, he sought to foster friendly relations with China. He paid a state visit to China and concluded a treaty settling the

<sup>35</sup> Why pro-Chinese sentiments or decisions are the expression of nationalism is explained in p. 317

<sup>36</sup> See page 342 where one of the later faction provides a clear explanation between nationalism and democracy in Nepal.

<sup>37</sup> During this period the Nepali Congress was operating from the soil of India and was carrying out cross-border raids into Nepal. This was the weakness of Nepali Congress because such acts were perceived as pro-Indian acts.

border problem between the two countries. Besides, an agreement was signed to construct a highway linking our capital with Kodar—the gateway to the Tibetan region of China. By taking these steps the King was able to mobilise the national sentiments of the people of Nepal behind him, which became a great political weapon in his hands to combat the democratic movement (NCP, Report of Third Executive ... Committee 8).

So, the NCP perceived nationalism—the national sentiments of the people of Nepal, a pro-Chinese sentiment, as a tool for mobilising the people and by giving it implicit recognition in the Third Congress’s strategy it wanted to better its political prospects vis-à-vis the King. In what way the NCP uses nationalism is for the later documents to reveal, but at this point suffice is to say that while adopting/adapting the strategy the NCP created a few confusions. First, the confusion was regarding the name of the strategy. Though from the classes taken it was an anti-imperialist strategy, yet it could neither be fully considered as National Democratic, nor as People’s Democratic strategy<sup>38</sup>. Second, there was no clear class analysis,<sup>39</sup> as a result they could not differentiate the bourgeois element from the national bourgeoisie. Sometimes, they even considered the Nepali Congress as the bourgeoisie of Nepal, which could also be interpreted as national bourgeoisie (See footnote 31 ). Third, subsequent works of Tulsilal have created an impression that the strategy of National Democracy had absolutely rejected the role of Nepali Congress in the democratic revolution, but this was not so. However, because of this when one goes through the documents of other

<sup>38</sup> The National Democratic strategy did not match with the objective conditions of Nepal and the manner in which it was adapted it was not People’s Democracy because it did not consider the gradual expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

<sup>39</sup> In all the documents till now the NCP does not identify the major classes; their interdependence and relation of conflicts generated while producing, appropriating and distributing the surplus value. Lack of this exercise has generated a lot of debate among the Communist factions leading to differences among them. To cite one example, see NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), “Deshko Rajnitik ... Bislayshun” 19 where the faction, while criticising Pushpalal says, “Without considering the characters of Nepali Congress, Pushpalal still thinks that it represents the bourgeois class or national bourgeoisie of Nepal”. And the reasons given to deny Nepali Congress the character of national bourgeoisie is that it is connected with Indian bourgeoisie and does not look after the interest of Nepalese national capital.

Communist factions<sup>40</sup> one persistently comes across views which attest to the claims of Tulsilal creating much confusion.

#### 1.5. Birth of NCP under Pushpalal and its transformation into NCP (Marxist)

The Third Congress of the NCP, which sought to iron out the differences between the leadership failed to bring about the much sought-after unity. Even in the course of the Congress Amatya states:

Pushpalal and Com. Hikmat were against the political line of the Third Congress. Pushpalal was of the opinion that the Nepali Congress was a decisive force, so the Communists should take the political line acceptable to them. In his opinion we were not to ask for anything more than the creation of the earlier type of Parliament... (Amatya, Nepal ... Matbhedharu 24).

Then he points out that until the end “Pushpalal remained adamant” as a result he sowed the seed of fragmentation. “Rayamajhi ... rejected the line of the Darbangha Plenum, and Pushpalal, the line given by the Third Congress...” (Amatya, Nepal ... Matbhedharu 26). After the conclusion of the Third Congress, one comes across writings of these leaders loaded with recrimination and counter recriminations. Pushpalal says, “In the Third Congress we had decided to resolve differences existing within the Party ... but after the Congress, owing to Tulsilal’s relations with International revisionists, especially with Indian Dange group ... he lobbied within the Party” (Pushpalal, Itihas 126).

Similarly Tulsilal states,

It was hilarious that Pushpalal believed in a political line, which sought to transform the Communists into a lackey of the Nepali Congress ... and according to him such politics was the politics of New Democracy. For him the politics of National Democracy, which believed in the unity of entire revolutionary classes and in the completion of revolution was revisionist politics (Amatya, Nepal ... Matbhedharu 28).

To come out of these polemics the following questions need to be answered: why was Pushpalal referring to Dange? Was Tulsilal right in pointing out that Pushpalal tried to

<sup>40</sup> See, NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Krantī Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu” 40 The Party says that the Third Congress had freed the Communist movement from the Nepal Congress.

turn the NCP into a lackey of the Nepali Congress? As claimed by Tulsilal, did the politics of National Democracy seek to unite the revolutionary classes? The first question cannot be answered in view of the fact that no documentary evidence, which proves the relation between Dange and Tulsilal, exists. Similarly, the extent to which Pushpalal wanted Nepali Congress to be a party in the National Democratic strategy is reflected nowhere in his writings or in the documents of the movement. But, considering how Pushpalal perceived the political intent behind the Darbangha line (See p. 293) it is difficult to accept Tulsilal's claim that Pushpalal wanted to turn Nepal Communist Party into a lackey of the Nepali Congress. Besides, in the entire works of Pushpalal or in the documents of the Party prepared by him one does not come across any expression which supports Tulsilal's claim. Perhaps, Tulsilal was making such a claim just to denigrate Pushpalal. As regards the last question, the foregoing account yields an easy answer. As already pointed out, the NCP documents until the 60s lack class analysis and as such without understanding as to how the bourgeois class of Nepal was related with its national bourgeoisie it is difficult to agree with Tulsilal that the politics of National Democracy was seeking to unite the revolutionary classes. Finally, if one considers the document of the Third Congress, which was prepared by Tulsilal and the later documents of NCP (Pushpalal)<sup>41</sup> then one finds that both subscribed to the same tactical positions, that is to use the Nepali Congress as a force against the King. However, they did differ, as shall be discussed later, on the question of the path of revolution: peaceful path or a path of violence. Hence, Tulsilal's allegations against Pushpalal cannot be accepted for want of valid arguments.

For the balance of 1962, the NCP functioned amid differences between Tulsilal and Pushpalal. But, these differences were not confined to the leaders alone; it

<sup>41</sup> Pushpalal does not clarify his stand when he splits, but in the Fourth Conference of 1972 he clarifies that NCP was never against the tactics of using Nepali Congress. See, p. 331

had seeped even among the rank and file. Portraying this situation, the NCP (Pushpalal) document states: “By placing the strategy of National democracy and supreme sovereign Parliament in the Third Congress, they [Tulsilal and his group] unnecessarily divided the Congress into the majority and the minority groups; created differences and blunted the fighting spirit of the Party” (NCP (Pushpalal), “Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha” 53).

But, when the Party withdrew its November 11, 1962 “nationwide peaceful movement” which was supposed to be a “democratic movement” linked with “the burning national questions” (NCP, Report of Third Executive ... Committee 9), the Party did not talk about its organisational weakness rather it explained its decision by stating,

As a result of the flare up of the Sino-Indian border dispute into an actual fighting, the Central Secretariat ... called off the proposed movement on the ground that the neutral foreign policy of Nepal was being made insecure by virtue of its geographical position. The Nepalese mind was also diverted from the movement to see the outcome of the fighting (NCP, Report of Third Executive ... Committee 4).

Considering the fact that the movement was meant for solving issues of burning national questions, which in the Communist movement of Nepal is identified with issues connected with Indo-Nepal treaties, the above explanation was reasonable. But, later document of the Party added, without explaining, of course, that “there were other reasons, too” for pulling out of the movement (NCP, Report of Third Executive ... Committee 9). The other reasons were perhaps related with the Party’s organisational status, which might have influenced its decision for withdrawing the movement. Because, by then the organizational issue had really turned into a significant one for the fact that even in the first quarter of 1963, the concern of the Party was regarding its consolidation for carrying on its struggle. So, Pushpalal observed that the Third Executive (Extended) Committee meeting was called “to bring unity within the Party” (Pushpalal, Itihas 127). The meeting was held in April 1963 and its document read:

At the extended meeting the Central Executive Committee (CEC) discussed cardinal issues pertaining to the consolidation of the Party, and advancement of the democratic struggle and establishment of all the democratic and patriotic forces. The meeting took a number of decisions affecting these questions. The aim of these discussions is to lay down a suitable tactical line, both political and organisational, and to restore democracy in Nepal in place of the present Panchayat system which deprives the people of all their political rights (NCP, Report of Third Executive ... Committee 3).

The tactical line, both political and organisational, which were “placed” by “Com. Puspa Lal”<sup>42</sup> discussed issues as to “how... The policy [of the Party should be taken] to the masses”; “how to reorganise Party committees, and how to materialise the principle of collectivism”. As regards the tactics, the document also explained “the need and importance of building a united front consisting of all the democratic and patriotic elements in the country” (5). It called upon all to “maintain unity even with those elements who [differed] with [the NCP] on the question of future political arrangement for Nepal, but [wanted] to fight for political liberties” (5–6).

But, there was no change in the strategy. The document titled “political resolution”, which was tabled by Amartya stressed upon “the decision of the Third Party Congress” to “stand for ... National Democracy and a supreme sovereign Parliament and for transferring of all legislative and executive powers ... to the people’s representative body”. Further, it observed, “owing to the set-back to the democratic movement ... there is no possibility of launching a big political movement in the country at present” (5).

From these statements certain facts come to light. The Party sought to achieve unity through the implementation of the resolutions on tactical line. And this tactical line was both political and organisational. Since, the main goal of its political tactics then was to fight for political liberties, its political tactics was to unite even with those elements ‘who differed’ on the question of political patterns on the assumption that all forces would agree to work for liberty—a move towards the democratisation of Nepal.

<sup>42</sup> Pushpalal is the standard form but at times the name is spelled even as Pushpa Lal.

And the organisational tactics, as it was called, was for strengthening the principle of collectivism. What were these principles? The report of the Third Executive (Extended) Committee fails to clarify its elements and how the Party sought to achieve it. However, later document representing one of the NCP factions, the Pushpalal faction, gives some direction towards understanding as to what the phrase could have possibly meant. It probably meant democratic centralism for the document stated: “Even, at that point of time, the minority group stressed upon the need for establishing democratic centralism to resolve Party differences through discussion ... In this direction the Third Executive (Extended) Committee meeting played a crucial role” (NCP (Pushpalal), “Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha” 55). Thus, principle of collectivism, in their understanding, meant democratic centralism and democratic centralism meant resolving issues through discussion. This understanding, that the Party was stressing on democratic centralism which meant resolving issues through discussion finds its support in another document of 1963. In it, describing the then status of the Party organisation the document portrays of a situation where discussions on important issues, within the Party, were a rarity for it says:

Today we have to remove the various illusions circling around in the Party. After the Third Congress the Party organisation has weakened because of our failure to discuss and analyse the politics of the past pro-King, opportunist leadership and the politics, strategy and constitution approved by the Third Congress (NCP, Tatkalik Karyaniti 1963 4–5).

Besides, the same document indicates that there was a break in the Party structure for it says, “Today it is essential to establish a planned, continuous contact among the different Party committees running from top to bottom” (NCP, Tatkalik Karyaniti 1963 5), indicating, by it, that such contacts did not exist. However, given the fact that the Party ultimately fragmented, it appears that it could never put to practice its idea of democratic centralism. During this phase when it was organisationally weak the Party sought to implement its tactics of heightening contradiction within the Panchayat structure and to reveal the class character of the King. Characterising the “National Panchayat ... [as] cover for the dictatorial rule of the King” its document said that

National Panchayat is “no more than an advisory body” where “the members ... have to seek permission from the King ... prior to moving any important Bill” (NCP, Tatkalik Karyaniti 1963 10). So, it is in “contradiction ... [with] the entire democratic forces” including those “who had imagined [that] the King would restore democratic rights gradually, [and] who had appealed the King to grant political rights within the framework of the Panchayat system ... and ... had pleaded for ‘Controlled Democracy’”. Besides, “unemployment” the “daily worsening” condition of the peasants, “nepotism and corruption ... in the administration” and “imperialist penetration ... and domination of Indian capitalist” (11) have brought the people in contradiction with the system. So, to heighten these “contradictions of the Panchayat system [and to] build a broad based movement of the masses from below” (12) the Party listed 15 political tactics. These tactics included “fight for immediate relief to the peasants from ... legal and illegal exploitation”; fight against “entry of foreign private capital with a view to protecting ... national capital”, fight for “employment of rural as well as urban youth”, fight for “living wages to workers in fields and factories”, fight against “all unequal treaties”, fight for “release of ... political prisoners”, legalisation of “political parties”, “rights of assembly” etcetera (NCP, Tatkalik Karyaniti 1963 12–3). But then, its statement, that “there is no possibility of launching a big political movement in the country at present” goads one to ask question regarding the nature of the movement that the Party had decided to launch by implementing its political tactics. The answer lies in what the Party had to say in its “Political Proposal” where it states:

It is a wrong assessment of the objective political condition to think [at present] that the entire classes and the people can jointly launch a big political movement. Such assessment done in a hurry will weaken the democratic forces, and will indirectly support the King. This is because until now... the character of the King, his class interest and the nature of the Panchayat system has not been fully revealed (NCP, Rajnaitik Prastao 1963 21).

Thus, in 1963 the NCP was not aiming at sea change in politics, but its actions were limited to the level of carrying out propaganda—propaganda to heighten the

contradictions<sup>43</sup> of the political system and to reveal the class character of the King. In its view, these tactics, as it document put it, were “a preparation for strengthening democracy against the system to launch a big political movement in future” (NCP, Tatkalik Karyaniti 1963 3). In this preparatory phase, the Party expected to contact people using “the rights available within the Panchayat system” and “open alignments with all those who believed in political freedom” (6, 7). This included even those whose hopes in “the progressive introduction of political rights under the Panchayat system” were belied (8). It wanted to bring all together, because it believed that “disunity among the democratic forces was the fountainhead of the King’s power” (9). Thus, the acid test for recognising the democratic forces was simply the groups’ belief in the need for restoring political freedom. To draw them together the Party believed in “appealing” the democratic forces, and such “appeal was to be backed by the power of the people” (9 and 10). This meant that the Party then charted out a course in increasing contacts and convincing people regarding the necessity for such tactics.

In this phase, the Party decided “to use even minor issues to rig movements for the cause of democracy” (10). But, it cautioned “we should raise movements only on those issues where victory is assured”. Because, only then it hoped to raise “the morale of the people ... and bring the revolutionaries together” (14). While carrying out these movements, the Party observed “we should make use of the legal instruments available in the system” (13). So, the tactics which the Party advocated then was for constitutional movements, whose primary goal was to inform the people about the need for more liberty. Had the document not stated that the then movement for liberty was for leading a larger movement, a movement against the system, then it would have created a problem in differentiating the Communists from those who had

<sup>43</sup> See, NCP, Tatkalik Karyaniti 1963 11 The party points out that in times to come contradictions such as demand for more powers to the Rastriya Panchayat and issues of corruption and nepotism in the works of Zonal and District Panchayats as well as the demands of class organisations for greater freedom would emerge as major contradictions. The party should utilise these contradictions to develop movements.

pinned their hopes in a Panchayat system with more political freedom. However, by addressing to such nuances the Party protected itself from sliding towards the politics of Rayamajhi faction, but despite this finesse the document reflected of a situation: a situation where the Party was desperately in need for mobilising forces by ascribing too broad a meaning to the term democratic. This was not the meaning which later factions of the movement were ready to accept (See, p. 364). Needless to say, that this democratic force even included the “students and urban youths [with dual class character] who had, in the past, played a significant role in the democratic movement of the nation” (14). The Party identified them as a class “readily available as groups who could be easily mobilised” and in “whom it could easily inculcate political consciousness” (16). As for the peasants, the suggested tactics was “to infuse in them the desire for class struggle” (17). And it did not discount the role of the bourgeoisie in its projected movement for it stated:

When different sections of the society... are involved in the political movement ... then the different political thought streams will certainly try to influence the course of the movement ... and the present regime will, in a bid to subjugate the movement, sop the representatives of the bourgeois thought processes ... and the bourgeoisie fearing the rise in the movement, will also be ready to enter into a compromise ... this will weaken the movement (NCP, Tatkalik Karyaniti 1963 20).

To check such probable outcome of the movement the Party, therefore, maintained the need for following a policy of “unity and struggle” in the united front. Thereafter, it said, “Even after the establishment of democracy we have to work towards the widening of democracy by uprooting feudalism and strengthening the foundations of independent economic development” (21). But, for widening democracy it states:

Since 1950, there has been a rise in nationalism. The main foundation of this nationalism is in the neutral foreign policy of Nepal between its two neighbours. So we have been opposing the policy of Indian Government which tries to keep Nepal under its economic, political and military control<sup>44</sup>. But the bourgeois forces of Nepal ... especially

<sup>44</sup> Because such arrangement forces Nepal to function according to the dictate of India.

the Nepali Congress, having failed to maintain the neutrality,<sup>45</sup> has allowed the King in projecting himself as a protector of nationalism ... But nationalism and democracy are complementary, because without nationalism there cannot be democracy, and without democracy there cannot be nationalism (21–2).

Then it says, “In the present period, when these elements [the Nepali Congress] have failed in raising the issue of nationalism and democracy as complementary ideals, we should move forward and if we do so we will emerge as a national Party” (23), indicating, thereby, that nationalism and democracy were being considered as ideals to mobilise forces. Besides, indicating such tactics of the Party the statements have another importance: they bring out, implicitly, of course, yet another dimension of NCP’s concept of nationalism, and this dimension is perhaps related with its idea of neutrality. In common parlance neutrality in case of Nepal means maintenance of equidistance from its two neighbours and the following of a foreign policy uninfluenced by them. But, in the analysis of the NCP there exists an imperial relation between the Government of India and Nepal. As such, one hardly comes across an instance of the Government of India’s act, which has been perceived by the NCP as an act which is not influenced by India’s desire to control Nepal. Therefore, the statement of the NCP that it opposes the policies of the Indian Government which tries to control it means, in essence, its objection to the use of the imperial relation in forcing Nepal to act against its will. Therefore, neutrality in the context of Nepal refers to its ability to function without being coerced by the superiority which India enjoys by virtue of its imperial relation with Nepal. Contrary to this, Nepal does not have such relation with China; hence any decision/act of Nepal in relation to China is free from coercion so it enjoys freedom in such acts. Such acts are, therefore, neutral stances, an expression of sovereignty and nationalism of Nepal.

According to another document<sup>46</sup> of the Party, the Third EEC’s Political

<sup>45</sup> It is in reference to the border raids which Subarna Shamsher started after the coup, and in it the communists perceived the support of the Indian Government.

<sup>46</sup> See, NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 11 This document was prepared by Gurung

Proposal and tactical line were accepted by “everyone, even by those who were in jail”. Hence, “to keep up this optimistic upbeat among the members of the Party”, the document says, “the ... Secretariat held a meeting ... and decided to focus upon organisational issues and upon removing the pro-King ideology spread by Rayamajhi group (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 6). Explaining further the reason behind the holding of the Secretariat meeting, the NCP (Pushpalal) document states:

... As per the decision of the Executive Committee the meeting of the Secretariat was held to remove the lack of faith among the members of the Secretariat ... and to infuse the spirit of teamwork among its members, the absence of which had, from the time of the Third Congress, stalled the progress of the Party organisational work (NCP (Pushpalal), “Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha” 55–6).

This meeting passed a six-point disciplinary resolution and a three-month organisational programme. Among the six-point resolutions, the most important ones were those which called for “intra-Party discussion on debatable issues to find a common point”, “an end to the practice of publicising intra-Party differences outside the committees [where they were supposed to be discussed]” and “a need for establishing amicable relation between the two old leaders of the Party”, that is, Pushpalal and Tulsilal (56).

The same meeting also decided to place “the Central Office under Com. PL and Com. TL” (56). The three-month organisational programme was chalked out “keeping in view the most urgent organisational tasks necessary for strengthening the Party” (NCP, Rastriya Parisadko Baithakma ... Pratibedan 13). This programme stressed upon the need for ensuring “extensive study of all-Party documents published after the Third Congress”, “proper links among the committees”, “increase in Party membership ... without diluting class contradictions and class consciousness” and “creation of jail fund” (13–4).

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[Pushpalal] for discussion in the Seventh EEC meeting.

In the meantime, cracks developed in the Rayamajhi group. According to the NCP version, Rayamajhi had joined the “Privy Council” [Raj Sabha] despite his group’s objection. What transpired thereafter is not clear, but Rayamajhi is reported to have conspired with the authorities to jail his earlier colleagues D. P Adhikari and Sambhuram Shrestha when they arranged “a meeting ... [on] July 22 to censure Mr Majhi for his ... activities”. Sambhuram was arrested but D. P Adhikari could plan his escape towards “Varanasi”, where he issued “a ... statement ... [accusing] Mr Majhi of his complete walk over to the camp of the King against democracy in Nepal” (NCP, “More ... Raimajhi’s Anti-Party Activities” 20). And despite D. P’s reservations against the “Third Congress’s activities” he is reported to have “entered into an agreement with the Secretariat of the NCP” to “work jointly towards revealing the wrong policies of Rayamajhi” (NCP, Rastriya Parisadko Baithakma ... Pratibedan 20).

After that the Party decided to hold a meeting of its Rastriya Parishad.<sup>47</sup> It was called on 16 June 1964, but when a few of its members, because of confusions regarding the venue, went astray the meeting could not achieve its “quorum” hence it was converted into the Fourth Executive (Extended) Committee meeting (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 6). According to the document, the Rastriya Parishad meeting had been called to “vote for the political line given by the Darbangha Plenum and especially to discuss thoroughly the organisational issues and the ideological differences of the Party with the pro-King opportunistic tendencies”. But, when Tulsilal “objected to the report<sup>48</sup> passed by the Secretariat ... the meeting fizzled out” (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 7).

<sup>47</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), “Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha” 61 According to the Third Congress Constitution, the meeting of this body was to be held in between the party congresses, and this inter-congress meeting was considered the highest forum of discussion in the absence of the Congress.

<sup>48</sup> This report refers to the document. Rastriya Parisadko Baithakma Kendriya Mantriparisadlay Peshgareko Pratibedan

What were Tulsilal's objections? The document prepared by Gurung [Pushpalal] does not clarify the nuances involved in Tulsilal's objections except to report Tulsilal's statement against the document of the Third EEC meeting. He is reported to have said that "the Third EEC document was passed under pressure" (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 7). Thereafter, the document reports about the Fifth EEC meeting, where Tulsilal is said to have resigned on "grounds of his failure to work with the then members of the Secretariat" (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 9). Under such circumstances, possibly to assuage Tulsilal, the document states that the "Secretariat then ... handed over the entire responsibility of the Central office to Tulsilal" (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 10). Commenting further on the failures of the Executive (Extended) Committee meetings the document says:

All these dampened the spirit of the comrades and in the Sixth EEC meeting there were only 10 members and the quorum was reached by only one. This meeting decided to hold the Fourth Congress; and in view of the tussle between the Secretariat and the General Secretary the responsibility to prepare the basic documents for discussion were given to TL ... But the basic documents were never prepared ... so when the possibility of holding the Fourth Congress seemed remote the Seventh EEC meeting was called (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 10).

These meetings must have taken place in between 16 June 1964 and 15 September 1966.<sup>49</sup> However, when the Seventh EEC meeting was called Rawal says, Tulsilal "boycotted" it and the "Central Working Committee split into two groups of 6 and 11 members" (62). As a result, the possibility of any future meetings turned remote. Nevertheless, the document prepared by Gurung [Pushpalal] and a booklet authored

<sup>49</sup> No documents of these meetings are available and the dates of these meetings are not mentioned even in the document prepared by Gurung [Pushpalal] for the Seventh Executive (Extended) Committee meeting. See, NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 8 the date of the Fourth Executive (Extended) Committee meeting is clear. It was held on 16th June 1964. Tulsilal Amatya's work, *Janabadi Kranti Ya Sansodhanbad*, see, Amatya 18 dates the document prepared by Pushpalal to 1966. This work of Amatya is dated 15 September 1966. It criticises the document prepared by Pushpalal. Hence, Pushpalal must have prepared the document anywhere between January 1966 to 15 September 1966. So, the Seventh EEC meeting was also supposed to be held in between these dates. As for the 5th and the 6th EEC meetings they must have been conducted in between the period 16 June 1964 to December 1965.

by Tulsilal— Kun Bato ?—during the period bring out the differences which existed between them ever since the holding of the Third Congress. According to Tulsilal, there were two views current in the Party after the Third Congress. One of them admitted that the “The Political Proposal of the Third Congress had given the Party the task of moving towards National Democracy after completing democratic revolution”. It had also given “the Party the task of marshalling people’s support for the creation of supreme sovereign parliament” (Amatya, Kun Bato ? 52). But, according to him there was a second view of “A few friends”, who considered “the politics given by the Third Congress as radical. So, they wanted to keep aside the Third Congress strategy and limit the activities of the Party within the ambit of possible politics” (Amatya, Kun Bato ? 53). Then he states, “The discussion of the Secretariat [held before the Third EEC] had decided that the resolution of the Third EEC should try to accommodate both these views” (53). But, contrary to such understanding, Amatya quotes the resolution of the Third EEC to point out that it contained the following:

... The Communist Party of Nepal is firmly opposed to the Panchayat system and stands for the democratic system. But, in the changed political situation the Party does not visualise the possibility of launching a big political movement against the system immediately. The immediate tasks of the CPN are to try to accelerate all the inherent contradictions of the Panchayat system and build a broad based movement of the masses from below on the basis of ... economic, national and political demands (Amatya, Kun Bato ? 57).

Commenting on the above paragraph of the resolution he then states:

This paragraph opposes the Panchayat system ... and focuses on the need to replace the Panchayat system by the democratic system .... But, nowhere it indicates the necessity for completing the National Democratic revolution, nor does it state about the nature of the Parliament. As such it means nothing more than establishing the old type of Parliament (Amatya, Kun Bato ? 57–8).

In sum, Tulsilal argues that the resolution of the Third EEC, which was supposed to be a compromised resolution had, “shelved the revolutionary politics given by the Third Congress” by not stating “the strategy”, and that it “limited the range of politics to struggles meant for the achievement of parliamentary democracy whose nature was

also not clarified in accordance with the line given by the Third Congress” (59). This was perhaps true. Pushpalal’s tilt towards the line of only parliamentary democracy is revealed even in the content of the document prepared by him for discussion in the Seventh EEC meeting. In it, he firstly quotes from Lenin’s work “State and Revolution” profusely to support the view that the “working class” needs “political liberties for its emancipation” (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 58) to finally say:

Quoted above are the statements made by Lenin during the formative stages of the Party and later. In essence, they imply that when there is an autocratic system in existence then ‘The vital task of the workers’ Party—the Communist Party—is to work for political liberty ... because only in course of such a struggle the workers will become powerful and will be able to establish democracy (66) .

Then he points out that even after “The December coup, the Darbhanga Plenum had voted in favour for the establishment of parliamentary democracy” and quotes a paragraph from the Appeal sent by Tulsilal after the formation of Antar Zonal Samanjasya Samiti, where he is said to have stated, “parliamentary democracy is the only system where people can form their Government ... the right to form and dissolve governments is in the hand of the people” (66, 67). Thereafter, he quotes a letter received, after the Third Congress of the NCP, from General Secretary, Ajoy Ghosh of the CPI where he is said to have stated that:

If the CPN [NCP] did not struggle for parliamentary democracy, [then] history will not forgive us and that there would be nobody even to spit upon the Communist Party. Democracy will come, sooner or later and when it would come it would be the Nepali Congress that had gained at the failure of the Communist Party (71–2).

On the strength of the above quotations; he then concludes, “In the present political crisis of the nation no one can, therefore, have a second opinion regarding the need for parliamentary democracy” clarifying, thereby, his position that he was against the political line given by the Third Congress which had voted in favour of a supreme sovereign Parliament, and that his political line was still the line of the Darbhanga Plenum, which was only for the restoration of Parliamentary system (NCP, Hamro Mul Bato 72). Since Pushpalal held such position even in 1966, Tulsilal Amatya’s

claim, that Pushpalal while preparing the resolution of the Third EEC focused only on the politics of parliamentary democracy disregarding the strategy given by the Third Congress, seems to be vindicated. But, given the fact that the resolution of the Third EEC is not in hand the whole discussion enables one to understand the nature of controversy between the two leaders without reaching a firm conclusion.

The controversy; however, had its toll. The movement was beset with a number of problems. Identifying them, the NCP (Pushpalal) document Circular 1/ 3 itemised eight issues. Chief among them were the “lack of clarity [among the leaders] regarding politics [strategy]”, “the absence of democratic centralism owing to lack of organisational discipline”, and “the prevalence of tendencies [among rank and file] to form units on regional basis<sup>50</sup>” (NCP (Pushpalal), Circular No. 1/3 3). Hence, in 1965, as Rawal reports, the “Purva Kosi Prantiya Committee, with the help of the CPI held its conference in Katihar to function as independent unit and like organisations sprang up in Dang and Pyuthan” (65–6). Similarly, “in 1966 the Bagmati Prantiya committee rejected the politics [strategy] fixed by the Third Congress” (Rawal 65). Of these independent units, the Purva Kosi Prantiya committee, to be described later, gave birth to the Jhapa movement (See p. 345). But, the immediate reaction against the problems was reflected in the activities of three members of the Secretariat and three members of the Central Committee of the Third Congress. The three members of the Secretariat, namely, “Pushpalal, Hikmat Singh and Devendralal” along with “three members of the Central Committee namely Balaram Upadhayaya, Ekdev Alay and Premprakash” took to themselves the task of putting into effect five-point objectives (Pushpalal, Itihas 136). These objectives were: “1. To stall regionalism. 2. To restore democratic centralism within the Party. 3. To organise [a Party] on the basis of a clear strategy. 4. To establish a Party centre. 5. To create a ... Party which would identify

<sup>50</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), Tesro Sammelanko Aitihāsik Mahatwa 21 These units rationalised their actions on the ground of the existence of a non-functional central leadership.

feudalism and imperialism as its main enemy and function primarily among the peasants” (NCP (Pushpalal), Circular No. 1/3 3). This necessitated the formation of a “Central Organising Committee” to “draft the Party document *Singhawalokan*” and “... to publish a monthly Party organ<sup>51</sup> ‘Nepal-Patra’ and its English edition ‘Nepal-Tribune’” (NCP (Pushpalal), Tesro Sammelanko Aitihāsik Mahatwa 6). When the document and the Party organ made its round throughout Nepal, the Party held its convention in Bhadra 2024<sup>52</sup> [August/September 1967]. The convention “passed the *Singhawalokan* as a draft document” to be “circulated among the different committees”. The convention expected the committees “to read the document and to send one representative each with its advice in the third conference” (10). “In May 15, 1968”, in Gorakhpur (an Indian town bordering South of Nepal), the faction then held its third conference (Pushpalal, Itihas 143). It was aimed at forming a Party wedded to the ideals of armed peasant revolution for its document stated:

The main objective of this conference is to counter the revisionist, the regionalist and the opportunist ... tendencies prevalent in the Party after the Third Congress ... and to form a revolutionary Party equipped with Maoist ideology aimed at achieving armed peasant revolution (NCP (Pushpalal), Tesro Sammelanko Aitihāsik Mahatwa 15).

Providing greater details regarding the reasons behind the formation of the Party, the document further said:

The developments informing the national and international situations are not going to halt when we are involved in our inner party struggle. They demand our opinion.... For that we have to declare the formation of our Party to clarify our ideological position; to state our strategy and tactics....

As Party members and as the members of the leading committees of the Party, we used all means; constitutional and conventional to resolve the inner party struggle ... but when Tulsilal and his colleagues failed to respond we had no choice but to declare the formation of the Party.

For quite some time ... the people of the country are facing novel problems under the Panchayati system ... under such conditions our colleagues and Party supporters are interested to function under a clear

<sup>51</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), “Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha” 71 These editions of the party organ were circulated with the intention to make it known both at the national and international level the ideology of the new group.

<sup>52</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), Tesro Sammelanko Aitihāsik Mahatwa 9

policy directive of the Party. But owing to the lack of clear Party policy there are misunderstandings going around regarding the Party ... our colleagues are under the influence of revisionist Tulsilal.... This needs to be stopped (11–2).

... Today on account of the lack of centralised Party directives spontaneous student and peasant movements<sup>53</sup> are on the rise. For centralising those movements and for unifying them it is necessary to declare the formation of the Party (12).

But what it stated while describing the mood of the conference raises question regarding the process that might have gone in adopting the strategy: it seems that the Party, while adopting the strategy, considered it also as a tool for mobilisation for it states:

The great cultural revolution which is going on today in China has influenced our people in Nepal: great is the influence of Mao's ideology here. Because of this thousand of our youths are interested in a strong Communist Party based on Maoist ideology. They are ready to join its rank and file. In this conference, the new friends who are present testify to the fact. Under such condition it will be easier for us to organise our Party (13).

In the conference, the Party passed two documents, namely, *Nepal Communist Partyko Aatharaha Barshako Krantikari Sangharsako Singhawalokan Awam Siksha* and *Naya Janabadi Karyakram: (Nepali Krantiko Ekmatra Mulbato)*. The former document is a survey of the Communist movement in Nepal from its inception. The survey was carried out with a view to “add momentum” to the movement, and to “draw lessons” for future (NCP (Pushpalal), “Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha” 1). In it, the Party describes the entry of revisionism and its development within the movement. And in the process it explains the reasons behind the fragmentation of the Nepal Communist movement; explains the NCP (Pushpalal) faction's objections against the strategy of the Third Congress and clarifies its stand on the Sino-Soviet rift contributing, thereby, to the analytical framework of the narrative.

<sup>53</sup> The party was probably referring to the incipient Jhapa movement, which in the beginning was a spontaneous student/peasant movement.

Explaining revisionism as the cause behind the fragmentation of the Communist movement in Nepal from 2010/2012 (1954–1955), and by way of stating its disapproval of the Russian Communist Party, whom it perceived as the revisionists, the NCP (Pushpalal) faction clarifies its stand on Sino-Soviet rift by stating,

... In short today it is essential to determine the role of the working class in the prospective bourgeois democratic revolution of Nepal. From Lenin's period the question has created much controversy among the Marxists. Even today, in the international level, this question is the issue of controversy among the Marxist-Leninists. Also in our Party this question has generated controversy since 2010/2012 [1954–55]. Today there are many splinters within our Party, but closer look reveals that these splinters are divided into representatives of two broad ideologies. Between these, one group advocates the leadership of the working class in the prospective bourgeois democratic revolution of Nepal; and the other group, the role of the bourgeoisie in the revolution. The revisionists<sup>54</sup> do not agree with the role of the leadership of the working class in the revolution, but the Marxist-Leninists consider working class leadership in the revolution as an essential element. Today, if the entire group of the revisionists of Nepal are in favour of the revisionist Communist Party of Russia, the Marxist-Leninists of Nepal are inclined towards the Chinese Communist Party which is under the leadership of comrade Mao (NCP (Pushpalal), "Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha" 3).

Arguing against the Third Congress's strategy, the Party observes:

In the political proposal published in the name of third Party Congress, the reasons for adopting the strategy of National Democracy is stated in the following lines 'the policies of King Mahendra's Panchayat democracy instead of resolving the fundamental problems of the nation is pushing it towards underdevelopment. Instead of ensuring rapid industrialisation, it is allowing foreign capital to loot the nation ... so today every countryman has to think whether there is an alternative to the capitalist path of development. Hence, all the underdeveloped countries of the world are following a path different from the capitalist path for their development'.

From the above quotation it is clear that ... the Third Congress's non-capitalist strategy of National Democracy was infused only with the purpose of bringing about rapid industrialisation of the nation (33–4).

Further the document states,

<sup>54</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), "Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha" 12 Revisionism in the ideological front denies the leadership role of the working class, and in the organisational front rejects democratic centralism, and emphasises on the possibility of resolving social contradictions through peaceful means. Revisionism is the bourgeois thought trend that sprouts in the proletariat led movement.

Explaining the importance of the strategy [the political proposal] said such National Democratic strategy has appeared as historic necessity to resolve our fundamental problems. In the context of Nepal the main points [which the strategy will resolve] ... are: 1 (a) the destruction of feudalism and the [implementation of] land reform in the interest of the peasants.... (10) It will ensure entire rights and liberty (speech, press, association and social organisation) to the people by opposing all sorts of dictatorial rule and will enable the people to participate in the policy-making function of the State (34).

The only purpose behind quoting all the points is to point out that these issues especially the one under point 10 makes it clear that the Government formed under the national democratic strategy will not be a Government, which will represent the working class instead it will allow them only to pressurise the Government from outside... (35).

Then taking exceptions to the statement of the third Party Congress's strategy that "the strategy of National Democracy will be acceptable even to the Nepali Congress", the bourgeois Party of our nation the Party observes that "the strategy was not meant for ... bringing about socialism" in Nepal (35). By this the Party probably meant to say that the strategy was in the interest of the bourgeoisie.

Lastly, it states, "In page 51 of the political proposal, they [Tulsilal and others] are exposed when they say, 'that the demand for all powerful sovereign parliament is not a demand for Republic' ... The meaning is clear [they were for] constitutional democracy. As such, there is no difference between the thinking of traitor Rayamajhi and Tulsilal" (38). However, in the other document *Naya Janabadi Karyakram: (Nepali Krantiko Ekmatra Mulbato)* the Party dubs Tulsilal group as the representatives of "neo-revisionists" (NCP (Pushpalal), "Janabadi Karyakram" 253) by which it meant those "who believed in vanquishing the forces of imperialism through economic competition and of achieving socialism through peaceful means" (237). But, more interesting in its former document is the answer to the question why revisionism spread its hold in the Communist Party of Nepal. The answer is interesting, because it indicates partially the social base of the movement, especially after the 1950 revolt, making it evident that since its inception the movement was influenced by the entry of the deprived middle class for the document states:

Before 1950 and after, when the bourgeois class of Nepal was following a policy of compromise within Nepal with the feudal forces, and outside, with the monopoly capitalists, especially the monopoly capitalists of India, the middle class radical forces became dissatisfied

and turned towards the NCP as a result the membership of the Party swelled in the cities. Thereafter, when the Party began spreading its revolutionary policy among the peasants revisionist ideas poured forth from that class [the middle class]. In the present day campaign of modernising Nepal, a campaign which is necessary to protect the interest of the exploiting class, a section of middle class of Nepal is enjoying the fruit of the campaign. This section at present is either with the Nepali Congress or with the King. But the condition of the other section of the class is ever degrading. So, elements coming from this section support bourgeois democratic revolution. This is the social base of revisionism in Nepal (NCP (Pushpalal), “Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha” 75)..

In Its other document, *Naya Janabadi Karyakram: (Nepali Krantiko Ekmatra Mulbato)* the Party presents its New Democratic strategy and the tactics. In the decision for adopting the strategy though the influence of the Sino-Soviet rift and the tilt of the Party towards the Chinese line must have weighed heavy, yet it was not the sole determinant, for the Party did identify the historical stage of Nepalese society, and the nature of the revolution to argue its case for adopting the strategy for it said:

Because of the exploitation of the Palace led feudal class of Nepal and international capitalism, especially the Indian monopoly capital and American imperialism, the social condition of our country is still semi-colonial and semi-feudal ... Hence the goals of our revolution today [are]: (1) To exterminate the Panchayat system which is functioning as the citadel of feudal exploitation,<sup>55</sup> and (2) To destroy foreign monopoly capitalism especially the Indian monopoly capital and American imperialism. Hence the nature of our revolution is anti-feudal; anti-imperialist. This revolution will be led by the proletariat and it will be based upon the unity of the proletariat-peasants and the entire revolutionary classes (266).

<sup>55</sup> See NCP (Pushpalal), “Janabadi Karyakram” 256 The party argues that feudal exploitation is the root cause of all problems. It points out that because of the feudal land relation there is exploitation of the most numerous class, the peasants’ class. So their exploitation has emerged as the pressing problem of the Nepalese society. Their exploitation can be removed by implementing land reform, and when there is land reform and the peasants are made the owners of land there will be more production; increase in wealth, and investment in industries. At present the feudal system, the document says, invites foreign capital for the establishment of industries, hence the country is in the clutches of the imperialists. So the end of feudalism will also bring about an end to imperialism.

From our past national movements it is proved that in this new historical age<sup>56</sup>the bourgeoisie of Nepal cannot lead this anti-feudal, anti-imperial revolution ... only the Communist Party of the working class can lead it ... It will not be the old type of bourgeois democratic revolution, but a new<sup>57</sup> type of ... revolution. It will destroy feudalism and imperialism; establish socialist economy, and pave the way towards the establishment of socialism (266).

... It will establish a socialist Republic under the proletariat-peasants leadership ... (NCP (Pushpalal), “Janabadi Karyakram” 267).

Thereafter, to identify the classes who are in favour and against the strategy, it presents its “class analysis.” But the class analysis, which is based upon “the power position of the classes” (288) do not qualify as class analysis acceptable to the Marxist tradition, where such analysis considers the roles of different classes in the creation, appropriation and distribution of surplus value in specific class structure. Therefore, the analysis presented in the document can, at best, pass out as the social analysis of the then Nepal. On the basis of such analysis, the document then identifies the feudal landlord, comprador bourgeoisie and the high officials engaged in the administration of the nation as the enemies of the strategy. And the allies of the strategy are identified as the proletariats, the peasants, the urban middle class, the literate class, the low wage employees, the retail traders, artisans; the section of the society involved in illicit activities and the section of the national bourgeoisie opposed to the intrusion of foreign capital in Nepal (288–9).

To achieve its transitional goal of new democracy, the Party then clarifies its tactics of uniting all the forces, which are against the Panchayat system for it states:

<sup>56</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), “Janabadi Karyakram” 267 Like Mao the new historical age is referred to as a period characterised by the rise of Socialism and the fall of Capitalism.

<sup>57</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), “Janabadi Karyakram” 267 The party, like Mao, points out that the New democratic strategy is a strategy for the establishment of democracy of the new type, because it will be established in the new historical age and it will come into existence as a result of a revolt led by the proletariat. However, the document fails to underscore the fact that Mao’s strategy of New democracy was new also because it was being implemented in a historical phase of a society which was semi-feudal and semi-colonial, a phase distinct from the feudal phase identified in classical Marxism.

Today our enemies are feudalism, imperialism and Indian capitalism. The feudal autocratic Panchayat system is its protective citadel. In the present context, [the Panchayat system] is the common enemy. Hence our tactics today should be to forge unity among all classes which exhibit contradiction [in their relation] with the Panchayat system, and we should focus our entire strength in raising movements against the system (300)..

How did the Party plan to raise movements against the system? The document does not clearly answer this question instead it prescribes that the Party should “give directions to all the spontaneous movements” emerging in the nation, and that it should direct its entire energy in forging the “unity among the allies” (302, 304), where such unity was to result in the formation of a united front consisting only of the classes opposed to the Panchayat system for it stated:

In the past our Party formed united front based on the unity of political parties. Experience has proved that such policy [of forming united front] was wrong. By united front we should, in the main, understand the unity among the classes. United front refers to the unity of classes which are opposed to the main enemy. The allies mentioned in the strategy ... are the ones who can form the united front. In the present context a united front is to be formed among all the classes who are opposed to the feudal ... Panchayat system (304).

Therefore, the tactics of the Party, at that point of time, was limited to the mobilisation of forces against the Panchayat system, the main enemy. But, the document did not state clearly as to whether the Nepali Congress was to be a party in the united front. And though the idea of nationalism was not woven around the strategy as it was done in the Third Congress document, it can be argued that the idea did inform the strategy. This becomes clear when the Party’s position on national unity under the New Democratic system is considered. In it the idea of nationalism, national independence and the establishment of independent national economy were considered the basis of national unity; where independent economy was the product of nationalism and national independence, and where nationalism and national independence were the outcome of the extermination of feudalism and nationalisation of foreign capital for its document stated:

National unity in the present age can be achieved only in the long drawn struggle of the entire revolutionary class and the people

organised under the leadership of the proletariat. Under the New Democratic strategy the long drawn revolution; while exterminating feudalism, nationalising foreign capital aimed at protecting nationalism and independence shall establish an independent economy. [And such revolution] will form the basis of national unity (NCP (Pushpalal), “Janabadi Karyakram” 286).

Answering the question as to how the revolution would engender national unity the document points out to the “equality”, that it would create in the political, economic, cultural and religious front of the society, but it does not answer the question as to how the destruction of feudalism and the nationalisation of foreign capital was to result in the establishment of nationalism (287). But from the statements quoted above, it is clear that even while advocating the strategy of new democracy, the Party had an eye on nationalism. Was this reference to nationalism a ploy to garner support? Without adequate evidences it is difficult to answer the question definitively.

Thereafter, in Sept/Oct. 1972, under the General Secretary-ship of Pushpalal, the Party held its Fourth Conference in Varanasi (India). The main intention<sup>58</sup> of the Party behind the scheduling of the conference then was to clarify its tactics, and its position regarding its tactical relation with the Nepali Congress. Clarifying its tactical positions its document pointed out that history expected it to shoulder the responsibility of raising a united movement against the Panchayat system. It was to do so by capitalising on the dissatisfaction of the peasants, *janajatis*, students etcetera

<sup>58</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), Report on Current Situation in Nepal, 1984 3 The party explains that the Fourth Conference was also called in order to remove the confusions created by the statements of Man Mohan Adhikari after his release from prison. The party quotes different statements of Man Mohan where he is said to have stated that “the tactics of mass struggle ... [supports] the Nepali Congress”. He is also indicated to have said that “the Nepali Congress ... [is] the main enemy of Nepalese people...”, “described Bangladesh agitation as Indian interference and so anti-national” and called “Pushpalal ... [a] supporter of Russia for his refusal to characterise the Soviet Union as Social imperialist”. Then the party points out that his main intention was to oppose “our party and Nepali Congress”. As a result there were clashes between the Communist and Nepali Congress students which were not in the interest of the movement. To avoid such situation the Conference was called to clarify the party perception regarding the Nepali Congress.

and by using issues connected with the nationalism and sovereignty of Nepal. It felt that such tactics was essential for creating the conditions necessary for waging armed struggle against the Panchayat system in future for it stated:

The historic responsibility of raising a united movement against this autocratic feudal Panchayat system has fallen upon our shoulders. For it our Party units should function in the forefront; provide leadership, and use the issues connected with the sovereignty and nationalism of our country along with the dissatisfaction of the peasants, *janajatis*, untouchables, students, intellectuals and Government employees. For this is the only way to ready ourselves for the armed struggle against the system (NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnaitik Report Sept/Oct 1972 15).

In its bid to create the United front against the Panchayat system<sup>59</sup> it categorised “left forces as those, who intended to bring about fundamental changes in the social system by dislodging the archaic one” opening, thereby, the license to accept “all political parties, which are against the Panchayat system as left forces” (17 and 18). With such position, after a long winded analysis of the character of Nepali Congress, it observed, “from the above long analysis, it is clear that, all along, our Party, in spite of the dual character of Nepali Congress, has always considered the Nepali Congress as our friend in our battle against our main enemy the King” (26). And though the document nowhere stated, that Nepali Congress would be a part of the united front, the implications behind its definition of left forces and its characterisation of Nepali Congress as a friend against the King indicated, that the Party was not against the idea of using the Congress as a partner in its struggle during the period. Further, the document said:

The Party should take part even in those struggles, led by other parties, if those struggles weaken the system. It should not reject participation in such struggles arguing that the success of the movement would strengthen the other Party which is in the leadership. For such position would keep the Communist away from the people (33).

<sup>59</sup> See, NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnaitik Report Sept/Oct 1972 23 The party explains that in a situation when the ruling elites are in league with the imperialists, the American and the Indian, to exploit the masses and when there is no pressure of external aggression then the internal enemy, here the Panchayat system, turns into the main enemy.

Thus, during this phase, tactically the Party was trying to build up its united front by clarifying its relation with the Nepali Congress. Moreover, the tactics also involved the participation of the Party in movements led by other political forces, if those movements were aimed at weakening the system. In sum, it stood for centring the entire forces in the destruction of the Panchayat system, the obstacle in its path towards New Democratic revolution.

With the passing away of Pushpalal in July 1978, the Party held its emergency conference in Darbhanga in September 1978. It was its fifth national conference. In it, the Party “vowed to carry forward the tactical line of Com. Puspa Lal, decided to concentrate on building its strength and directing it towards developing the popular movement more effectively” (NCP (Pushpalal), Report on Current Situation in Nepal, 1984 4). Later, in Chaitra 14–19, 2043 [March 28–31, 1987], the Party held its sixth National conference in Sarnath (India). The conference was a joint conference between the NCP (Pushpalal) and the NCP (Man Mohan) faction (See, p. 365). Explaining the basis behind the holding of the joint conference, its document drew attention towards the similarities in the two parties’ ideas, which had come to the fore during the period of the referendum (See, p.108), that is, in 1979/80 for it stated:

Here special attention must be focused on the statements given by Comrade Man Mohan Adhikari on the analysis of the proclamation [of the referendum] and on the basic conditions (See p. 334) during the days of the referendum. On these questions his views were somewhat similar to ours. In his [Man Mohan’s] statements he had proposed an additional condition: to consider youths above 18 as adults. Both the parties had agreed to the proposal as an essential condition. It is, therefore, not an exaggeration to state that similarity and the similarities which evolved thereafter form the basis of the sixth conference (NCP (Pushpalal), Rajnitik Report 2043 [1987] 11).

Thereafter, analysing the prevailing political condition the document observed that “even after the third Amendment of the Constitution the people enjoy only the right to exercise adult franchise sans fundamental and political rights”. Therefore, “there is no difference between Panchayat system that existed before the referendum and the system that exists today” (13). Hence, “today the main issue at hand is the issue concerning the restoration of the democratic rights of the people” (14). This explained

why the document in the beginning had stated, “we have reached an understanding that the main task today is to restore democracy and for it we have felt the necessity for uniting all the classes and political parties to carry on a United People’s movement” (4). With such understanding at the tactical level, the two parties, therefore, merged to form the NCP (Marxist). However, the basis behind the joint meeting to which the Party draws attention to and the growing similarities of the parties’ in the tactical positions expressed by the document is debatable. They are debatable because of the characterisation of Man Mohan Adhikari drawn by the Party documents published as late as in 20 June 1984 and in 17 January 1986. In the former, the Party points out only to the agreement of Man Mohan with the five pre-conditions and that also under pressure, for it states:

When our Party declared that it would take part in the opinion poll only on the basis of the basic pre-conditions and brought pressures upon him to take part in a joint meeting, he accepted the five requirements and addressed joint meeting at some places ... But because of his ... opportunistic nature, he started supporting the King again (NCP (Pushpalal), Report on Current Situation in Nepal, 1984 15).

Thereafter drawing attention to Man Mohan’s unity move with the Party, its document of 17 June 1986 states:

This Party was formed after comrade Pushpalal’s death mainly to break our Party. This Party consists of members of Upper-class ... engaged in different organisations. There is no organisation as such, any activities, nor [sic] any People’s front. The basic political character of Man Mohan Adhikari is understood to be vacillating, pro-King and devoid of Communist character. Despite this, he is known to be a Communist in Nepal ... The Party has, therefore, to be very careful in this regard. Now he has started propagating to unite without any condition with our Party ... Our Party plenum has given serious thought to Adhikari’s such conspiracy. The Party has decided to reciprocate in the same manner. By forging ideological and political unity we shall make efforts to unite with Adhikari on the basis of Party norms. Our Party has enormous responsibility in this regard. Ideological and political unity is the key factor for unity in the Communist movement and not an opportunistic alliance (NCP (Pushpalal), A Report ... Political Situation, 1986 29–30).

In the light of the above comments, it is clear that even as late as in 1986 there was no understanding between the two parties. The *volte-face* in the 1987 Party position on Man Mohan’s stand, therefore, appears to point out that the reasons supplied to

explain the unity move were just to project the unity as an ideological unity based on tactical similarities. If, this is read with Rawal's comment that "the NCP (Pushpalal) had become weak by then, because of the death of Pushpalal and owing to the exit of his longtime co-worker Hikmat Singh from the Party", then it appears that the Party was in need of a leader with a Communist legacy and Man Mohan was in need of a foothold in a comparatively powerful Party organisation (73). The unity served them both, and this, perhaps, was the reason which brought the parties together. After the formation of the NCP (Marxist) in March 1987, documentary evidences of its activities do not exist. However, its activities came to the fore only during the 1989-90 *Jana Andolan* when it combined with the NCP (ML) and other Communist factions to form the United Left Front.

#### 1.6. Rayamajhi Faction and Its Evolution until 1990

As pointed out, the Third Congress of the NCP held in February 1962 in Varanasi expelled Rayamajhi from the party. After his expulsion, Rayamajhi and his group held their third conference in VS 2021[1964/65]. In the conference the party opted for the "National Democratic Strategy" (NCP (Rayamajhi), Tesro Sammelanma ... Report 13). Since the evaluation of the strategy has already been done, the following paragraphs will highlight the tactical position of the party in the post-1960 Nepal

To announce its tactical position, the party first reviews the history of the movement until 1964/65. In the review, it highlights the characteristic features of the national politics and the mistakes committed by the NCP. According to its analysis, "the 2007[1950] revolt had not only smashed the Rana rule, but also secured fundamental rights and the right to form the Constituent Assembly for the people". Under such circumstances, it observes that "it was the duty of all the democratic forces of Nepal to protect the achievements of the revolt". But, when the "first Calcutta conference of the NCP failed to see the gains of the revolt" and when "Pushpalal's report in the conference declared that the Interim Government formed after the revolt was ineffective in accomplishing the political and economic and social

transformation of the society”, the Party declared its “New Democratic strategy”. The declaration then came “in the way of forging unity among the democratic forces and in preserving the achievements of the 1950 revolt” (NCP (Rayamajhi), Tesro Sammelanma ... Report 1). As a result, one by one the King and his anti-democratic forces snatched away the rights of the people to finally carry out the coup in 1960 (1). Thus, the analysis of the historical background of the movement naturally placed the faction among those who were against the new Democratic strategy. Besides, the party was guided by its understanding that democracy is necessary “for the creation of an organised and a conscious society”, a society which in turn is necessary for the establishment of “either a bourgeois economy or an economy through the non-capitalist path” (5) to observe, “had the democratic forces worked for the preservation of the democratic rights, then the nation could have developed its independent economy and freed itself from the clutches of the imperialists and the Indian capitalists” (2). Coming from a communist faction, such argument was indeed queer. Besides to argue in favour of unity among the democratic forces the party while commenting on the 1959 election states, “had the democratic forces engaged themselves in the debate regarding what was right: election for the Constituent Assembly or for the Legislative Assembly, then even the election would not have taken place” (5) meaning, by it, that the election was possible only because all the democratic forces had agreed to the election. Hence, even in the post-1960 Nepal the party’s prescribed tactics was to work for the achievement of democratic rights. This tactics, according to the party, involved the opening up of “two front struggle”. Such struggle, on the other hand, was expected “to develop peoples’ struggle” and on the other, it asked the “democratic forces to take part in the class organisations and the National Panchayat to wrest more democratic rights” for the people (6). And though the document of the party nowhere states, that the achievements of the democratic rights is a necessity for the weakening of or for the gradual destruction of the feudal system, yet what it says regarding the path to be followed for the establishment of National Democracy conveys the idea that the Party’s tactics was perhaps aimed

towards such a possibility for its document states:

Today the main issue facing the country is regarding the unity of the democratic forces for securing democratic rights. Past experiences prove that in the absence of democratic unity the possibility of securing democratic rights is remote. So, while fixing out strategy we must consider whether the strategy fixed by us comes in the way of such unity. There is no doubt that we intend to establish National Democracy, which will create the circumstances necessary for the establishment of socialism. Besides, the strategy of National Democracy by itself is the demand of the united national force, and to implement such strategy in the country we require a struggle of the highest order. Presently, in view of the lack of unity among the democratic forces, it is not possible to educate and develop among the people a character which is anti-feudal and anti-imperialist, and without the development of such character it is not possible to embrace such a strategy. Besides, in the absence of democratic rights the strategy of National Democracy cannot be pushed through... (NCP (Rayamajhi), Tesro Sammelanma ... Report 13).

Thus, the party tactics then was for forging unity among the democratic forces, use the combined force for wresting democratic rights, use the democratic rights to develop anti-feudal, anti-imperialist feeling among the people, use such people for the establishment of National Democracy, and use the democracy for the establishment of socialism. Therefore, the party then stood for gradual peaceful tactics for the establishment of socialism.

This conference of the party was followed by its Third Congress. Based on a paper report, Surendra K. C points out that “the Congress was held in 2023 [1966/67]. In the Congress, he says, “the party formed a 21 member Central Committee and elected Kesar Jung Rayamajhi as its General Secretary. Its 5 member politburo was composed of Rayamajhi, Kumar Shah, Krishnaraj Verma, Krishnaprasad Shrestha and Bishnubahadur Manandhar” (K. C, Nepalma Communist Bhag 2 139). In view of the lack of documentary evidence it is not possible to comment upon the strategy and the tactics which the Congress advocated, but on considering its document of the Fourth Congress, it is evident that the party must have advocated the National Democratic strategy even in the Third Congress for the document of the Fourth Congress states:

In the present political system, where there is no political freedom...the fundamental problems of the society cannot be resolved. Hence, for the resolution of the economic and social problems of the country the requisite environment needs to be created. And for creating the environment it is essential to work for the establishment of democracy

where the people are fully involved. Only in a political system where democracy exists, the development of movement for the establishment of National Democracy is possible. As such if our immediate goal is to work for the development of the movement for the establishment of National Democracy, the political instrument for the development of such a movement is the democratic system (NCP (Rayamajhi), Nepal Communist Partyko Karya 18)

However, with the beginning of the 1979 movement, differences of opinion cropped up in between the Rayamajhi and the Bishnubahadur Manandhar group. Describing the point of difference between the two groups Rawal writes, “If Manandhar group stood for playing an active role and in developing the 1979 movement, Rayamajhi and his group went against the movement and stood for the maintenance of status quo. Thereafter, differences between the two groups widened and the Manandhar group formed its own party” (66).

The Manandhar faction, which eventually formed NCP [Bishnubahadur Manandhar], held its Fifth Congress in Tikapur in VS 2038[1981/82]. In the Congress, the Party viewed the existing Panchayat system as the main culprit behind all visible economic anomalies of the kingdom. It claimed that for changes the country required a polity, which reflected the essence of National Democracy for its document said:

The Panchayat system...is incapable of solving the problems of the nation. It can resolve neither the problems of the working class, nor the problem of the national bourgeoisie interested in protecting national industries. The nation can be freed from its crisis only when the present system is destroyed; the economic structure changed, land reform implemented, industries are developed, corruption is eradicated and cultural transformation is initiated. In other words, the problems can be resolved only under a democratic system which captures the essence of national democracy (NCP (Manandhar) 2).

Therefore, the party still followed the National Democratic strategy eulogising it as a strategy that opened the possibility of reaching socialism without entering into the transitional phase of bourgeois democracy for it stated:

The path of Nepalese revolution will pass through the phase of National Democracy. Under the participation of our party and the working class, National Democratic revolution will help the nation to enter into socialism. National Democratic revolution will be a transitional phase of revolution which will push the nation towards socialism without entering into the phase of bourgeois democracy. It will create the material and social bases for such transformation. The

ultimate aim of the party is to establish communism (NCP (Manandhar) 3)

However, these statements do not clarify what the party viewed as the essence of National Democracy, and how transitional phase of National Democratic revolution bypassed bourgeois democracy to reach socialism? But, what it says while analysing the then situation of Nepal answers the first question leaving the burden of answering the second to the readers. To start with , it describes Nepal as a nation “where 94 per cent of its population are engaged in agriculture” (8). Then it states:

To establish democracy we have to free them from the maze of imperialist and feudal forces...the peasants should snatch rights which enable them to carry on such revolution. In such effort our party should organise them...as auxiliary of the working class. To free the peasants from the feudal forces is the essence of democracy and since peasants alone cannot achieve such goal they should combine with the proletariat (8–9).

Thereafter, following what Tulsilal Amatya had stated in the past while advocating National Democratic strategy in the Third Congress, the party points out that it should take “national bourgeoisie as an ally of its revolution” (11). It includes them in its tactics of establishing democracy—the precondition for enabling peasants to carry on revolution. But, like Tulsilal it does not reject in its tactics of a “broad democratic front of united communists for achieving democracy” the “participation” of Nepali Congress (17). Moreover, it sees only the USA as an imperialist; seldom talks about China, praises Soviet Union and maintains silence on issues involving India (NCP (Manandhar) 20–6).

After the formation of NCP (Manandhar) faction, NCP (Rayamajhi) faction continued until VS 2040 Asoj [September 1983] only to witness yet another fragmentation. Objecting against “Rayamajhi’s membership in the Raj Sabha and his policies of compromise with the Panchayat system”, Rawal writes, “the Party expelled Rayamajhi and accepted Krishnaraj Verma as its unchallenged leader” (67). Thus, came into existence NCP (Verma) faction in the Communist movement of Nepal. According to Rawal, “this faction published its Rajnitik Pratibedan (Political Report) in 1987 where it advocated unity among communist factions. But, the unity was never

achieved”. So, the different factions continued, but in the process the Rayamajhi faction “vanished by VS 2043[1986/87]” (68). The remaining two; however, resurfaced before the 1989–90 *Jana Andolan* to play their part in the United Left Front. And if one takes the document of NCP (Verma) published in VS 2047[1990/91] where it says that its “Rajnitik Report of Rastriya Parishad [National Council] of VS 2045 Falgun [Feb/March 1989] had advocated unity among the communist factions for working with Nepali Congress for achieving democracy” (NCP (Verma) 15), then its stand was similar to that of NCP (Manandhar) which had also espoused the tactics of combining with the Nepali Congress. However, the factions falling in this line appear confused. There is no clarity in their understanding of National Democratic strategy. Their stand suggests that they wanted to achieve socialism by changing the superstructure, that is by achieving democracy, besides they sometimes say that one should first achieve democracy to achieve National Democracy and sometimes they advocate the path of bypassing democracy to reach socialism.

#### 1.7. Fragmentation within NCP (Pushpalal): Birth of NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Sangathan)

Documentary evidences point out to two factions, which the NCP under Pushpalal underwent in the 70s: one was in 1974 and the other in 1975. Though the 1974 faction did not result in the formation of an enduring political Party, yet in view of the nature of the work and the questions posed the faction assumes importance. The treatment of other faction is important not only because of the questions raised in the work, but also because the faction resulted in the evolution of an enduring NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party)[NeMKiPa]<sup>60</sup> Party.

In Srawan 2031 [July/August 1974], a group of Communists from the “Western” and “Central Zone” and from “outside” organised a meeting. The meeting,

<sup>60</sup> See, NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Bidhan 2047 3 This is its short form as declared by its Constitution of VS 2047. Its English translation is NWPP. However, in the communist circle of Nepal this faction is also called NCP (Rohit). Rohit is the nickname of the party leader, Narayan Man Bijukche.

“rejected outright the ideology of revisionist P. L [Pushpalal] and his group”. This group established a “Communist Ekta Samparka Samiti” until the evolution of the group into a Party (Communist Samparka Samiti (Nepal) 3). The Appeal of the Samiti (Committee) objected against the social basis of the Party; the intentions of the Party leadership and the different Communist parties’ analysis of the main enemy to put forward its view that in the context of Nepal the main enemy is the existing *Rajyasatta*,<sup>61</sup> for its document stated:

Today the Communist movement in Nepal is in fragments. Within the circle of the Party’s fragments and factions; the leaders, instead of organising landless peasants and emerging proletariats, busy themselves in organising parties of the middle class and the educated class... (4).

By holding the so-called ‘Gorakhpur conference’, P. L [Pushpalal] has ... destroyed Party unity. The plot and intentions of P. L (to form his own Communist Party by running after the expansionists, tout capitalists and socialist-imperialists) until now was not understood by us, so we were after him. We have understood it now, so our Party today proposes to organise a Fourth Congress to unite the movement and to form a Party, which preserves the purity of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

In the unity of Nepal Communist movement the main hurdle is regarding the identification of the main enemy ... Some consider the King as the main enemy and the Nepali Congress as an ally, some consider the King as an ally and the Nepali Congress, the main enemy and some consider both the Nepali Congress and the King as the main enemy. But, we do not support these views. In reality for the Communists believing in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, in the context of Nepal which is in semi-feudal and semi-colonial stage of historical development the main enemy of an armed peasants’ revolt is the present *Rajyasatta* (Communist Samparka Samiti (Nepal) 5).

Barring the objection of the faction towards the social base of the Party, its strategy and tactics added nothing fresh to the complexion of the movement: if its strategy was for the total destruction of the State system, its tactics subtly rejected the use of Nepali Congress by pointing out tout capitalism as an element of the *Rajyasatta*. And by referring to peasants’ armed struggle and expansionism, it rehashed the early 70s position of the NCP (ML) (See, p.349). A position, which was further clarified when the faction stated, “In the preliminary stage of armed peasants’ struggle the nature of

<sup>61</sup> See, Communist Samparka Samiti (Nepal) 11

our revolt is to destroy the class enemy violently. Then the struggle will be developed into a guerrilla struggle ... and the encirclement of the cities by the villages” (11–2). This recourse to the strategy and tactics of the NCP (ML), was perhaps the faction’s way out to objecting the tactics of Pushpalal led NCP, which favoured the use of the Nepali Congress, and which after 1972 aimed at the destruction of only the Panchayat system. Later, as Rawal observes, “In 1976 the faction was organised as Sarvahara Krantikari Sangathan Nepal”. And according to him, “The faction since 1977 began advocating similarity between Buddha and Mao” to conclude that “without the amalgamation of the Buddhist thought with that of Mao, neither Buddhism will be respected in Nepal, nor the exploited lot of Nepal will gain access to the path of power as advocated by Maoism” (71). Such metaphysical stand taken by the faction was perhaps the reason behind its demise, but there was also another reason. The other reason was its adoption of the strategy and tactics of a faction which was, at least, more coherent in the expression of its position. As already stated, the faction’s strategy and tactics were similar to that of the NCP (ML), as such, according to the NCP (ML) document, “the Eastern group of the faction” joined the “NCP (ML) Co-ordination Committee in Bhadra 2035 [Aug./Sep.1978]”. Further, the document states, because of such amalgamation “our position in the Eastern zone was established” (NCP (ML), “Rajnitik Pratibedan 1989” 68) indicating, thereby, that the Eastern group of the faction did enjoy a dominant position in the zone. Thus, with its powerful section gone, and with its left-over mired in metaphysical ideology, the faction faded into the oblivion of history.

The other faction, NCP (Rohit) faction, was born on the “23<sup>rd</sup> of January 1975”. Its document points out that its “ideological bases” are contained in two of Narayanman Bijukche’s works namely, “*Nepalko Communist Andolanma Dekhapareyka Khota Vicharharuko Khandan* and *Russi Sansodhanbad Samajik Samrajyabadma Patan*” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Nepalko ... Andolanma ... Bhumika 1). Thus, to understand its ideological bases one has to go through the works. However, before entering into the subject related to its ideological bases one

had better address the question as to why the Party came out of NCP [Pushpalal]. But, in the two works one does not come across straightforward answer to the question. His work *Russi Sansodhanbad Samajik Samrajyabaddma Patan* simply puts forward clichés to conclude that the Socialist Soviet Union degenerated into a Socialist revisionist after Kruschev's support to the leaders of Yugoslav Communist League (Rohit, Russi-Sansodhanbad 21). And before, that is between 1957–60, it had already evolved as an imperialist nation which exported capital, in the name of Soviet loan, for earning profit (59). Thereafter, as an imperialist it invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968; attacked China in 1969, supported Indian expansionist in 1970 to invade East Pakistan, and helped India to capture Sikkim in 1974 (137). In his other work, which is a collection of articles, he argues his views on what he thinks correct in the practice of Marxism-Leninism and Maoist thought in the context of Nepal. Since the Party declares that these views form its ideological bases they need to be placed here hoping to find the causes behind the split assuming, of course, that a few (since the work is a criticism of all Communist factions of Nepal) of these ideological orientations were absent within NCP under Pushpalal. These views when paraphrased generate directives falling under three broad categories namely those related to strategy, tactics and identification of enemies. As a list they are as follows:

1 A strategy is a road map of revolution. It should not be the pet opinion of a person or of a group ... Communist parties in Nepal today are fragmented into many factions. If a strategy functions as an obstacle in the unity of Communists then it should be rejected or amended for a strategy acceptable to all ... a strategy should be written keeping in mind the needs of the society... (Rohit, "Party ... Sambandhama" 1–2).

2 Nepal is a semi-colonial and semi-feudal State. Hence, the enemies of the people are the feudal forces, foreign monopoly capitalists and elements connected with those capitalists ... the feudal forces and the capitalists are connected through different links (Rohit, "Hamra Satruharu" 5). While identifying the enemies of the people one should depend on class analysis and not on names of individuals or groups

(6). Hence, “to identify the internal and external enemies of Nepal ... one should watch the policies of the King and of the Congress” (9). At present, Communists should also consider Soviet Union at par with American imperialist, because it has degenerated into a Socialist imperialist (Rohit, “Antarastriya” 16).

3 While trying to destroy the enemy the Communists should not, in the name of main contradiction, focus on one enemy. Such approach is revisionist, a distortion of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong’s thought (Rohit, “Ke Ekchoti ... Ho?” 23). Communists should make use of the Panchayat bodies and reactionary institutions or else they will be disconnected from the masses (Rohit, “Ke Hamilay” 29–31). Besides, they should take part in elections and Parliamentary practices to educate the masses (Rohit, “Chunaoma Bhag ... Prashnama” 32–8). However, they should not limit themselves within electoral practices, because such practices alone will not lead to freedom. They should prepare for armed struggle (Rohit, “Kranti” 48–9).

Considered in the light of the overall trend of NCP (Pushpalal)—since Pushpalal sought to destroy only the Panchayat system, maintained silence on the question of participation in the system, which can be construed as rejection of such tactics, and did not characterise Soviet Union as the Socialist imperialist—only these directives reveal Narayanman’s objections against Pushpalal’s Party. However, his other directive—unreasonable and malicious, for reasons discussed below— which says that strategy should be considered a road map of revolution and not an opinion of a person or a group, and that it should be amended if amendment is necessary for the unity of the Communists seem to reveal his other differences with Pushpalal. First, strategies are based on assessment of the stage of historical development of society, so if they are based on right judgement of the historical stage then one cannot ask for their amendment for the sake of unity. Hence, it was an unreasonable directive and coming from Bijukche it projected him in a poor light. Second, it implied that within NCP (Pushpalal) what counted most was the opinion of a leader and not the interest of the Communist movement. And since the leader then was Pushpalal it reflected his dissatisfaction against him. Thus, what seems to have been the causes behind the

fragmentation are tactical differences, difference in the identification of enemy, and personal dislike against Pushpalal. As regards its strategy none of its documents state whether it was for New democracy or National Democracy except to point out that it wanted to establish a Government that represented the “Majdoor (proletariat), peasants, intellectuals, *Sahu-Mahajan* (merchant class) and different *jatis* [nationalities]” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Nirvachan Ghoshna-Patra 2056 1). Such a statement creates problem in classifying its strategy. Perhaps by such silence, the Party was trying to steer clear of the problems associated with class analysis, in the absence of which the Communists of Nepal were unable to decisively differentiate the national bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of Nepal.

#### 1.8. Jhapa Movement and the Birth of NCP (ML)

With the coming into being of the NCP (Pushpalal) faction, in May 1968 the Communist movement in Nepal was fragmented into three political factions namely, the NCP (Amatya), the NCP (Rayamajhi) and the NCP (Pushpalal). Besides, there were a number of Committees functioning independently. One such committee, which was under the charge of Tulsilal Amatya was the Purva Koshi Prantiya Committee [Eastern Koshi Zonal Committee]. It had revolted and snapped its tie with the Party centre in 1965. In view of the non-availability of its document concerning its first meeting in Katihar (an Indian town to the South of Nepal), it is difficult to find out the cause behind the revolt. However, the comments of the NCP (Pushpalal), in its document *Singhawalokan*, on the strategy adopted by the Committee provides some clue in understanding the cause behind the revolt. According to the NCP (Pushpalal) document, the Purva Koshi Prantiya Committee floated the strategy of New democracy, but it did not bring out the feudal class character of the King before the people. The strategy portrayed him progressive; as such it was floated in the interest of the King, the leader of feudal class, and not in the interest of the working class. So, it did not even analyse the class character of the “Panchayat system”, instead it characterised Panchayat’s industrial and land reform policies simply as faulty and partial respectively. In doing so, its intent was to hide the feudal interest implicit in

the policies and to support its reformatory view. Hence, the NCP (Pushpalal) document characterised the strategy of the Committee as reformatory for it stated:

... Bourgeois democratic revolution is a revolution against the feudal class. In our country the King is the leader of the reactionary feudal class. Hence, it is important to place before the people the feudal character of the King. But, in their strategy they have stated nothing regarding his class character, on the contrary regarding the character of the King they have tried to spread the illusion that he is progressive but with a few weaknesses. Regarding the King they have only said 'he runs after the foreign and national reactionaries to enter into compromises,' meaning, thereby, that he himself is not a reactionary. In the present condition, when the King has destroyed democracy what purpose do they have in thus characterising the King?

It is clear, that they are intentionally trying to spread illusion regarding the class character of the King. Thus, while floating the strategy of New democracy, they have not written it from the perspective of the working class. Hence, they have not even spoken a word regarding the class character of the Panchayat system, they have only criticised it [the Panchayat system]. From this it becomes clear ... that their strategy... is reformatory. In the industrial and land reform policies advocated by the Panchayat system, which is under the leadership of the King, they have failed to perceive the hidden feudal interest so they simply characterise them as, 'faulty industrial policy and partial land reform.' They are true only in stating that the Government is not sincere even in implementing the partial land reform (NCP (Pushpalal), "Nepal ... Singhawalokan Awam Siksha" 42-3)...

Being a reformatory strategy, framed "not in the interest of the proletariat class" and being unable to perceive "the hidden feudal interest" in the Panchayat policies the strategy of the Purva Koshi Prantiya Committee (henceforth PKPC), in the perception of the NCP (Pushpalal) was pro-feudal/pro-King. And if the comments of the NCP (Pushpalal) faction are taken at its face value, this very character in the strategy of the PKPC may have compelled it to revolt against the Party centre. And perhaps this strategy was also responsible for the "debate" which arose within the PKPC from "2022 [1965]" when its propounders were pitched against "a section of its activists," who advocated the strategy of "capturing power" through "class annihilation" (Rawal 80). This led to the split in the PKPC and the Jhapa Zilla Committee, which was responsible for spearheading the Jhapa movement. The events which brought about such split were contained in the activities of the students and peasants organised under the Jhapa Zilla Committee.

The Purva Koshi Prantiya Committee, which was “under the leadership of Man Mohan Adhikari”, had dissociated itself from the Party centre in 1965 (Bhandari and Baral 3). Since then the Jhapa Committee, which formed one of “its constituent” (Rawal 80) district committees was “organising the students and peasants” of the area for “various political” activities, and the area had turned into a hot spot of “spontaneous students and peasants’ movements” (Bhandari, et al. 3). These movements were the movements of poor, landless peasants against the Zamindar class to capture the seat of power. By the guerrilla actions of the poor, landless peasants it believed in forging unity with the middle class peasants and to neutralise the Zamindar class organising, thereby, the peasants under the Communist Party for its document said:

This struggle organised under the Communist Party is a class struggle of the peasants against the Zamindars. The main force of this struggle is the peasant class. Even among the class, its leaders are the poor, landless peasants. Being the most economically and politically exploited class; these peasants, with intense hatred against the Zamindars and their touts, are capable of moving ahead in the struggle. This very class by leading guerrilla war can forge unity with the middle peasants and neutralise Zamindar class and their touts to organise all the peasants around the Communist Party... (NCP (ML), “Dhakka Khanu ... Cha” 12).

Imbued with such ideals, around 1970, Bhandari and Baral point out that the students of the area under the Jhapa Zilla Committee “organised an attack upon a *marwari* trader in Gauriganj”. This incident “triggered” a “debate” within the Purva Koshi Prantiya Committee (3). Further, they state:

But the Purva Koshi Prantiya Committee under Man Mohan Adhikari rejected the action as a result the Jhapa Zilla committee revolted against the Purva Koshi Prantiya Committee. The Committee was split; if Gopalakrishna Prasai, Bharatmohun Adhikari and Meghraj Acharya were against the action, Mohanchandra Adhikari and Madan Khapangi supported it. Thereafter, the Jhapa Zilla committee was formed under Madan Khapangi (3).

Starting from “2029 Baisakh 29” [11 May 1972], the Jhapa Zilla Committee carried on a series of class annihilation campaigns. The administrative responses against these campaigns were either in the form of “jailing the leaders” (Bhandari, et al. 3), or in the form of killing the jailed activists in fake encounters (Shaha 10). As a result of the

repression, Bhandari and Baral point out that, “by 2030 Kartik 5 [21 October 1973] the movement was left dispirited” (3). However, the document of the faction says that it failed in the face of “intense administrative pressure” because the “revolutionaries had failed to work among the poor land less peasant class” (NCP (ML), “Sansodhanbad ... Bikas Garau” 74). Thus, it seems that its failure was due to both organisational weakness and administrative repression. In this phase of intense action, the movement produced a few documents. In these documents, the Jhapa Committee<sup>62</sup> characterises the then Soviet Communist Party as “revisionists”, “socialist imperialists” (NCP (ML), “Sampurna Bhramharu Milkau ... Gara!” 23, 24), and “socialist China” as “a ... dependable friend” (25). Such characterisations reflected the influence of Sino-Soviet rift on the movement. Besides, the influences of the cultural revolution in China in the 60s, the Naxalite movement and the subsequent formation of CPI (ML) in India, which the activists of Jhapa movement perceived as a revolt against revisionism there, the trend which they wanted to emulate, were the main factors responsible for the birth of the Jhapa movement for their document states:

In the middle of the 60s, China witnessed Cultural Revolution. Under its explicit influence, in Naxalbadi, India there grew the historic peasant revolution. The heat of that movement incinerated the revisionists of the Indian Communist movement and gave birth to the CPI (ML). In the main, the influences of these very events spurred the Nepal Communist revolutionaries to break their tie with the revisionists,<sup>63</sup> thereby, enabling them to evolve guerrilla struggle against the Zamindar class (NCP (ML), “Sampurna Bhramharu Milkau ... Gara!” 28).

And to achieve its goal of “New Democratic revolution” and “socialism” the faction

<sup>62</sup> Since the Committee ultimately turned into NCP (ML) all its documents are published in the name of NCP (ML)

<sup>63</sup> See, NCP (ML), “Sampurna Bhramharu Milkau ... Gara!” 23–5 According to the faction all Communist parties, which followed parliamentary line and peaceful path of change were revisionists. This included NCP (Amatya), NCP (Rayamajhi), NCP (Pushpalal) and NCP (Kendriya Nucleus).

aimed at capturing the national power Centre by leading a protracted People's struggle (NCP (ML), "Dhakka Khanu ... Cha" 12). Its tactics involved: violence against violence, annihilation of the Zamindar class with the help of peasant guerrillas, armed struggle for the capture of local power and creation of village base areas and People's Army to encircle the cities, for its document stated:

About two years ago the revolutionary peasants of Jhapa ... started snatching the power of the exploiters to kill people ... In this way the peasants of Jhapa started using violence against violence to kill ... the Zamindars and their touts. That was the beginning of the peasants' guerrilla struggle. Under the leadership of Marxist-Leninists Party, it seeks to capture local power with the help of arms. After forming base areas and creating People's Army [it will use] villages to encircle cities to carry out ... protracted armed struggle to capture the national power Centre. Begun as a Zamindar annihilation movement, this armed struggle, which is anti-feudal and anti-imperialist, has instilled fear into the mind of the reactionaries... (NCP (ML), "Aja Paschatap ... Uthnay Din Ho" 2).

Following an anti-imperialist strategy, it identified "the entire Marxist-Leninists friends, the proletariat class, the landless peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the students and all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces" as its allies. In its enemy ranks were "the police and the military" (5), "the ruling elites" who were, as its document said, "hand in gloves with the imperialists and feudal forces" (NCP (ML), "Jhapa Zillako ... Jawaf Diwau" 6) and all "the revisionists" (NCP (ML), "Sampurna Bhramharu Milkau ... Gara!" 23). However, the documents maintained silence regarding who should lead the revolution. Often the documents point out that the movement should be led by the Communist Party. But, whether the so identified Communist Party meant the proletariat class is not clear. And if its statement that "the purpose of our armed revolt ... [and] our strategy of peasant revolution is to organise the working class, the intelligentsia, the petty bourgeoisie and the middle class in the revolution", is considered then it pushes the proletariat class to the second fiddle, a feature which does not conform with the new democratic strategy (NCP (ML), "Sampurna Bhramharu Milkau ... Gara!" 29). Further, while stating the strategy, the faction fails to identify the historical stage of the society, and it does not explain the

prevalent class relation, a defect which a later document of the faction realises to declare in the following words:

Class analysis is the Marxist method of understanding the society ... In our earlier phase [of the movement] we hardly used it. Though we knew that struggle should be developed consciously, yet we were after spontaneity because we never tried to study thoroughly the revolutionary strategies ... (NCP (ML), "Dhakka Khanu ... Cha" 15).

And its tactics of guerrilla struggle instead of being the outcome of a studied approach was an inspired tactics, inspired by the sayings of Charu Mazumdar, for its document stated:

Comrade Charu Mazumdar has stated, 'class annihilation is the highest form of class struggle and guerrilla war is its beginning.' This thinking has shown us the revolutionary path of developing class struggle to its highest level and of starting peasant guerrilla movement. We should tag peasants' guerrilla movement with our aim to capture local power... (NCP (ML), "Jhapa Zillako ... Jawaf Diwau" 9).

Besides, the faction believed its activities to serve as examples to other groups to take up arms, for it stated "the revolutionary path which the peasants of Jhapa have taken will certainly be followed by the peasants of other parts of the country as a result there will be armed struggle throughout the country" (7–8). But contrary to such beliefs, the movement remained more or less confined within the borders of Jhapa district. And when administrative repression weakened it, the *Jhapalese* may have realised the need for a conscious effort in organising their group. So on 14 Jestha 2031 [27 May 1974], the Jhapa Zilla Committee with the Krantikari Sangathan (ML), Morang issued an appeal asking all Marxist-Leninist groups to come under its Coordination Committee (ML). However, the conditions attached for joining the Committee were:

a Acknowledgement of Chairman Mao as the authority of revolution; acknowledgement of the then Mao's teaching as the most evolved form of Marxist-Leninist ideology, unconditional acceptance of Marxist-Leninists-Maoist teaching and its application in the revolution of the country.

b Acknowledgement of the prevalence of acute revolutionary condition throughout Nepal.

c Acceptance of the politics of capturing local areas.

d Acknowledgement of guerrilla tactics as the only means by which the level of armed struggle could be evolved and acknowledgement of the use of armed struggle according to the teachings of Charu Mazumdar to annihilate class enemy... (NCP (ML), “Deshbharika ... Hamro Appeal” 40–1).

Acknowledging the above directions, the groups joining the Committee were expected to carry out “New Democratic” revolution in a “semi-feudal, semi-colonial” Nepalese society by vanquishing “Indian expansionism”, “American imperialism”, “Soviet-socialist imperialism”, and the “feudal forces” and “comprador bourgeoisie” operating within Nepal (NCP (ML), “Deshbharika ... Hamro Appeal” 36). But before destroying the external forces, the revolution was to destroy feudalism, that is, the Zamindar class. It was to be a peasant revolution, where the main force the poor, landless peasants were to be led by the Communist Party under the leadership of the proletariat, for their document said:

Though contradictions exist between the Nepali people and its five enemies, yet the contradiction between the people and feudalism is the main contradiction. Only after resolving this contradiction the other contradictions can be resolved. The contradiction with feudalism means the contradiction between the Zamindar class and the peasants. There is only one way of resolving this contradiction; that is through peasant revolution, and peasant revolution will succeed only when the Communist Party under the leadership of the proletariat leads the peasant class, the main force, in an armed struggle to capture power from the hands of the Zamindar and the comprador bourgeois class (NCP (ML), “Deshbharika ... Hamro Appeal” 36).

There are no documents which explain why the acceptance of the conditions was necessary for joining the Coordination Committee. But, the documents published in between the period when the Appeal was floated that is 14 Jestha 2031 [27 May 1974] and 24–25 Jestha 2032 [7–8 June 1975] that is the date when the Akhil Nepal Communist Krantikari Coordination Committee came into being gives a feeling that the faction, by laying down the conditions, was trying to build a party based on a “right-line” (NCP (ML), “Janatako Agadi ... Gara” 45) and a Party which was against the “revisionists’ line of parliamentary politics” (NCP (ML), “Vichardharatmak ... Karyadisha ... Garcha” 61). Accordingly, on 24–25 Jestha 2032 [7–8 June 1975], the faction says, that in “some secret corner of Nepal” it held its “deliberations” to form

the “Akhil Nepal Communist Krantikari Coordination Committee (ML)” (NCP (ML), “Akhil Nepal ... Ghoshna” 67). In its document the Committee declared that its goals were to consciously counter revisionism within and outside the Party; to take its politics among the primary classes [the peasant class], and to form a Marxist-Leninist Party in the process of developing the already begun class struggle and guerrilla tactics for its document stated:

We the revolutionary Nepal Communist have formed the Akhil Nepal Communist Krantikari Coordination Committee (ML) to fight consciously revisionism within and outside the Party with more intensity and in an organised manner. Improving our method of functioning, we intend to take our politics among the primary classes and the goal of the Committee is to form a Marxist- Leninist Party while developing the already begun class struggle and guerrilla tactics (NCP (ML), “Akhil Nepal ... Ghoshna” 70).

Three years after, that is in V.S 11–17 Paus 2035 [26 December 1978 to 1 January 1979], the document of the Committee says that it organised the first national conference of the NCP (ML) in “some village”. In the conference, the Party identified its strategy of “Communism”, but in the immediate phase it targeted on “the completion of New Democratic revolution” (NCP (ML), Rajnaitik Prastao 1978–79 20), which was aimed at “destroying tout-bureaucratic capitalism which was supported by the imperialists, expansionist and the Panchayat system”. It sought to establish “the socialist dictatorship of the peasants and entire revolutionary classes under the leadership of the proletariat” (27). Its tactics rejected the “peaceful parliamentary politics” and stated,

The revolution can be completed only through armed struggle, which is based upon the method of capturing power at local level. For it the peasants should be organised into People's Army; carry on guerrilla struggle, encircle cities by creating base areas in villages and engage in a protracted People's War (28).

To carry out such revolution, the Party identified three weapons: “a disciplined Party”, “a People’s Army with a centralised command” and a “United front” (29). The United front was to be formed “under the leadership of the proletariat based on the unity of peasants-proletariat and all revolutionary classes” (31). However, one thing stood out

in the document. It was the concern of the Party regarding national independence and nationalism of Nepal. On the former it stated that “the threat from the South regarding possible interference, attack and expansion inside the territory of Nepal has increased more than it was there during the British period” (NCP (ML), Fascist Nirdaliya ... Gara! 4), and regarding the latter it argued that the then nationalism of Nepal represented the interest of the “Panchayat class, Congress and the ... Indian expansionist and the imperialists ... at the expense of the interests of the proletariats, urban poor, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie” (4–5). It rejected such nationalism and pointed out that “Panchayat class and others ... subjugated” the nationalism, which represented the interest of the proletariats, peasants etc., meaning thereby, that the nationalism of the Panchayati class and of the others needed to be fought (4). Therefore, by saying so the Party surreptitiously introduced nationalism as a weapon to fight its enemy. And their idea of nationalism was revealed during the period between 24<sup>th</sup> May 1979 and 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1980 when they were campaigning against the referendum, which was announced by the King for its document, while analysing the nationalism of the *panchas* (the participants in the Panchayat system), stated:

The nationalism advocated by the *panchas* is only to rouse devotion towards the reactionary Government ... it is anti-national in nature. Does not the activity of the *panchas* in the last 19 years support such conclusion? If they had even an iota of nationalism in them, then why did they not close the Gorkha recruitment centre? Why have they not rejected the Kosi, the Gandaki, the 1950 treaty and other unequal treaties? Why did they sell out the Karnali project and other natural resources to India? Why have they bowed before the expansionist India on the ‘zone of peace’ proposal proposed by the King? ... There are no answers to these questions before the *panchas* ... these people cannot do such works (NCP (ML), Fascist Nirdaliya ... Gara! 5).

And the same document pointed out that “the policy of boycott [then] was essentially dictated by the need for protecting nationalism” and “for securing democratic rights, food, clothing and shelter for the masses” (31) indicating, thereby, the mix of nationalism with democracy, which carried the meaning of fulfilling the basic needs of the people, for mobilising forces. As the year progressed, the experience of the

Party in between the period 24 May 1979 and 2 May 1980 was instrumental in changing its tactical position. When its boycott call fell flat, and when the Party reflected upon its the then policies, it observed that “since our formative period”, because of the prevalence of “ultra-left deviation within the Party” our “perceptions regarding the referendum” and “the policies which we followed during the movement were coloured by the deviations” (NCP (ML), “Janmat Sangraha ... Mulyankan” 8). And though the Party nowhere explains as to what it meant by ultra-left deviation the statements which follow immediately gives a feel, that by such deviation it meant its one track method of analysing every event as the outcome of forces at play within and outside the nation instead of relying on ‘concrete situations’, and of relying not in other tactics as the means of struggle for it stated:

The proclamation of referendum was due to the interaction between the forces of the peoples’ struggle and the forces unleashed for subjugating it... For the proletariats it was necessary to analyse the forces in the context of the concrete situation. Accordingly it should have moved forward holding on to the rights returned to the people; reformulated its tactics, strengthened its revolutionary propaganda, lifted to greater heights the people’s struggle for democratic rights, revealed in wider scale the machination of the King in the proclamation, combined the entire forces, and used all the means of struggle against the panchayat system. But, our Party viewed the proclamation only as a plot of the national and outsiders’ against the revolutionary forces and took the decision to boycott the referendum from the very beginning (9).

This realisation brought about a change in the thinking of the Party, which it expressed by noting “by the end of VS 2036 [March/April 1980] our thinking changed ... and we felt the necessity for investigating the Party policies and tactics ... Under such context the seventh Central Committee meeting of the Party was held in Asoj 2037 [September/October 1980]”. The meeting, their document said, “in the context of changed national and international situation ... rectified the past mistakes of the Party” (NCP (ML), “Rajnitik Pratibedan 1989” 58, 59). If, the changed national situation referred to the situation of the nation during/after the referendum; the change in the international situation, which the Party referred to, is explained nowhere in the document of the period. However, the NCP (Masal) while characterising the Party in its document of the Ayodhya Congress held in Mangshir 2041[Nov/Dec. 1984] holds

the view that the changes in the NCP (ML)'s stand was due to its "acceptance of the policies of revisionist Chinese", expressed in Chinese "counter revolutionary" trend, which it says had begun before 1984 (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), "Party Ra Krantika ... Pachau Mahadhiwayshunma Parit" 247, 227). If one were to accept the NCP (Mashal)'s version, then the change of policies in the CPC (Chinese Communist Party) was perhaps what the NCP (ML) was referring to as the changes in the international situation. The past mistakes obviously pointed towards its realisation of the prevalence of ultra-left deviation in the Party. In a bid to rectify it, the Committee, therefore, gave up its earlier stand which viewed the existence of "an acute revolutionary condition in the nation", and it gave up its "tactics of armed struggle" as the only means of leading the revolution. In lieu of it, the Party observed the existence of a "revolutionary condition", but shifted its focus "on strengthening the revolutionary consciousness of the nation" and in building "Party organisations" by "organising the people more vigorously" (NCP (ML), "Rajnitik Pratibedan 1989" 59). So, for strengthening the revolutionary consciousness of the people it changed its perception towards the Panchayat elections and institutions. It decided to use them in exposing the system and in propagandising revolutionary *Janabad* (democracy) for it stated, "the Party since the referendum has decided to use the Panchayat elections and institutions to expose the system and to propagandise revolutionary *Janabad* [democracy]" (90). In sum, it gave up its armed tactics.

Thereafter, in a series of Central Committee and Extended Central Committee meetings the Party revised many of its earlier stands. In its 13<sup>th</sup> Central Committee meeting of Jestha 2039 [May/June 1982] the Party changed its earlier policy of giving even "critical support" to the King's proposal for zone of peace, because it felt that such support was creating "delusion" regarding the Party's policy "towards its prime enemy". Therefore, it decided to "oppose the proposal" (NCP (ML), "Rajnitik Pratibedan 1989" 62–3). Similarly, in its Kartik 2039 [October/November 1982] Central Committee meeting it declared that "the primary contradiction in Nepal is the contradiction between the people and the feudalism cum tout-bureaucratic capitalism"

(63). Its 31<sup>st</sup> Central Committee meeting of 2045 [1988/89] emphasised upon moving ahead with the primary slogan, which focused on “the destruction of autocratic monarchy and ... the Panchayat system for the establishment of a republic and for achieving total political rights” (63–4). In the same year, in Fagun [February/March], its Second Extended Central Committee meeting categorised “Soviet Union along with all other East-European states as socialist states” (64). This change in its perception was due to the changes which it perceived in the activities of the USSR in the decade of the eighties for it stated:

With the arrival of Gorbachev in the leadership position of the country, the country has taken important steps towards the establishment of world peace, disarmament and for lessening tensions in different parts of the world ... it has put forward the proposal for creating a nuclear free world by the end of the century... kept on going the disarmament dialogue with the USA ... pulled its forces from Afghanistan ... and normalised its relation with China which in turn has led to the improvement in the relation between India and China. The more this process goes on the faster will be the end of the hegemonic states of the world (NCP (ML), “Rajnitik Pratibedan 1989” 11–2).

This meant that, by 1989, the Party no more viewed Soviet Union as a tension generating, expansionist, socialist-imperialist State, and especially after the normalisation of its relation with China it was no more in league with India in its bid to expand inside Nepal to encircle the Chinese. This was an important change in its perception for it wiped away the difference which it had perceived in the past between the USSR and the Republic of China, the very difference which was one of the factors responsible for its birth.

Despite these changes, by the end of 1989 the Party perception regarding who constituted the enemies—India was still an enemy—was still the same, but there was a change in its tactics. It was reflected in its tactics of roping in all the forces of revolution in its united front. As a result, the scope of its united front was broadened to include all and sundry for it stated:

The Nepalese revolution at this point is at a historical stage of new democratic revolution. It can be completed only by bringing together the entire forces under the proletariat leadership against the forces of feudalism, tout-bureaucratic bourgeoisie, imperialists and the expansionists. That will be new democratic united front. In such front there will be the proletariats, the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie of the

towns, the national bourgeoisie and in special situations even a section or class of the Zamindars and the bourgeoisie can be included. However, depending upon the phase of the revolution the front may either be broad or narrow, but in all the circumstances it will include the proletariats, the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie of the towns (NCP (ML), "Rajnitik Pratibedan 1989" 98).

The objective of the Party behind the formation of such broad united front was "to strengthen the revolutionary forces by embracing even the centrists". Its objective was to "isolate the main enemy by forging tactical alliances on common issues" (106). And the main enemy which the Party identified then was "the autocratic monarchy and his Party-less Panchayat system" (108).

Looking forward to the post-1989 period, the Party criticises, both Man Mohan and Mohan Bikram trend. The Man Mohan trend is criticised for its perception, which considers "India as the main enemy", and the Mohan Bikram, for considering "both Indian expansionism and the Nepali Congress" as the main enemies (NCP (ML), "Nepali Krantiko ... Karyakram" 38). As such, by implication, the Party's main focus was against the King's autocracy without, of course, sloughing off its perceptions regarding India. For it still held India as an imperialist, which controlled the Nepalese economy by propping, as *quid pro quo*, the existing feudal system for it observed:

Among the foreign nations exploiting the Nepalese economy the role of Indian monopoly capitalists is the most predominant. In the protection of the autocratic monarchy it plays second fiddle to the American imperialist. As a result it [India] controls Nepalese economy ... as such in spite of Nepalese contradiction with India on the issues of foreign trade and security, Nepal has always bowed before the authority of India. On account of this very fact, the Indian Government is helping the monarchy to subjugate the democratic struggle of Nepal (NCP (ML), "Nepali Krantiko ... Karyakram" 10).

Thus, under the control of the foreign and the feudal forces, the Party perceived Nepal in the "semi-feudal, semi-colonial" stage of social development, where the production system, was distorted. Hence, the need was to replace it with "a progressive productive system". To do so, the Party observes that "the main aim of the revolt should be to destroy the monarchy" (8). Such revolution, the new democratic revolution, was expected to "capture the State power" (14) and form a "Constituent Assembly" to frame a "new democratic republican constitution" (15). And the

purpose behind the framing of such constitution was to establish “new democratic production system” (30). Thus, during 1989 the main concern of the Party was to replace the anachronistic production system with an advanced system, and since the King came on its way the monarchy and the Panchayat system were to be destroyed. And for accomplishing such destruction the Party banked “mainly on the support of the peasants based on the proletariat-peasant unity” (30). Thereafter, the Party does not indicate the other classes which were to be included as the allies of the revolution instead it indulges in a circumlocution, and says that “It is a given fact that the proletariat class must combine with other classes in order to accomplish the new democratic revolution, hence it must adopt the tactics of united front for we give importance to the question of united front with this ideological understanding” (31). Which were the other classes the Party was referring to? And what was to be the nature of the united front? These questions are answered much later. To answer them it says,

While analysing the political forces the question of the Nepali Congress comes to the fore. In this context ... one type, on the basis of Congress’s class character, considers it as an ally of the New Democratic struggle. The other, considers it as an enemy and proposes to fight continuously against it. But both these assessments are dogmatic and unreal... (45).

Basically it represents the interest of the Zamindar class and of the tout bureaucratic capitalists ... so without defeating it one cannot achieve New Democracy. But at this point of time when there is autocratic regime the Congress is in favour of constitutional monarchy and multi-Party system....

Hence, this aspect of the Congress needs to be encouraged ... and its wrong tendencies of compromising with the monarchy should be opposed. For doing so the minimum political basis of the front should be widely propagated and its support should be sought... (NCP (ML), “Nepali Krantiko ... Karyakram” 46).

And the minimum political bases of the front outlined by the Party were:

- 1 Oppose Monarchy and establish democracy.
- 2 Unite with those who are ready to accept the Congress in the struggle for democracy.

3 End the Party-less autocracy and adopt multi-Party democracy... (NCP (ML), “Nepali Krantiko ... Karyakram” 45).

Thus, by this time the tactical position of the Party was to unite even with the Congress for the sake of establishing democracy. In fact, so generous was its welcome to the Congress in its front, that other party’s entry into the front depended upon their agreeing to accept the Congress as a partner. Besides, the document lists a number of issues over which the front was expected to fight. Most of these issues were related with the basics of, what they called as *Bahudaliya Janabad*, a multi-Party democratic polity. And they were, “freedom of political association”, the “demand for the setting up of a Constituent Assembly”, removal of “ban on the functioning of political parties” etcetera (NCP (ML), “Nepali Krantiko ... Karyakram” 53). But, a few of them were related with its idea of nationalism and they were as follows: “Demand for scientific demarcation of Indo-Nepal border; demand for two separate treaties on trade and transit; ... demand for work permit to foreign labourers working in Nepal” (53–4) and “demands concerning issues of national freedom ... (such as) demand for the end of 1950 Treaty along with all unjust treaties based upon it” (54). However, there was no entry which highlighted ethnic issues. With such tactical position the Party was ready to enter the decade of the 90s.

1.9. Birth of NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), its Fragmentation into NCP (Masal), NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress) and NCP (Mashal)

By the end of the 60s, King Mahendra released Man Mohan Adhikari and Sambhuram Shrestha from jail. This was followed by the release of Mohan Bikram Singh and Nirmal Lama in 1971. In the open, these leaders point out that they were faced with a situation where the Communist movement was in disarray. Describing the situation of the movement, the document of the NCP (Mashal), which originally began as NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) states:

[After the Third Congress] ... there was rank indiscipline in the movement. And by ... VS 2028 ... the situation was such that the Party had no Central Committee. It had no central line and most of the Zonal

and District committees were defunct. Those which existed were functioning by themselves like Central Committees. There was intense struggle among those functioning committees and in many of them Government agents had penetrated ... All professional organisations were non-existent... There was no Party to lead the movement (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), “Rajnitik Pratibedan: (2041 Salma [1984/85] ... Parit)” 196).

Under such circumstances, the Kendriya Nucleus (Centralised Nucleus) came into existence in “Mangshir 20, 2028 [December 6, 1971] in Kathmandu” (196). In explaining the reasons as to why the Nucleus was formed all existing works highlight in different versions the intentions of the leaders to bind together the strewn Communists under a single command structure (Rawal 74; Thapa and Sijapati 25). However, the document of the Kendriya Nucleus implies that the Nucleus was formed not only to create an organisation with a Centre, but also to unite ‘true Communist’ forces with a strategy and a political line opposed to those of the NCP (Rayamajhi), the NCP (Tulsil Amatya) and the NCP under Pushpalal for it states:

Rayamajhi, T.L [Tulsilal] and P.L [Pushpalal] are primarily moving in the same direction—in the direction of revisionism and opportunism. Today the reactionary forces are more powerful than the Communists ... Today owing to the disunity among true Communist forces; owing to the absence of a centre among them, and owing to the lack of a strategy and a political line they are unable to progress. But when we struggle for the creation of a centre and when we advocate a political line then the situation will improve ... (NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), “Nepal ... Bhadkauru” 35).

To form such a Party, the strategy adopted was the New Democratic strategy. The strategy, in comparison with the New Democratic strategy of NCP (Pushpalal), differed in one aspect: it differed at the tactical level. The difference lay around the question as to whether the Nepali Congress should be taken as a fellow traveller of the revolution. In comparison with NCP (Pushpalal)’s strategy, which considered the Nepali Congress as the representative of the national bourgeoisie and, therefore, an ally in the path of New Democratic revolution, the Kendriya nucleus characterised the Nepali Congress as the representative of the feudal forces, tout bureaucratic capitalists, foreign capitalists and it equated its class position with that of the King. It said: “Today besides the Communist Party there are two other political forces—the

King and the Nepali Congress. The class character of both is essentially the same. Both represent the feudal forces, tout bureaucratic bourgeois class, foreign capitalists and the imperialists” (NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), “Deshko Rajnitik ... Bislayshun” 18). However, the Party reached such conclusion not on the basis of class analysis, but on the basis of lessons learnt from past experiences for it stated:

... National bourgeois class in our country is in its infancy. Even then it is found championing for the rights of an underdeveloped, landlocked State. It raises demands for transit facilities, and raises objections against the Indian tactics of economic pressure and its policy of considering Nepal as its common market. Far from supporting these causes of the national bourgeoisie, the Nepali Congress is found supporting the interest of the Indian monopoly capitalists. Hence it is hilarious to consider the Nepali Congress as the representative of the national bourgeoisie (NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), “Deshko Rajnitik ... Bislayshun” 18).

It characterised the tactics of the NCP under Pushpalal as reactionary, because it sought to destroy the outer shell of the Panchayat system while keeping intact its anti-nationalist and undemocratic features (For explanation see, p. 364). On account of this, the Kendriya Nucleus bracketed the NCP under Pushpalal nearer to the Nepali Congress, the NCP (Rayamajhi) and Indian monopoly capitalists for it stated:

The existing Panchayat system is so corrupt, defamed and weak that in its present form, it cannot serve the interest of both the national and foreign reactionaries. Hence, the reactionaries channel the *vox populi* towards the external form of the system while trying to keep intact its anti-nationalist and undemocratic features. This is, in essence, the characteristic of present-day reactionary tactics. Either PL [Pushpalal] has not understood this [that is the nature of the tactics], or, because of his links with the reactionaries, he is not trying to understand the reality. So he is advocating the destruction of the outer shell of the Panchayat system as the basic duty of the revolution. As such he is going closer to the Nepali Congress, Rayamajhi and Indian monopoly capitalists<sup>64</sup>... (NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), “Tatkalik” 9).

The criticism of the Nucleus against the tactics of NCP (Pushpalal), NCP (Rayamajhi)

<sup>64</sup> See, NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), “Tatkalik” 9 The Nepali Congress advocated the establishment of the parliamentary system and Rayamajhi stood for reforms in the Panchayat system. Since both these tactical positions kept intact the anti-nationalist and anti-democratic nature of the Panchayat system it conformed to the tactical position of the NCP under Pushpalal. However, the intention of the Indian monopoly capitalist is not clearly stated.

and the Nepali Congress stems from the faction's tactics, which considered democracy and nationalism as inalienably linked principles of the revolution. It was clarified by the document of the faction when its name became NCP (Fourth Congress) in 1974 (See, p. 365). After turning into NCP (Fourth Congress) the Party says, "Nationalism and democracy are closely linked with each other and now,<sup>65</sup> for their sake, time has come to struggle against both the Nepali Congress and the King" (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu" 41). And after reviewing the various tactical positions, which were current in the Communist movement of Nepal it reached the conclusion that both democracy and nationalism should remain as the inalienable principles of the revolution or else Nepal will go the Sikkim way for it stated:

Regarding nationalism there appeared two types of mistaken views. One type accepted the King's leadership for the protection of nationalism; stressed on bolstering his status, thereby, strengthening nationalism at the cost of democracy [four-class democracy]. The other type went on embracing the Nepali Congress's position: it careened fully towards democracy [parliamentary democracy] little realising the threat to which the independence and sovereignty of the nation were exposed to as a result of such a position. The advocates of the first type of views were those who were expelled, on account of their pro-King stance, in the third Congress. The victims of the second view were all those who in the Darbanga plenum and even in the third Congress put forward the proposal for the re-establishment of the dissolved parliament while nakedly towing the line of the Nepali Congress. However, the majority of the third Congress was free from the influences of both these views. They took both democracy and nationalism as inalienable principles of the revolution ... and the same stance has been the foundation of the Fourth Congress. The political

<sup>65</sup> To understand why the Party thought that nationalism had become important then one has to refer to its earlier document NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), "Deshko Rajnitik ... Bislayshun" 22-3 In it the Party explains that the issue of nationalism had become important because of two reasons: the surrender of the King before India, especially after Indian conquest of Pakistan with the support of imperialist Soviet Union and because of Nepali Congress's pro-India policies. Since, the King's surrender before India had made him autocratic the issue of democracy had also gained importance. See, also NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu" 49 In their perception the King had surrendered before India by accepting the ratification of Trade and Transit Treaty in 1971, which they argue was based on the 1950 treaties which are against the sovereignty and independence of Nepal.

scenario of Sikkim also helps us to understand the danger underlying the tactics which segregate nationalism from democracy ... The events there also help us to understand the character of Nepali Congress. From VS 2007 (1950/51) they have, in Nepal, played the role of Sikkim Congress. Without paying attention to their [Nepali Congress]'s character and intentions if one unites with them only for democracy, then Nepal will turn into another Sikkim (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu" 42).

However, the way the Party understood the relation between democracy and nationalism<sup>66</sup> is to be understood by placing together the implications of the foregoing statements with those of its statements on democracy. The above statements implied that in the Nepalese context an anti-nationalist tilted towards India or served the interest of India. So, nationalism meant not to tilt towards India; not to serve Indian interest, but to work for Nepalese independence and sovereignty. And democracy to the Party, besides meaning wider economic and political rights for the people (See, footnote 66) also meant the transfer of power to the people, for it stated:

Nepal for centuries has remained under autocratic monarchy ... [here] the rulers are always the feudal and the tout bourgeois classes. From these classes, the strategy of new democracy seeks to transfer power to the people. Until such transfer of power to the people is effected the goal of democratic revolution would remain unfulfilled (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu" 43).

And since the New Democratic strategy of the Party defined people as the proletariat, the peasants, the petty and the national bourgeoisie the above statement implied that the coming of the four classes to power meant democracy.

<sup>66</sup> See, NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu" 74 The party explains that the question of nationalism should be linked with the question of wider economic and political rights of the people i.e., democracy. Then and then alone, the party says, the issue of nationalism would receive the support of the people, meaning thereby that even nationalism on its own was not sufficient to mobilise the people (this observation is of importance in view of the fact that this faction was the mother of the NCP (Maoist)), and tactically the Maoist also banked upon such formulation that linked democracy with nationalism. Besides, the document points out that if nationalism is linked only with the interest of the King then it is reactionary in nature.

In the light of the above conclusion, the connection which the Party perceived in between democracy and nationalism is clear. To the Party, the independence and sovereignty of Nepal were in safe hand if power were transferred to the four classes. So, such rule was democratic and in the interest of the nationalism of Nepal. Hence, it was opposed to NCP (Rayamajhi)'s tactics, which advocated reformed Panchayat system, and the tactics of NCP (Pushpalal) which advocated a parliamentary system because both the tactics<sup>67</sup> sought changes without asking for a change in the ruling classes. However, the Party believed that it was important to support nationalism to keep Indian aggression at bay for it was implied in its version where it stated, "In the past two decades, India has repeatedly tried to limit our sovereignty and independence. These efforts, however, could not manifest into open attacks only because since the day of the Delhi Accord there has been a constant struggle against the Indian reactionaries" (NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), "Deshko Rajnitik ... Bislayshun" 23). Besides, in its tactics for the period, it pointed out that for "developing an independent<sup>68</sup> and revolutionary Communist Party" (28) it must outperform the Nepali Congress's campaign for democracy and the King's campaign for nationalism for it stated:

In such a situation ... we have to struggle both for democracy and nationalism and while campaigning for democracy we must outperform Nepali Congress's campaign, and while campaigning for nationalism

<sup>67</sup> For further understanding of the objection of the Nucleus see NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), "Deshko Rajnitik ... Bislayshun" 29 The party observes that National democracy, the strategy of the Rayamajhi faction believes in achieving socialism through bourgeois parliamentary system and by following a peaceful path. NCP (Pushpalal) does not accept the Rayamajhi's strategy, but accepts the tactics of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. Hence, Rayamajhi's strategy is revisionist and Pushpalal's, neo-revisionist. Hence, they are both unacceptable.

<sup>68</sup> See, NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), "Deshko Rajnitik ... Bislayshun" 27–8 The party explains that in the past its role was confined to support either the Nepali Congress's struggle for democracy or to support the King's struggle for nationalism (knowing well that his nationalism was for the protection of monarchy). In the former instance it opposed the King but neglected its struggle against the Nepali Congress and vice versa in the latter. Hence, for evolving as a revolutionary force its tactics was to oppose both the forces.

we must outperform the King's campaign for nationalism ... Usually, in the past, when we struggled against either the King or the Nepali Congress we applied our main force against one of them while neglecting our struggle against the other as a result we could not play an independent role... (NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), "Deshko Rajnitik ... Bislayshun" 28).

However, the importance of the above statements lies not only in clarifying that for transforming itself into an independent revolutionary force the Nucleus approved of a tactics which avoided alliance both with the Nepali Congress and the forces representing the King, but also in revealing that its tactics was in favour of using democracy and nationalism as instruments of mobilisation.

Then in Varanasi in June/July 1974, the Nucleus held its Fourth Congress. In the Congress, Rawal points out that a few of the founder members of the Nucleus viz., "Man Mohan, Sambhuram, Bharatmohun, Siddhilal and Kamal Koirala were not present". According to him, these members ultimately formed the "NCP (Man Mohan) in 1979 after holding a 'unity conference'" (74). Since the documents related with these events are unavailable, one can neither account for the reasons behind the split in the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) in 1974, nor explain the reasons behind the formation of the NCP (Man Mohan) in 1979. After the split, "the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) under Mohan Bikram Singh ... came to be known as the NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress))" (Rawal 75; K. C, Nepalma Communist Bhag 2 113).<sup>69</sup>

As a continuation of the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), the NCP (Fourth Congress) subscribed to the strategy of New Democratic revolution. This revolution was expected "to transfer land to the tillers ... nationalise the capital and industries which

<sup>69</sup> See, K. C, Nepalma Communist Bhag 2 114 The party then formed a Central Committee of 13 members, which included Mohan Bikram Singh, Nirmal Lama, Bhaktabahadur Shrestha, Jaigovinda Shaha, Khambasingh Kuwar, Chitrabahadur KC, Khiman Singh Gurung, Rawuviram Acharya, Suryanath Yadav, Haridwar Upadhyaya, Gangadhar Ghimire, Mohan Baidhya and Lalsingh Bhandari with Mohan Bikram Singh as the General Secretary. Of these 9 were full members and 4,

were in possession of tout bureaucratic bourgeoisie ... annul all unequal treaties ... equalise women's status with that of men, and give freedom and equal rights to the poor, deprived<sup>70</sup> and untouchables of the society" (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu" 58). However, the Party felt that the above quoted elements of the strategy could be fulfilled only by "a Government representing the interest of the people" (58). And since such Government (representing the four classes) was not in existence it prescribed the creation of a *Deshbhakta Janatantrik Sarkar* (patriotic-democratic Government). For the creation of such a Government, the Party prescribed the use of the above quoted elements of the strategy along with 33 other issues [minimum programme]<sup>71</sup> as "immediate demands and problems to be resolved" "to pressurise the then reactionary Government" (59). Such pressure tactics was expected "to raise the level of people's consciousness" and establish the "patriotic-democratic Government"<sup>72</sup> (59). This

<sup>70</sup> See, NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu" 50–1 The party rejects movements based on ethnic lines. It points out that the Indian Government and the Americans are penetrating the ethnic population and instigating them to undermine the integrity and the strength of Nepal. They are doing so to maintain their control over Nepal.

<sup>71</sup> See, NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu" 59–62 The party itemises 33 issues such as the rights of a land-locked state, issues concerning land reform etc., and for the first time it points out to the problem of migration from its southern border and the manner in which the corrupt officials sell citizenship to the migrants. The resolution of these 33 issues formed the minimum programme of the party.

<sup>72</sup> See, NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), "Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu" 59 Tactically such Government was necessary for two reasons. First, without such Government in existence people would repose their faith in the reactionary Government to solve their problem. Secondly, without such Government it would not be possible to keep alive people's problems and demands, which were necessary for raising their level of consciousness till the Government of the people was established. Besides, the existence of such Government, which would keep the demands alive would help the subjective and objective conditions of the revolution to mature.

Government<sup>73</sup> was then expected to implement “the minimum programme, provide full political rights to the people, hold the election for the Constituent Assembly and pass on the responsibilities to the Government created thereafter” (56). Hence, at that point of time the Party aimed at destroying the “autocratic monarchy and the Panchayat system” and for it, the Party favoured the forging of a united front of patriotic, democratic and Communist forces, the very forces visualised in power in the patriotic-democratic Government (63). These, forces, as identified by the Party, were those “who favoured full political freedom for the people, supported the sovereignty and independence of the nation, advocated the implementation of the minimum programme especially progressive land reform; opposed, for the sake of achieving the foregoing goals, the autocratic rule of the King, Indian expansionism, American imperialism, and Soviet socialist imperialism” (62). This front was, however, supposed to remain clear from “both the Nepali Congress and [forces representing] the King as the front was struggling for nationalism and democracy” (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu” 63). However, to achieve the destruction of autocratic monarchy and the Panchayat system, the Party believed essentially in armed peasant struggle for it stated:

In order to achieve the present revolutionary aims—the destruction of autocratic monarchy and the Panchayat system, the establishment of a Government of patriotic and democratic forces, the protection of the independence and sovereignty of the country and for implementing the minimum programme—it is essential to carry on a revolutionary struggle at the grass-roots. And the core of such a struggle should be armed peasant struggle (63).

The Party planned to organise peasant struggle by “progressively encouraging movements at the local level” taking “local problems”. In such a struggle the Party was to organise “poor villagers” “agricultural labourers”, “middle class peasants”

<sup>73</sup> See, NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Kranti Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu” 57 The party argues that this Government should emphasise nationalism and democracy, the interest of the four classes, then alone the Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly would be in the interest of the people.

against “local feudal, rich agriculturists and the administration to transform the movement into armed peasant struggle”. The Party advocated “peasant struggle to be the primary form of peoples’ struggle”. However, the Party rued over the fact that “it had no organisation to carry out such struggle”, and problem existed especially regarding the “organisation of the proletariat, youth and student fronts” (65). In case of the proletariats, the Party said, “because of the weak condition of the proletariats in the country, their struggle has not developed and acquired political significance ... In the last two decades there was certainly a growth in the numerical strength of the proletariats, but the role of the Party among them was almost non-existent” (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Krantī Ra Partyka ... Samasyaharu” 65–66). In view of such situation of the proletariat it was, therefore, logical on the part of the Party to state that “The aim of the struggle would be to create situation conducive to the launching of armed peasant struggle” (64). And for generating such outcome the struggle was to take two forms: unconstitutional and constitutional. The unconstitutional struggle was for “directly opposing the King, the Constitution and the system” and the constitutional struggle was to be waged for “raising demands for various reforms while functioning within the limits of the Constitution”. If the former type of struggle was “to be waged in areas where people’s consciousness was developed”, the latter type of struggle was meant for “areas with less developed consciousness” (64). But, for waging such struggle the Party banked on “the proletariat, the peasants and the students’ movements as the three most important elements of the struggle” (66), without expressing, of course, the pre-eminent role of the peasants in the struggle. Was it the compulsion of the Party, in view of the status of the proletariat, to bank on the students and to categorise their movement as one of the important elements of the struggle? It seems so, because all across the Communist literature of Nepal the students are referred to as one of the most conscious sections of the society.

During the 70s, the Party—the NCP (Fourth Congress), as Rawal puts it, was “considered as one of the strongest Communist factions”, but all was not well within

the Party (75). “In VS 2035 [1978/79], the Party took disciplinary action against its General Secretary, Mohan Bikram Singh for his indulgence in immoral activities and replaced him with Nirmal Lama” (K. C, Nepalma Communist Bhag 2 115). But, Lama could not last long. Within two years, as pointed out by Surendra K. C, he lost his hold in the Party “for trying to transform the duly elected members of the Party Central Committee into a minority by unconstitutionally including new members”,<sup>74</sup> for “embracing a policy, which favoured participation in the Panchayat election”, and for his statement on the death of Pushpalal where he is said to have stated that “the death of Pushpalal was a great loss to the Communist movement of Nepal despite the fact, that the Party had characterised him as a ‘traitor’” (K. C, Nepalma Communist Bhag 2 115). So, he was removed from the office of the General Secretary to make way for the entry of Shersingh [Bhaktabahadur Shrestha]. During this period, the Party’s tactics was focused on struggling for nationalism and democracy.<sup>75</sup> However,

<sup>74</sup> See, NCP (Masal[Mashal]), “Chautho Mahadhiwayshunbhitra ... Singhawalokan” 185 This faction emerged after Nirmal Lama went out. The document of this faction points out that Nirmal Lama invented the rule that the Central Committee could rightfully include additional members numbering 1/3 of the total Committee members i.e., 1/3 of the 13 members. Further, in the next meeting 1/3 of the total members created after the first addition could be added and the process could go on. This according to the Party was an unconstitutional invention and it was invented by Lama to reduce the Central Committee elected by the Fourth Congress into a minority and to steer the Party according to his will.

<sup>75</sup> See, NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Rajnitik Pratibedan ... 2038 Salko Asadma” 143–50 Here the party points out that the characteristic feature of world politics then was the competition between the Soviet Socialist Imperialists and the Imperialist America for world domination. Its effect was also being felt in the Indian subcontinent. The Indian expansionist was in league with the Soviet Socialist Imperialists and was trying to penetrate Nepal. The party perceived the possibility of open attack from its southern neighbour and hence it pointed out that its tactics should be focused on the issue of nationalism and democracy. To do so, it proposed the creation of a united front where the only force that it considered eligible was the NCP (ML). It denigrated the NCP (Pushpalal) as a lackey of the Nepali Congress, the party of the feudal forces and the tout bourgeoisie; condemned Man Mohan faction as an opportunist and declined to the NCP (Rohit) faction and the Rayamajhi group, the revisionists, a place in the united front.

events like the May 1979 proclamation and the subsequent developments reveal that the Party could not function without differences even under the new leadership. And this becomes clear in its document “Rajnaitik Singhawalokan” of Paus 2036 [Dec. /Jan. 1979/80]. In it, the Party points out that its response to the May 1979 proclamation was not decisive: in the beginning, it perceived the proclamation as a “plot” (See, p.106), so it decided to boycott the referendum, but soon “a section of its leaders shared platform with Pushpalal and Man Mohan factions [Despite the fact that it characterised both Pushpalal and Man Mohan factions as touts of Indian reactionaries]<sup>76</sup> to advocate the cause for an environment where free and fair referendum could be conducted” conveying, thereby, “a message that the Party was not against participation in the referendum” (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Rajnaitik Singhawalokan” 92). According to its document, such confusion in its tactics then was due to the “Bhadra 1(August 17) pamphlet”, which according to the Party, was “published without the approval of the Central Committee and the politburo” (93). Since the pamphlet is not available it is not possible to assess the level of the differences, that the content of the pamphlet held with the official position of the Party. However, the differences must have been glaring in view of the Party statement, which assessed “the contents of the pamphlet [as] something beyond the understanding of the Central Committee” (93). Though the Central Committee, thereafter, boycotted the referendum, yet the vacillation in the activities of the Party and the pamphlet incident<sup>77</sup> brought into the open the breach within the Party: a breach which heralded the Party fragmentation of 1983/1984 (see following page).

<sup>76</sup> See, NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), Rajnaitik Singhawalokan, p-99 where the party characterises Manmohan, P.L [Pushpalal], Rayamajhi as the touts of Indian reactionaries. So it advocated that the party should avoid them.

<sup>77</sup> The differences which the document of the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama faction)) highlights with the opinions of the Central Committee after the fragmentation of the NCP (Fourth Congress) in 1984 as NCP (Mashal) and NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama faction)) conveys a feeling that the party workers involved in the pamphlet incident were probably Nirmal Lama and his coterie.

The developments after 1980, in the organisational front as described by Rawal and as indicated by the Party document catalysed the process of fragmentation. Describing the developments, both Rawal and Surendra K. C point out that disciplinary action was again taken against Mohan Bikram [obviously followed by his expulsion from the Central Committee] and Nirmal Lama was also removed from the Central Committee (Rawal 78; K. C, Nepalma Communist Bhag 2 116). This was followed by the incarceration of General Secretary, “Shersingh” by the Government in “Srawan 2040 [August 1983]” (Rawal 77). Thereafter, a pamphlet of the Party published in 14 Aswin 2040 [30 September 1983] indicates that “for a long time differences existed within the Party over political and organisational issues” (see, following page), and because of these differences even the “Central Committee was divided” (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Partyo Sankat ... Prasna” 180). With existing differences intact, when “Com. Suryanath Yadav” and “Com. Jaigovinda Shaha” representing the “minority group” resigned from the Central Committee there emerged “a constitutional crisis”<sup>78</sup>, which led to the dissolution of the Committee in its 27<sup>th</sup> meet (180). For creating such a situation, the “majority group”—the majority among the 13 member Central Committee of the NCP (Fourth Congress)—blamed the “minority group” (headed by Nirmal Lama) for its impatience when it stated:

For a long time there had been many types of differences among the Party members over political and organisational issues. The majority decision cannot always satisfy everybody. In such situation is it right on the part of the dissatisfied lot to indulge in indiscipline? Certainly not. The Central Committee was preparing for the Congress ... It had already published three documents. Moves were on to publish the documents of the minority groups. It was possible to discuss the viewpoints of all in the Congress ... [but] the minority group forced the dissolution of the Central Committee. They did not have even a

<sup>78</sup> The Constitution of the party is not available hence to understand the Constitutional crisis one needs to refer the document, NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 83 The faction observes that the existence of the Central Committee became unconstitutional when the numerical strength of the 9 full members of the Committee which was fixed by the NCP (Fourth Congress) became 4 after the resignation of its two members.

little patience to wait for the Congress which was scheduled to meet within a few months (NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), “Partyo Sankat ... Prasna” 180).

After the dissolution of the Central Committee, the Mohan Bikram group formed a “temporary Central Committee” and under its initiative it held in “Kartik 2040 [Oct/Nov 1983] in Gorakhpur its Third National Conference and declared the birth of Nepal Communist Party (Mashal)” (K. C, Nepalma Communist Bhag 2 117). Similarly, on the “10<sup>th</sup> of Mangshir 2040 [ 26 Nov. 1983]”, the Nirmal Lama faction formed its “National Conference Organising Committee” (1), which after “two months” i.e., in January 1984 organised a “Conference” (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 2), the first National Conference of the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama))<sup>79</sup>. The NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh))<sup>80</sup> faction blamed Nirmal Lama Group for plotting the dissolution of the Central Committee of the NCP (Fourth Congress [original]) with the intention to take part in the upcoming election of National Panchayat for its document stated:

The minority group ... took such a step keeping in view the upcoming National Panchayat election. For years ordinary differences within the Party and the two line struggle were going on and for such differences it was not necessary to fragment the Party even before the fifth Congress which was due to be held a few months later. But time to organise for the upcoming Rastriya Panchayat election was less ... Besides the Central Committee of the Fourth Congress and its politics were not accommodative of their goal to participate in the election. And since the possibility of winning majority by their policies in the fifth Congress was remote, they hastened the dissolution of the Central

<sup>79</sup> Nirmal Lama Group took the name of the earlier Fourth Congress, whereas Mohan Bikram group came up with a new name. The documents used in this work are all from the original Fourth Congress that existed before January 1984. There is only one document of Nirmal Lama group which is also in the name of NCP and is only distinguished by its tag, Nirmal Lama Paksha, which in English means Nirmal Lama side.

<sup>80</sup> Since document of NCP (Mashal) which was under the leadership of Mohan Bikram Gharti are all published in the name of NCP (Masal) which emerged out of another split in NCP (Mashal) in 1985/86 the references are given with the name Mashal within square brackets to clarify that it was NCP (Mashal) formed in 1984, because after 1985/86 split another faction arrogated the name of Gharti faction and Gharti faction started using the name NCP (Masal).

Committee and engineered the fragmentation of the Party (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), “Chautho Mahadhiwayshunbhitra ... Singhawalokan” 183).

Further, the faction characterised the minority group as reformist interested in forging tactical alliance with the Nepali Congress and pro-Panchayat [Man Mohan faction] groups. It dubbed them as ‘careerists’ who were not interested in the revolutionary goal of the Party for it stated:

In place of protracted revolutionary people’s struggle and preparation for underground movement, they are stressing on reformist and constitutional movements. They are emphasising on tactical union with the pro-Panchayat forces and Nepali Congress. In fact, they are not interested in the revolutionary goal of the Party but as 'careerists', they intend to enter the Panchayat system... (184).

Finally, in the Rajnaitik Pratibedan of the Fifth Congress held in Ayodhya in 1984/85, the Party, in hindsight, pointed out that the split was due to the slackening in the effort of the Party in revealing the activities of the ultra-leftists<sup>81</sup> and the right opportunists in the context of the controversy between the issue of the united front and the tactical front for it stated:

To deal with the ultra-left tilt visible in the activities of Com. Rishiraj Devkota (Com. Ajad) and the right opportunism of the minority group, we had to remove them after 3 years. The Party had to bear a significant loss because along with them the Party lost a sizeable section of honest friends. Behind all these happenings lay the slackness of the Party in exposing the activities of the ultra-left and right opportunists in the context of the controversy between the issue of united front and the tactical front (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), “Rajnaitik Pratibedan: (2041 Salma [1984/85] ... Parit)” 214).

Therefore, in the perception of the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)) the causes behind the split were essentially the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama))’s leaders desire to participate in the Panchayat elections; their reformatory attitude, and the controversies surrounding the issue of united front and tactical front. However, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) itemised 7 issues, along with others, on which its perception differed from that of the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh))

<sup>81</sup> No document of this group is available

group when they were together as the NCP (Fourth Congress). First, it was regarding the analysis of the year 2007 (1949/50). The NCP (Fourth Congress) led by Nirmal Lama pointed out that the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)) analysed “the year 2007” simply as “an event” where “two feudal forces clashed” with each other (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 17). Then it points out that such an analysis was against the perception of NCP (Fourth Congress), because in the 2007 [1949/50] revolt the NCP (Fourth Congress) “admitted of the existence of a revolutionary democratic force besides the force of the King and the Congress” (18). In the revolt, the King and the Congress “posed” as “democrats”, and misled “the bourgeois democratic revolution to failure”. Then they argue, that the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh))’s analysis while going against the perception of the NCP (Fourth Congress), hid the “betrayal perpetrated by the Nepali Congress and the King”, because the analysis did not admit of the existence of a revolutionary force, which was misled by them and so it failed to “expose to the people that the betrayal was due to their [of the Nepali Congress and the King] class character” (19). By such analysis, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) was probably arguing that the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)) was soft peddling with the Nepali Congress and the King, whom the NCP (Fourth Congress) had adjudged as forces to be avoided.

Second, after distinguishing strategic and tactical united front<sup>82</sup>, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) points out that as per the decisions of the NCP (Fourth Congress [original]) it believed in tactical alliance even with patriotic,

<sup>82</sup> See, NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 25–6 The Party points out that tactical alliance is a miniature form of United front. This type of alliance, formed on the basis of a special demand, binds together different political forces to fulfill the immediate needs of the people through constitutional struggle. This type of struggle may last for a day or for a while and its organisational structure is loose. But the function of Strategic United front is to capture the seat of power.

democratic and Communist forces with whom strategic alliance could not be forged immediately for it stated:

The patriotic, democratic and Communist forces with whom ... strategic United front cannot be forged; with them, in the course of functioning, we should adopt the policy of forging different types of political alliances. These types of unity could be either of the national and regional level or it could be open and secret ... It is possible to forge temporary alliances with forces that have the same policy regarding a particular issue in a particular situation. We have called such alliances tactical united front or tactical unity ... (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 26).

Then the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) argues that the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)) does not distinguish between the strategic and tactical united fronts. As such “it considers tactical unity to be the most important and limits the formation of the united front to tactical united front” (27). So, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) states, that “by holding such understanding the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)) is helping the reactionary forces” probably because it felt that the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh))’s understanding of the tactical alliance did not allow it to use the alliance as a stepping stone towards strategic united front—a front necessary for the capture of power (27).

Third, in the 1979–1980 referendum if the Nirmal Lama group was in support of the movement for ensuring free and fair referendum, the Central Committee of the NCP (Fourth Congress [original]) was in favour of boycotting the referendum for continuing the struggle (See p. 131).

Fourth, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) believed in the revolutionary use of the Panchayat election. It felt the necessity for such turn in the Party tactics after VS 2038 (1981–82), because it perceived a change in the situation. The change in the situation was perhaps explained in the Party perception, which viewed in the third amendments of the 1962 Constitution the desire of the monarchy to preserve and strengthen the system (see page139). Hence its document stated:

The boycott and the use of Panchayat (reactionary association-institution) election is two different forms of struggle used under two different political situations. They are not ideological stances. Earlier the Party had adopted the boycott form of struggle. The struggle of VS 2035/36 (1979/80) was in a different situation, where the Party was

expected to change the form of struggle. The Party could not understand that the necessity was for the revolutionary use of the election (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 37).

And by the revolutionary use of the election, the faction meant that the Party should “participate in the election with a view to educate and make the citizens aware of the system while revealing the weaknesses of the process” (39), meaning, thereby, that the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)) did not see eye to eye with this understanding of the faction. On the contrary, the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)) was using the boycott form of struggle to form a Party, which would fight elections like a rightist opportunists and revisionists. It was propagandising such petty bourgeois stances, that is boycott, as revolutionary ideals among the Party members and the people to fulfil its narrow factional goal for the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) stated:

Like the rightist opportunists and revisionists, the advocates of boycott form of struggle are propagandising among the Party members and the people the wrong idea that to make a revolutionary use of the Panchayat election is to expend the entire energy of the Party in creating a Party which would fight elections. By propagating such petty bourgeois understanding as revolutionary ideals it is trying to fulfil its narrow factional goal (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 39).

In sum, the Party was pointing out that the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)) was interested only in its goal of creating a Party to fight elections. Fifth, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) points out that the leadership of the NCP (Mashal), that is, Mohan Bikram Singh, in the past, had introduced ideological deviation by revising the strategy fixed by the NCP (Fourth Congress) when it declared the maximum strategy as New democracy and minimum strategy of achieving a Government of the patriotic and democratic forces for its document states:

The Fourth Congress of the NCP had clearly spelled out the maximum strategy of Socialism and Communism, but Mohan Bikram Singh ... fixed the maximum strategy of the Party as New democracy and the minimum strategy as the creation of a Government of the patriotic and democratic forces. As a result the Central Committee of the Party also fell into the trap of this ideological deviation (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 57).

However, here the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) is not clear, because it

neither explains why it considered such changes in the strategy as ideological deviations, nor it explains the results flowing out of such deviations. Therefore, this difference accounts for differences between the two factions without adding analytical content to the progress of the narrative.

Sixth, the difference between the two factions is based on the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama))’s understanding about the differences between basic contradiction and main contradiction. According to it, the main contradiction in Nepal is between the Nepalese people and feudalism. So, it points out that “the main force of revolution should aim at destroying feudalism”, but according to its version the “NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)) considered the basic contradiction as the main contradiction” (62) and argued that “the focus of the struggle against feudalism alone would serve the interest of the imperialists, especially the Indian expansionists” (63) to mean that the stand of the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) is in favour of the imperialists. Rebutting such argument of the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)), the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) points out that in Nepal “the Indian exploitation and its interference as an expansionist is owing to the support of the feudal forces of Nepal. From the backstage, the Imperialists and the Indian expansionists protect Nepalese feudalism from the brunt of the people’s attack. So, an attack upon the monarchy, the kingpin of feudalism, is also an indirect attack upon them” (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 63). So, they argue the stand of the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh)) is wrong, because their stand does not reflect the “objective condition” of the kingdom (63) .

Lastly, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) itemised 5 issues concerning Party organisational principles, which they claimed were violated by the NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh))’s leadership. These were issues concerning Collegiate leadership, Democratic centralism, principles related with the formation of *Jana Bargiya* organisation (professional organisation), and issues related to the relationship between Central Party organisations.

On collegiate leadership, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) points out that the Party was infested from the “centre to the cell” with the leadership of individuals. As a result, the Party functioned not according to the principle of “Collegiate leadership with individual responsibility, but according to the principle of individual leadership with Collegiate responsibility” (66–7). This had, according to the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)), “deified the Party leadership and turned them into ... autocrats” (67) implying, by it, the practice of personality cult within the Party. Based on its understanding about the principle of democratic centralism, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) faction points out that for the last “9 years the Party Central leadership and its majority (the 7 out of the 13 Central Committee leaders) ... took decisions ... and imposed them upon the Party...” (68). The “decisions were imposed unilaterally ... destroying democratic centralism and [helping the growth of] bureaucratic centralism” (68).

Similarly, on the issue of *Jana Bargiya Sangathan* (professional organisations) the Party blamed that the leadership violated the Marxist organisational principle, because the fractions formed by the Party leadership were composed of Party members and not of members of professional organisations. This fulfilled the “formality of forming fractions”, but the fractions turned into Party organisations instead of “organisations formed for the larger interest of the classes” (70) represented by the professional organisations.

Lastly, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) points out that before the 1983/84 fragmentation the Party Central organisations, functioned in contravention with the provisions of the NCP (Fourth Congress [original]) Constitution: On many occasions the politburo and the technical committee took decisions while keeping the Central Committee in the dark (71).

Besides, they objected against NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti/Singh))’s stand, which barred tactical alliance with forces categorised as the “reactionary forces” by the NCP (Fourth Congress [original]) (73). These forces were parties like the NCP (Pushpalal) and NCP (Man Mohan) (See, footnote 75 and 76 of this

Chapter). But, (NCP (Fourth Congress [Nirmal Lama]) faction viewed alliances with them as the “revolutionary use of the reactionary forces” as “prescribed by Lenin” (73). And true to its profession the leaders (Nirmal Lama and his group) had combined with the above mentioned Communist parties in 1979 in their bid to create a free and fair environment for the holding of the referendum.

However, to explain the causes behind the fragmentation the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) does not refer to the seven tactical and organisational issues instead it itemises three organisational tendencies which were prevalent in the Party. These tendencies as per the document were:

1 When the opportunist Communists were certain that their policies would lose their stand they indulged in mudslinging and in political-character assassination of those who advocated practical, objective tactics. They took disciplinary actions by implicating them in false allegations and blocked them from taking part in the Fifth Congress.

2 To serve the personal ambitions and selfish interests of a few they purged those who advocated the right opinion under the pretext of democratic centralism, collegiate leadership and Party secrecy.

3 In the process of inner struggle they ... suppressed the alternative opinions in the name of centralism (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 89–90).

The reference to “Opportunist Communists,” “selfish interest of a few,” and “they” in each of the above statements reveal the concern of the Party regarding the activities of a few Communists, and these “a few communists” as pointed out by the document, were no other than “Shersingh, and Kiran [Mohan Bikram Baidhya]” (81). Therefore, all the three statements of the Party were pointing towards one direction. They were pointing towards the ‘group-ism’ (81), which Shersingh and Kiran indulged in, and which the Nirmal Lama faction considered as the single most cause behind the fragmentation of the Party. But, this raises a question why did the Party list out the 7 differences if the explanation for the fragmentation lay only in the ‘group-ism’ of the two leaders? Perhaps, this was their way of pointing out that the ‘group-

ism' stood in the Party's way in the proper resolution of the various issues. However, if one takes the claims of NCP (Masal [Mashal])'s and that of NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) concerning the differences which paved the way for the split then one difference—both point out to it—gains prominence. It is about their difference in the understanding of the tactical unity. Hence, this, besides the 'group-ism', seems to be the most important cause behind the fragmentation of the NCP (Fourth Congress [original]).

#### 1.9.1. Strategy and Tactics of NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama Faction))

Its strategy, prefaced by the description of the external environment of the day, points out to the "fall of the Soviet Union and China" (93). In its characterisation of the Soviet Union as a fallen State, the Party perception must have been similar to those of the NCP (Fourth Congress), the NCP (ML), and the NCP (NWPP), but its characterisation of China in the same coin seems to have been influenced by its negative assessment of Chinese socialist modernisation policies initiated in the 80s under the leadership of Hu Yaobang. Thereafter, it identifies the historical stage of Nepalese society as "semi-colonial and semi-feudal", where "the growth of capitalism was imminent" (94). In such circumstances, the Party decides to work for the speedy transformation of the society by "destroying the vestiges of medieval feudalism through an armed revolution under the leadership of the proletariat" (95). Such revolution was expected to destroy "the monarchy which stood for imperialism, feudalism, tout-bourgeoisie and the bureaucratic bourgeois classes; complete bourgeois democratic revolution and push the society towards socialism" (95). In such a revolution the Party feared the absence of the "leadership of the proletariat". The absence, it observed, would allow "the monarchy, in collusion with the Congress and other revisionist opportunists to enact the drama of proclaiming hypocritical reforms to effect an still born revolution as in 1950 and 1979/80" (95). And to pinpoint the enemy and the supportive forces of the revolution it points out that at that stage of Nepalese society "the reactionary camp (the monarchy, the Nepali Congress and the pro-King Rayamajhi) is poised against the Communist camp and there is no liberal

bourgeoisie in sight” (96). It identifies “the reactionary forces in collusion with the imperialists” especially “the Indian expansionists as enemy of Nepali nationalism (national integrity and sovereignty), which is in political and economic danger, and which is burdened under iniquitous treaties, border incursion and the migration of population from the south” (96). It foresees, “the imperialists, who work in the background, to turn into a stumbling block of the bourgeois democratic revolution, when its emigrants would create a political problem” (96). And though, its strategy digresses from the usual New Democratic strategy, yet its observation regarding the necessity of the leadership of the proletariat; its statements regarding the absence of liberal bourgeoisie, and the need for moving towards the accomplishment of bourgeois democratic revolution raises doubts regarding the clarity of its strategy. Why did the Party announce such a confusing strategy? There is no reasonable answer to the question, moreover its reading that the country was in the phase of rapid economic transformation was itself a farfetched understanding about the objective condition of the country, because the economic growth rate of the country in between the period 1960 to 1982 was -01% (Shaha 54).

Finally, offering reasons for the formation of the tactical unity and identifying the supportive forces—the Communist parties (it does not identify the classes), the Party perceives that they should come together to form a national force to carry on national struggle, so it states:

Today the Communist forces are splintered under the pall of doubts and machinations. These divided forces are by themselves weak and none of them by themselves are powerful enough to do anything. Each of them are struggling to maintain even their existence, but when they will unite then a national force would be created and such national force would be actively supported by the people. Then this force will be able to lead, in planned manner, the organisation of national struggle. So, at this phase of Nepalese bourgeois democratic revolution, tactical unity is the objective necessity (NCP, Hamra Mukhya Matbhedharu ... Lama Pakcha 96–7).

Since the above quoted paragraph follows the identification of the dangers to the nationalism of Nepal what catches the eye are the two phrases, they are ‘national force’ and ‘national struggle’ implying by it that the formation of the tactical unity

was necessary in the interest of the nationalism of Nepal. Moreover, when the Party states that such force would be actively supported by the people, the implications comes to light: this Party was also in favour of using nationalism as a bait to hook the support of the people, it was necessary for mobilising its forces.

#### 1.10. Activities of NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Gharti))

After the fragmentation, NCP (Mashal) held its 5<sup>th</sup> Congress in Ayodhya in between 1–16 Mangshir 2041(16 Nov to 1 Dec. 1984). In the Congress Surendra K.C states:

... as the General Secretary of the organising committee Com. Ranabahadur (Chitra Bahadur K. C) presented the Rajnitik Pratibedan [Political Proposal]. The Congress elected a ... 15 member Central Committee and a 5 member Politburo. In the latter body, the three full members were Mohan Baidhya [Kiran], Chitra Bahadur K.C and Khambasingh Kuwar; and its 2 alternative members were Bhaktabahadur Shrestha, Chandraprasad Gajurel (C.P Gajurel). Mohan Baidhya was elected as the General Secretary (K. C, Nepal Communist Bhag 2 119).

In the Congress, the Party, NCP (Mashal), while explaining the slogans to be used clarified, though indirectly, that its strategy was to be the strategy advocated by the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) transformed as the NCP (Fourth Congress [original]). The Party decided to hold on to two slogans, the slogan for the establishment of a ‘patriotic-democratic Government’ and the slogan of ‘New Democratic Government’. Both these slogans were considered as strategic slogans for it stated:

Only armed peasant struggle can destroy monarchy, but today such condition is not present in the nation. So, under such situation, the slogan for the establishment of a Government of De. Ja. Sha. (*Deshbhakta Janatantrik Sarkar* [patriotic-democratic Government]) is not a tactical but a strategic slogan ... And until its realisation, it will be intact in all the circumstances ... we will, therefore, have two strategic slogans: one, the slogan for New Democratic Government and the other for De. Ja. Sha (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), “Party Ra Krantika ... Pachau Mahadhiwayshunma Parit” 251)..

To work for the establishment of ‘patriotic-democratic Government’ the Party banked on its leadership. It was to lead a united front of the “proletariat, peasants, students, women, teachers, intellectuals and all those representing the patriotic, democratic and left forces in the society” (277). However, after reviewing its functioning in the past,

the Party sought to change its tactics. It decided to focus on the propaganda movement for the establishment of New Democratic Government; work towards the establishment of peoples' army, and make preparation for armed struggle; focus on the creation of Revolutionary United front keeping in view the New Democratic strategy, and establish link with revolutionary movements of the world. In the absence of such tactics in the past, the Party felt that it had fallen into the 'bog of right opportunism' for it stated:

While reviewing the functioning of our Party in the past, we have to focus on some of our weaknesses. First, in the past our main emphasis was on the creation of a Government of *Deshbhakta Janatantrik* [patriotic-democratic] forces, while neglecting the propaganda movement for the New Democratic Government. Secondly, we focused only on peoples' movement at the cost of creating People's Army and preparing for armed struggle. Thirdly, we formed only tactical alliances focused on immediate issues neglecting the task of forging united front under the leadership of the Party with the proletariat -peasant unity.... Fourthly, we are far behind in nurturing our links with revolutionary movements of the world. Because of all these mistakes our Party, in the past, fell into the bog of right opportunism. We have to fight against this, and lead the Party towards the revolutionary path by removing our weaknesses (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), "Party Ra Krantika ... Pachau Mahadhiwayshunma Parit" 250).

Besides, the documents of the Party made two observations on problems related with the *Janajatis*. The first observation, while explaining why the *Janajatis*' problems remained unresolved throws light upon the class basis of the movement for it states: "Today the Party has failed to work among the *Janajatis*. The leaders of the Party are all Brahmins, Chettris and Newars and they represent either the higher or the middle class of the society, so the Party has failed to work significantly among the *Janajatis*" (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), "Party Ra Krantika ... Pachau Mahadhiwayshunma Parit" 271). The second observation is concerned with the relation between the problems of the various *Janajatis* and nationalism. On this relation, the Party states, "the problems of the various *Janajatis* are, in fact, the problems falling within the ambit of nationalism" (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), "Janajati ... Prastao" 287), this meant that if the problem of nationalism is resolved then the problems of the *Janajatis* are resolved. But when the argument is paraphrased the document fails to present a

coherent view. According to what is stated, there are two types of nationalism. The first type, advocated in the interest of the ruling class, rationalises inequality which is the outcome of an underdeveloped economy characterised by lack of industries; lack of communication facilities, and lack of development in education and language. Such nationalism is divisive. The other type, advocates the cause of the majority of the exploited lot and is the outcome of a developed economy. Therefore, “capitalist development” (287) is necessary to move from the first type of nationalism to the second type. Such nationalism is cohesive because it is based on “equality of opportunities” (288). However, the document warns, that in the progress towards the second type of nationalism the Party should desist from applying Lenin’s principle of “the right to self-determination which encourages the carving out of different states for the *Janajatis*”. This is because the principle is applicable only in resolving the problem of “nationalities” and not of *Janajatis*, which are “historical construction of human groups”. Finally, it says, “We should avoid all such perceptions which seek to divide one *Janajati* from another, the aim of our movement should, therefore, be to unite the *janajatis* on the basis of progress” (288). Thus, the logic of the argument, instead of proving that the problems of the *Janajatis* are due to the problem of nationalism proves that the problems of the *Janajatis* are related with the problem of development and that too capitalist development. Hence, the Party fails to prove its stand. However, for the narrative the argument is important in revealing how the Party wanted its form of nationalism to be perceived: it wanted it to be perceived as an ideal possessing an explanatory capability. Besides, the document rejects the application of Lenin’s right to self-determination in resolving the problems of the *Janajatis*. This rejection is important in view of the fact that the documents of the Fifth Congress provided the foundations on which the NCP (Maoist) were to base their strategy and tactics, but with a difference.

#### 1.11.1. Split in NCP (Mashal): Formation of NCP (Masal) and NCP (Mashal (Baidhya Group))

In the days ahead, the Party, the NCP (Mashal) could not maintain its

cohesiveness. “For about a year after the Fifth Congress” it witnessed “intense Party struggle”, which “ended in the further fragmentation of the Party” (34). The inner party struggle, as recorded in the document of NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Baidhya or Kiran faction]) was “intense because of two reasons”. “Firstly, the advocates of individual leadership were not at all ready to resolve their attack on Party centralism while remaining within the bounds of Party discipline. Secondly, they were raising issues already resolved in the fifth Congress” (NCP (Mashal) 35).

The above statements, except for the fact that it allows one to make a reasonable guess regarding the period when the fragmentation occurred (the split may have occurred in and around November/December 1985 because the Fifth Congress was held in December 1984), leave many questions unanswered. It does not indicate the persons responsible for launching attack against the Party Centre. Further, it does not tell the issues involved in the struggle. However, if one were to go by the resolution passed by the Baglung District Committee of the NCP (Masal) on 3 Kartik 2042 [October 19, 1985], then it is clear that the issues involved were political and organisational and the comrades attacking the Central committee were none other than the members of the yet to be born NCP (Masal), see the following page, for the resolution stated:

On 3 Kartik 2042 [October 19, 1985], the meeting of the Baglung District Committee reviewed the political and organisational mistakes committed by the Central committee since the holding of the fifth Congress. To end the near chaotic situation prevalent within the Party; to organise a revolutionary Party based on the principle of Marxism, Leninism and the thinking of Mao Zedong, and to rectify the worsening condition of the Party by removing the mistakes committed by the Central committee, we appeal all the comrades of different district committees and of other committees to come together ... In this period of crisis, we hope to receive the full support of all the comrades in preserving the revolutionary image of the Party (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), “Baglung Zilla Samitiko Prastao” 291).

If the political issues referred to the changes the Central committee had introduced in the Rajnaitik Pratibedan passed in the fifth Congress, the organisational issues referred to its method of functioning, which the Baglung District Committee

resolution judged as unconstitutional. However, before entering into the controversies it would be better here to take note of two facts:

- The Central committee of the NCP (Mashal) then was divided into majority/minority groups. “If the majority group was of Kiran [Mohun Bikram Baidhya], the minority was of Mohan Bikram [Singh/Gharti]”, and the fifth Congress document, the “Rajnitik Pratibedan” represented “Mohan Bikram Singh's line” (K. C, *Nepal Communist Bhag 2* 122, 119). In the Congress it was placed by Chitra Bahadur KC [Ranabahadur], “a fast friend of Mohan Bikram Singh” (119).

- As reported in the resolution of the NCP (Mashal) “the Central committee meeting held immediately after the fifth Congress, in contravention with the decision of the Congress, had decided to enter into tactical alliance with Man Mohan and P. L [Pushpalal] at the Central level” (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), “Rajnitik Pratibedan Ma ... Parivartanbarey” 310).

With these facts in place, one is now in a position to understand the contention of the NCP (Mashal). Explaining why the Central committee introduced changes in the *Rajnitik Pratibedan* (Political Proposal), the NCP (Mashal) points out that behind the Central committee's action was its intention to rationalise its decision to ally with Man Mohan and P. L groups, and to prove that the past policy guidelines concerning the formation of united front and tactical alliance was a weakness in the decision of the fifth Congress. To make its point clear, it quotes the relevant paragraphs from the Rajnitik Pratibedan passed in the Congress and the changes introduced by the C.C. as follows:

In the Rajnitik Pratibedan, it was stated [in reference to the expulsion of Nirmal Lama Group]: “along with the rightists a sizeable section of honest comrades also left the Party damaging the Party significantly. Behind the happening, the slackness of the Party in exposing the rightists and the ultra-leftists in the context of the united front or tactical alliance controversy ... was also responsible to a large extent”. The above lines were changed [by the Central Committee] and expressed as: “a few friends went along with the rightists. As such, the Party suffered some damages and this was due to the slackness of the Party in dealing with the issue of united front and tactical alliance” (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), “Rajnitik Pratibedan Ma ... Parivartanbarey” 312).

After that the Party argues;

To explain the split, the decision of the Congress focuses on the slackness of the Party in exposing the rightists and the ultra-leftists. To explain the split, the changed version, focuses on the slackness of the Party in dealing with the issue of united front or tactical alliance.... Behind these changes their intention [the intention of the majority] was to emphasise on the necessity to forge alliance with the rightists. Further, the C.C had already taken the decision to combine with P. L and Man Mohan at the Central level. So to rationalise the decision they wanted to prove that the earlier policy regarding united front or tactical alliance was wrong ... A weakness in the decision of the fifth Congress... (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), "Rajnitik Pratibedan Ma ... Parivartanbarey" 312).

Besides, in the published form of the *Rajnitik Pratibedan* the Party points out that the C.C expunged the name of the Secretary, Chitra Bahadur K.C, the presenter of the Rajnitik Pratibedan, from the document to "lower the importance of the minority group" (311). As regards the unconstitutional functioning of the C.C, the Baglung District Committee resolution points out to 21 issues, where activities like "the C.C [Central Committee] taking disciplinary action against comrades without allowing them the chance to explain their position"; "the suppression of alternative views by the C.C", and "the suppression of inner party struggle and democracy by the C.C" are listed (NCP (Masal[Mashal]), "Baglung Zilla Samitiko Prastao" 293). Although these differences are proffered by the parties involved in explaining the reasons behind the split, yet when the two splits (the earlier split that led to the formation of NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama faction)) and the present split are viewed comparatively there seems to be much more than what meets the eye.

In explaining the causes behind the split, the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama faction)) had forwarded similar objections against the Central committee of the NCP (Fourth Congress (original)), and even then the main issue was whether tactical alliance should be forged with the Man Mohan and the Pushpalal groups. The only difference between the present and the past splits was regarding the position of the parties involved in the altercation. Then it was the Nirmal Lama group (the minority) against Mohan Bikram Baidhya [Kiran] and Bhaktabahadur Shrestha [Shersingh] group (the majority) functioning under the direction of Mohan Bikram Singh

[Dumdum]. And in the present instance, it is the Mohan Bikram Singh group (the minority) against the Mohan Bikram Baidhya group (the majority). However, in both the cases the Party in the majority was linked with the name of Mohan Bikram Baidhya group. If in the split of the NCP (Fourth Congress (original)), as indicated by the document of the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama faction)), the Baidhya group was against the tactics of joining with the Man Mohan and the Pushpalal groups, the contrary stand of the Baidhya group was pointed as one of the causes behind the split in the NCP (Masal [Mashal]) by the Mohan Bikram Singh's group. Such change in the tactical position of the Baidhya<sup>83</sup> group, and that too within a period of one year asks for an explanation, but there are none. Hence, these splits lend credence to the belief that they were probably engineered to capture the Party leadership or better still they were probably the outcome of leadership struggle within the NCP (Mashal).

As a result, the NCP (Mashal) split into two factions: the NCP (Masal) and the NCP (Mashal). The Mohan Bikram Singh group held its fourth national conference in Gorakhpur (India) in Chaitra 2042 (March/April 1986); formed a 12 member Central Committee and a 3 member politburo consisting of Mohan Bikram, Chitrabahadur K.C and Ramsingh Srish. Mohan Bikram was elected as its General Secretary (K. C, *Nepalma Communist Bhag 2* 122). In the conference, it passed a document, *Madhyapanthi Awsharbadko Singhawalokan*, where the name of the Party was indicated as NCP (Masal). However, no document exists to substantiate the formal date regarding the formation of the Party under the Mohan Bikram Baidhya group. Possibly, it came into existence in Nov/Dec 1985 and as indicated by this group's later document it was named as NCP (Mashal). Thus by March/April 1986, the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), which had begun its journey as one single Party in December 6,

<sup>83</sup> This seems to be the trend of the group where Mohan Bikram Baidhya is involved. Even in the split of NCP (Unity Centre) in 1994 and later in the fragmentation of NCP (Maoist) in 2013 the name of the same leader appears again and again.

1971, to bring together the splintered Communist parties was itself split into three factions: the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama faction)) under the leadership of Nirmal Lama, the NCP (Masal) under the leadership of Mohan Bikram Singh and the NCP (Mashal) under the leadership of Mohan Bikram Baidhya.

In the foregoing discussion, the strategy and tactics of the NCP (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)) has already been dealt with. The NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Baidhya)) declared that it was following the footsteps of the Fifth Congress while changing its tactics in the course of its evolution until 1990. Since, this was the Party, which was behind the evolution of the NCP (Maoist) in 1996 it is essential to survey the changes in the tactics, which the Party introduced in between the period 1985 to 1990. The next section of the narrative is therefore devoted to this end.

#### 1.11.1. Strategy and Tactics of NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Baidhya))

During the period 1985–1990, NCP (Mashal (Mohan Bikram Baidhya)) produced only one document, “*Rajnaitik Pratibedan: (Pachau Mahadhiwayshun Pachiko Pratham Rashtriya Sammelanma Parit)*”. It was passed in the first national conference of Kartik 2047 (October/November 1990). In it the Party presents a survey of its past activities. The survey begins with an opening line, where it states: “After the fifth Congress exactly 6 years have passed. Therefore, to assess how far we succeeded in carrying out the responsibilities handed over to us by the fifth Congress, we need to survey our past” (13). This implied that the Party recognised itself as a continuation of NCP (Mashal); hence it had accepted the fifth Congress’s strategy which was a continuation of the strategy of the NCP (Fourth Congress). Hence, as usual, its document of October/November 1990 identified the Nepalese society passing through the “feudal and semi-colonial” stage of historical development (24). In it the domestic enemies, “the feudal, the bureaucratic and the tout bourgeoisie were still in power”. The enemies without, as usual, were identified as “Indian expansionist and the weakened [Soviet union under Gorbachev] Soviet socialist imperialist” (10, 11). As such, the problem of “nationalism and democracy” were yet to be resolved (13). So the Party chooses the “New Democratic strategy” (22). In keeping with the

strategy, the Party tactics was similarly a rehash of the tactics of the NCP (Mashal) fixed by the fifth Congress: in its struggle it tagged the issues of nationalism and democracy. And if its slogans were aimed at propagandising new democracy, destroying the Panchayat system and for transferring power to the people, its activities opposed feudalism, imperialism, socialist imperialism and especially the Panchayat system and Indian expansionism characterised by its dictatorial stand. Besides, it focused on campaigns which sought to expose the rightists. And these tactics, according to the document, helped the Party to enhance its image among the people for it says:

During this period we tagged our struggle with the issue of nationalism and with issues concerned with the day to day problem of the society. Besides we also focused on the problems of professional organisations. We used those tactics which were in tune with the strategy forwarded by us and our slogans were also framed in the same perspective. While framing the strategy we have always emphasised upon a strong propaganda slogan for new democracy. Our tactical slogan which calls for the end of the Panchayat system and which demands the transfer of power to the people is a centralised slogan. In this period, firstly the strength of our struggles were centred on fighting against feudalism, imperialism, Socialist imperialism and especially the autocratic Panchayat system and Indian expansionism characterised by its dictatorial stand. Secondly, we fought against the wrong policies of the Nepali Congress. Thirdly, we paid special attention in exposing the rightists. Today the image of 'Mashal' has improved among the people and behind such improvement lies the role of these tactics (NCP (Mashal) 27).

And since the Party admitted that it intended to shoulder the responsibilities handed over to it by the fifth Congress, in its survey of the period, it identified "25 [tactical and organisational] responsibilities" (14). Out of these the survey focuses on those which were worked out in greater details. Considering the later evolution of the Party, the important ones, where it claims to have made important changes, are described below:

According to the Party, this period was used in developing a revolutionary line; in the 'proletarianising'<sup>84</sup> of the Party, in developing a collegiate leadership, in

<sup>84</sup> The document nowhere explains what this term meant to them. But, when

developing its workers, on deciding its position on elections, on the development of three weapons of revolution, and on deciding the process to be adopted in the management of *Janabargiya Sangathan* (professional organisations). While developing the revolutionary line, the Party observes that “its emphasis was on the development of class struggle at the village level; in readying itself for armed struggle and in developing a line against the parliamentary line” (22). This sort of line “focused on understanding the local conditions and on understanding how the constitutional and unconstitutional tactics could be coordinated with the tactics of counter attacks on the reactionaries”. These understandings were “then used to achieve local strategies”,<sup>85</sup> under the direct command of the “the Party centre” (17). While dealing with the issue of ‘proletarianising’ the Party, it felt that “it was extremely important to weed out the influences of non-Marxist thinking on personal property and family in the Party”, as such it says that it “organised programmes to sanitise the Party of all rightist and petty bourgeois thinking” (22). However, on the issue of developing collegiate leadership the Party observed that during this phase “it understood the importance of such leadership, but while implementing it the Party was faced with a situation where the demand for absolute equality among the leadership was raised” (23). Then it points out, that “a revolutionary Party needs to respect a leader” and observes that so far “it has failed in resolving the contradictions

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this faction fragmented in 1994 and when another faction NCP (Unity Centre) emerged under Nirmal Lama then the document of the Nirmal Lama faction explains what the term meant to them. See, NCP (Unity Centre) 18–23 ‘Proletarianisation’ meant three things. Proletarianisation of outlook and thinking, to struggle and to be one with the interest of the proletariat and to apply proletariat revolutionary outlook in all aspects of life. All these, essentially meant sloughing off individual ambitions, embracing proletarian value (which is not explained) in every facet of life and to be ready for class struggle. Therefore, this term was used to convey the idea of de-classed activists.

<sup>85</sup> These were put into effect in Rolpa and Rukum when this group formed NCP (Unity Centre) in 1991.

between the two positions” i.e., the demand for equality and the need for a respected leader (24). While developing Party workers, the document observes that it focused on “taking care about the workers and in solving the problems of their families”, besides this it “sought to develop their ideological and political understanding and in developing their organisational skills”. As a result, the document observes that “new leaders are emerging in the Party” (24). On the issue of elections, the Party does not seem to have developed a clear line. At one point it raises it to the level of strategy and rejects participation in elections and at the other level, it indulges in a linguistic rigmarole, which gives it the license to participate in elections for it states:

On considering the nature of Nepalese revolution, which is bound to be characterised by protracted peoples’ war, and for which preparations are needed from the beginning, the question of participating in elections is ruled out. Besides, we have reached a conclusion that our past tactics of active boycott of elections was the mechanical copying of Lenin’s tactics, which was suitable in the context of Russia. In short, in a country like ours the question of election assumes strategic importance. Hence, it is appropriate [in the Nepalese context] that the boycott movement should be adapted to the situation of the nation (25).

On the development of three weapons of revolution viz., revolutionary Communist Party, leadership of revolutionary united front and Peoples’ Army the Party observes that it reached the conclusion that for “accomplishing the New Democratic revolution ... the absence of even one of the weapons would make the revolution a distant cry” (25). Finally, it points out that during the period it reached the conclusion that “all its *Janabargiya Sangathan* (professional organisations) should be centrally managed” (26).

However, these changes, which the Party describes, are just in the nature of descriptions. As such, they leave many questions unanswered raising further questions, and even on a few issues where the Party tries to explain the changes, the explanations are vague. Therefore, it fails to enrich the analytical content of the narrative, but the description throws some light on the path followed by a faction, which, in future, was destined to lead a revolution.

### 1.12. Tactics of NCP (Masal) Mohan Bikram Singh/Gharti

The strategy of the Party, as indicated, was the continuation of the strategy of the NCP (Mashal)—it aimed at establishing new democracy. In 1989, the Party tactics was to move forward with a seven point programme. The programmes were:

1. To end the despotic Panchayat system and to transfer power to the people.
2. To achieve total political freedom for the people.
3. To end the ban on political parties.
4. To end the ban on fundamental rights.
5. To demand for the release of political prisoners.
6. To end the 1950 treaty and all unjust treaties related to it.
7. To fight for two separate treaties on trade and transit between India and Nepal, and to demand transit facilities as per international law (NCP (Masal), “Rajnitik Prastao 2046 [December/January 1989]” 372–3).

However, in order to carry out the struggle for achieving its programmes the Party decided to form a united front. But; according to its document, the united front was to be “strategic united front” (373). By this, it meant a class based front formed under the Party leadership. Thus, at the close of 1989, all Communist factions were thinking in line of destroying the Panchayat system and in establishing democracy.

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## Chapter 4

### Communist Movement after 1990

#### Parliamentary System and Various Communist Parties. Their Ideologies and Strategies, Major Issues, Forms of Protests, Support Base/Social Base

##### 1. The United Left Front and the UNPM

The On 15 January 1990, seven Communist parties formed the United Left Front. The seven parties were “NCP (Marxist), NCP (Manandhar), NCP (Verma), NCP (Tulsilal), Majdoor Kisan Sangathan Bhela Samiti (Rohit faction),<sup>1</sup>NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress (Nirmal Lama)), and NCP (ML)” (Samyukta Bam Morcha 7). It declared its “moral support to the Nepali Congress’s movement against the Panchayat system”. It aimed at “bringing the Congress to its fold ... and if not, to coordinate its activities with them” (6). However, the Front was a loose organisation, where “the participating parties or groups, with the permission of the Front, could either stay or leave the Front” (7). Organised under “Sahana Pradhan as President, and Tulsilal Amatya, Honorary President” the Front formed a “seven-member Secretariat” (3). The “*Jana Andolan*”, which the Front decided to lead was open to “the peasants, the majdoor [working class], the youths, students, women, the national bourgeoisie and national traders” (2). It listed 18 goals’ struggle. Of them, majority were related to the setting up of a democratic polity, and the political context in which they were framed explained their presence in the list. However, considering the tenor of Communist movement in Nepal, goal 17 stood out: it was softly couched. And the Front had this to say, “17. Review the relation with India in the context of Nepal’s traditional friendly relation ...” (Samyukta Bam Morcha 6). Besides, in the list, what strikes most is the absence of goal concerning its stand towards monarchy. Later document of NCP (ML) explained the absence to the presence of “rightist

<sup>1</sup> See, K. C, Nepalma Communist Bhag 2 149 This faction was named NCP (Nepal Majdoor-Kisan Party) after January/February 1991. In English its name is NCP (NWPP) that is NCP (Nepal Workers Peasants Party).

forces” in the Front. And the same phrase explained, though indirectly, the presence of euphemistic expression in goal 17 for it stated

The rightist forces were not even ready to include any anti-monarchic words ... On the question of national interest they were not ready to come openly against the suppression of India. So in the program of the ULF, the issues concerning national freedom and Indian expansionism were not clearly mentioned ... (NCP (UML), Bartaman Paristhiti: 1994 26).

The rightist forces which the NCP (ML) document was referring to were probably the leaders of the NCP (Verma) and NCP (Manandhar). These were leaders who advocated the strategy of National Democracy and because of their strategy they were thought to be pro-Russian.

Sometimes later, that is after 19 February 1990,<sup>2</sup> another Communist Front, *Samyukta Rastriya Jana Andolan* (United National Peoples’ Movement [Henceforth, UNPM]) came into existence. It was composed of “NCP (Masal), NCP (Mashal), NCP (MLM [Krishnadas Shrestha]), Proletarian Labour Organisation, Nepal (Ruplal Biswakarma) and the United People’s Front (Sambhuram Shrestha)” (*Samyukta Rastriya Jana Andolan* 1). In the list, considering the Front’s strategy,<sup>3</sup> and owing to the lack of evidence one cannot pinpoint the ideological positions of two of its factions: the Proletarian Labour Organisation, Nepal (Ruplal Biswakarma) and the United People’s Front (Sambhuram Shrestha). In its formation, NCP (Masal) claims that it “played a significant role”, and perceives Nepali Congress and Left Front’s activities in the service of India (NCP (Masal), “*Rajnitik Prastao 2047 Asad* [June 1990]” 377) for it states:

<sup>2</sup> See, NCP (Masal), “*Rajnitik Prastao 2047 Asad* [June 1990]” 377 The Party states that the 19 February 1990 movement was mainly the movement of the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front. It had chalked out its programme, but its emphasis was on moving forward only after the formation of the United National Peoples’ Movement. Thus, as the NCP (Masal) denies its part in 19 February, it is clear that the UNPM came into existence after February 19.

<sup>3</sup> See, p. 406 The Front welcomed factions following both strategies of New Democracy and People’s Democracy. Hence, it is not possible to find out which strategy the Proletarian Labour Organisation and United People’s Front subscribed to.

In the democratic movement two sides, the Nepali Congress and the 'Left' Front as one, and our Party and the *Samyukta Rastriya Jana Andolan* (UNPM) as another, participated. But, there was a basic difference in the nature of their participation. Owing to their compromising position towards Indian expansionism, the participation of Nepali Congress and the Left Front received media attention at the international level. But, our Party did not receive any such support ... we moved forward independently depending upon our own strength and on the support of the patriotic, democratic forces of the nation and the Front. Even then our movement received the support of all democratic and left forces... (377).

When the Front announced its existence, its booklet, rejected both "Parliamentary and Panchayat arrangements for having historically failed in resolving the problems of Nepal" (*Samyukta Rastriya Jana Andolan* 2–3), and came up with a 7-point programme. These programmes, in comparison with that of the ULF made its position clear. It denounced Indian expansionism; and by declaring that its goal was for establishing 'New Democracy/People's Democracy' (see below), it obliquely rejected the institution of monarchy. However, by placing the two strategies on equal footing the Front created confusion, but communicated its tactics to remain open to all Communists of Nepal barring, of course, the ULF. It did not welcome them, because it rejected their "blind support" to the "demands drafted by the Nepali Congress for the *Jana Andolan*" (*Rising Nepal*, "UNPM for Nationalising" 1990 April 17). When the programmes of the Front are compared with that of the ULF, except for the confusion that exists in its strategy and for its stands on Monarchy and Indian expansionism, they are similar. The programmes focus on issues concerning land distribution to peasants, freeing women from suppression, ending discrimination based on ethnicity etc. Considering the link of the Front to the growth of NCP (Maoist) in 1994, the programmes need to be placed here. Its booklet titled "Samyukta Rastriya Jana Andolanko Niti Ra Karyakram Sambandhi Baktabya" itemises the following programmes of the Front.

[1]. Majority of the Nepalese population is peasants so their problem is the fundamental problem of the country. To solve their problem the land in the hands of the landlords should be confiscated and distributed to the tillers of the soil and to the poor landless peasants.

[2]. By freeing women from political, economic, social and family suppression they should be given rights equal to that of men.

[3]. Healthy national unity should be established by giving equal rights to all ethnic groups and languages and by opposing the domination of one language throughout Nepal.

[4]. Revoke all unequal and unjust treaties by opposing Indian expansionism and the 1950 treaty to ensure the independence of Nepal. Establish friendship with other countries on the basis of Panchasheel.

[5]. We should build independent national economy by ending the control of the imperialists and the expansionists upon our national economy.

[6]. We should ensure the political freedom and rights of the people.

[7]. Highest priority should be given for the fulfilment of the fundamental rights of the *Majdoor*, peasants, minimum wage earners, students, intellectuals and small traders. There needs for work, food, home, clothes, education and health should be met with... (4–6).

The above problems of the people and of the country can be solved only with the establishment of either People's Democracy or New Democracy. So in place of Panchayat system ... we should establish either People's or New Democracy. To fulfil these historical purposes we have formed the United National People's Movement... (Samyukta Rastriya Jana Andolan 6–7).

In these announcements, the important programmes to be noted are 4–5, because through these programmes the Front was subtly indicating that one of the issues which came in the nation's way in solving its problems was Indian expansionism. And, since majority of the Communist factions of Nepal construe Nepalese nationalism as opposition to Indian expansionism UNPM's statements above cannot be taken as an exception. By castigating Indian expansionism, the Front was also raising the issue of nationalism.

In the February 18, 1990–April 9 *Jana Andolan*, the United Left Front played an important role. According to T. Louise Brown, in the Congress-ULF alliance “the political backbone of the *Jana Andolan* was built and sustained ... by the junior partner in the alliance, the ULF” (123). And though the United National People's Movement functioned in isolation, yet Rishikesh Shaha credited the Front for elevating the nature of the movement to its “climactic” height (See p. 123). In passing such judgement on the role of the UNPM in the movement, he must have shared the NCP (Masal)'s view that “the UNPM's call for action on 6 April was decisive for it brought the King and Panchayat system to its knees before the people” (NCP (Masal), “Rajnitik Prastao 2047 Asad [June 1990]” 377). However, it could not take part in the political parleys that followed the 8 April King's proclamation. Explaining why this

happened, the Front in a press conference held in April 16 simply said that “it was side-lined”. Nevertheless, the Front was then busy in demanding the Government to seize and nationalise “all ill-gotten assets amassed by those exercising political influence during the Panchayat rule” and in asking the “abrogation of the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty”. Besides, it was not totally against joining the Interim Government. It was ready to join the Government provided its composition suited its taste (Rising Nepal, “UNPM for Nationalising” 1990 April 17). However, in the K. P Bhattarai Interim Government of ten-member Cabinet three berths went to the ULF and none to the UNPM. Thus, during the period it was the ULF strain of the Communists who were in position that mattered. However, the continuing alliance between the two forces was conditioned by the NCP (ML)’s (the main force within the ULF) understanding of the then political situation. According to its understanding, “the King was still the power and the Interim Government was battling against him for democracy” (NCP (ML), Bartaman Paristhiti: Oct/Nov 1990 16). Under such circumstances, the Party observed that “the revolutionary forces could not be the enemy of the Interim Government ... rather it was its ally bound by its revolutionary ideals to help and keep the Government on track by offering constructive criticisms” (16). Besides, it offered five reasons to explain why it was party to the Government. These reasons essentially rotated around three themes. First, the Party felt that its participation was necessary to concretise the joint movement’s spirit which was for establishing democracy. Second, by participating in the Government, it aimed at ensuring good governance, which it felt was necessary to nurture and sustain people’s faith in revolution. Third, it was there to check any future tie between the reformist and autocratic forces for such relationship, it thought, was harmful to the spirit of the movement. Hence it stated:

Why did our Party take part in the Interim Government? To clarify our tactics on this question a few other fact are to be clarified. Firstly, the Interim Government is the product of a united revolution and the democratic movement is still on. The united revolution was carried on for establishing multi-Party democratic structure and for achieving democratic rights. Those goals are yet to be fulfilled. Hence, there is still a need for a united Front of the participants of the revolution

which was waged in unison ... Hence, our participation in the Government is still of the nature of United Front. Secondly, when a Government reaches the position which allows it to administer the nation then it should provide relief to the people this will infuse among the people to support revolution... Thirdly, if united Front can be created for achieving democratic rights then why cannot such Front be created for fuelling the same movement and for running the Government? ... Fourthly, the Interim Government is the product of an understanding with the King. In it there are also King's nominees. They are personalities working either explicitly or implicitly in favour of autocratic forces. Hence, if revolutionary forces do not take part in the Government, then there is a high possibility that these forces in future will come to terms with the reformists. In such situation the casualty will be the gains of democratic movement ... Fifthly, there is no alternative to this coalition arrangement ... No Government representing a single Party can express in full the spirit of the united movement... (NCP (ML), Bartaman Paristhiti: Oct/Nov 1990 16–7).

Thus, while expressing its tactics it made clear that its participation in the Government was for the sake of democracy and in the interest of more revolutions, for even behind its tactics of good governance was the motive to keep afire the flames of revolution. In line with its stand on creating a democratic arrangement, the Party submitted its 14-point demands to the Interim Government, which the Government accepted as its “guiding line” (Rising Nepal, “Bhattarai Seeks Cooperation” 1990 May 3). The demands stressed upon creating a democratic Constitution based on the principle of constitutional monarchy. Besides, it demanded the transfer of power to the people; holding of free and fair elections, guaranteeing of press and academic freedom, and the abolition of all laws impeding the democratic process (Rising Nepal, “ULF ... 14-Point Demands” 1990 May 10). However, even while asking for transfer of power to the people the ULF did not demand election for Constituent Assembly. To explain its position the Party presented a series of reasons. In the main, it argued that the nature of the movement—the force that it expressed—was not enough for such change. So, the understanding reached between the King and the parties were not meant for the creation of a Constituent Assembly or a republic. In its argument, it drew a relation between a republic and a Constituent Assembly and argued, implicitly though, that a movement for a republic was required if one were to go for a Constituent Assembly. Besides, it drew attention to two convincing reasons. In one, it expressed the fear of Palace plot if a long winding course were opted in the framing of

the Constitution. In the second, it pointed out that the then situation did not guarantee the possibility of creating a Constituent Assembly where the people's force could be in the majority, because even in the *Jana Andolan* it was the towns and district population which were active. Under such condition, the Party said that it felt safer to rely on the representation of revolutionary forces in the Commission than on the creation of Constituent Assembly. Its document put these views in following terms:

Why did our Party opt for a Constitution framed by a Commission and not by a Constituent Assembly? There are multiple reasons for it. Firstly the Andolan did not have the power to accomplish such change. So the parties and the King reached understanding to end the Panchayat system; set up multi-Party democracy, and end the autocracy of the King. Such understanding implied that immediately the country was not going to be a republic and that the King was ready to remain within the bounds of the Constitution ... Secondly, the King had agreed on such Constitution when he was forced on this line by the revolt of the people. Thirdly, even a Constitution framed by a Constituent Assembly was circumscribed within its limit: it was not going to be republic. Besides, even after forming the Commission it was possible to transfer all constitutional rights in the hands of the people. Fourthly, considering past experiences, there was the possibility of Palace plot if a long winding course were followed. Fifthly, if the King were not ready for transferring the constitutional rights to the people, and if he was against constitutional monarchy, then the slogan of Constituent Assembly is not enough. For change what are required are slogans for ending monarchy and for establishing republic ... Sixthly, the democratic movement was carried out by the conscious section of the towns and of a few districts. Even in the election for a Constituent Assembly, we cannot rule out the possibility of the influences of autocratic forces among the ruling masses. Under such situation, it would not be possible to ensure the majority of anti-autocratic forces in the Constituent Assembly. Compared to it the possibility of ensuring the representation of revolutionary forces in the Commission for drafting the Constitution were high ... Hence, we did not opt for a Constituent Assembly... (NCP (ML), Bartaman Paristhiti: Oct/Nov 1990 19–20).

Compared to the NCP (ML)'s understanding of the political situation, the NCP (Masal)'s and that of the UNPM's were different. The NCP (Masal)'s understanding was coloured by its equation of nationalism with democracy, implying thereby, its usual stand that nationalism cannot prosper without democracy (transfer of power to the people) or vice versa. So, it viewed the period as a phase of limited democracy, which needed rectification by passing sovereignty into the hands of the people for its document stated:

Under the present situation we have achieved limited democracy, but under it the threat of Indian expansionism has multiplied. So, in the present context the need to struggle for democracy and nationalism has increased manifold.

Today the multi-Party system has replaced the autocratic Panchayat regime, but the multi-Party system is still limited, because power has not yet been transferred to the people ...

To pass sovereignty into the hands of the people is the pressing problem of present day politics. And to do so the only medium is the election for the establishment of a Constituent Assembly... (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Prastao 2047 Asad [June 1990]" 378–9) .

And though the UNPM's booklet did not fully explain the import of its statement that "the present task of Nepali people is to find solution to the basic problem of nationalism, democracy and problems of livelihood" (Samyukta Rastriya Jana Andolan 3), yet in view of the presence of NCP (Masal) within the faction one cannot go wrong in stating that the Front too equated nationalism with democracy. Hence, during April/May 1990, the nature of demands raised by the NCP (Masal)<sup>4</sup> and the UNPM were focused on two issues. These were: 1) The creation of Constituent Assembly (Rising Nepal, "UNPM Team" 1990 May 1) and 2) Abrogation of 1950 treaty, if not, separate treaties on trade and transit with India. However, in the face of dogged stand taken by the Government against their demands the UNPM even threatened Prime Minister Bhattarai with a movement (Rising Nepal, "UNPM Team" 1990 May 1), and called on the people "to counter moves which were being planned to reverse the gains of the peoples' movement" (Rising Nepal, "UNPM For" 1990 May 2). For the balance of the period, three trends characterised Communist activities. They were engaged in unity moves; in raising demands for an

<sup>4</sup> See, K. C, Nepal Communist Bhag 2 130 During this period NCP (Masal) witnessed a split. The split, according to the author, occurred in the month of Chaitra [14 March–13 April 1990], under the leadership of Haribol Gajurel (Shitalkumar), Dr. Baburam Bhattarai and Sindhunath Pyakurel. They formed a group named Bidrohi Masal. However, in dating the split in March/April 1990, the author seems to have made a mistake. Because, the organ of NCP (Masal), which was published in Asad 2046 [June/July 1989], describes the split. Explaining the cause behind the split the Party indicts them as victims of Left deviation for advocating guerrilla war, armed struggle, guerrilla training for cadres as in Peru, Maoism in lieu of Maoist thought etc. See, NCP (Masal), "Masal. Anka 20" 713–4

Interim Act, and in contesting the Palace in the Palace-Government tussle over issues related to the Constitution. In the unity moves, initiatives came from minor factions namely NCP (Verma) and NCP (Manandhar). On 10 May, General Secretary, Krishna Raj Verma of the former faction announced that moves were on to unite NCP (Tulsilal), NCP (Manandhar), and NCP (Verma). Its document identified the basis for the unity in “the understanding created ... during the people’s movement” (NCP (Verma), Ajako Hamro Karya 10), but the move, in May, had an element of surprise. In earlier context, that is just after the formation of Interim Government, if NCP (Verma) saw the possibility of unity among three of the ULF partners namely “NCP (Manandhar), NCP (Tulsilal Amatya) and itself” (NCP (Verma), Ajako Hamro Karya 10–11), in the changed context, it was trying to rope in even factions like NCP (Marxist) and NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party [Rohit]) who stood by the New Democratic strategy. Arguing in similar lines, on May 14, Bishnu Bahadur Manandhar, General Secretary of NCP (Manandhar), announced the formation of a three-member committee to initiate unity talks among the parties (Rising Nepal, “Bright Prospect” 1990 May 15). Giving fillip to the move Hikmat Singh, a close associate of Pushpalal, joined NCP (Verma) on 1 June (Rising Nepal, “NCP Founder Member” 1990 June 2). Similar was the trend in the activities of NCP (ML). Radha Krishna Mainali, one of its Central Committee members declared on August 24 that the ULF to strengthen itself was trying to bring in the UNPM under its fold (Rising Nepal, “UNPM Into ULF” 1990 August 24). However, hidden in such moves of the larger faction, the NCP (ML), were clear indications that the tactics was being pursued with an eye on the coming election. During that period, they were trying to assess the power positions of the minor factions before forging alliances— a conclusion which finds its support in the Party document of the NCP (ML) where it states:

According to the new Constitution, a Party which does not collect 3% of the total votes cast will not be recognised by the Election Commission as a national Party. Under such circumstances unity among parties, who wish to unite should be forged accordingly. And with those who do not wish to unite there should be an informal Front based on electoral alliance. Then they should be allowed to contest

election as the candidate of the Party... (NCP (ML), Bartaman Paristhiti: Oct/Nov 1990 64).

Though the last statement of the Party is vague, yet what it says on the issue of unity is clear. And considering the manner in which the smaller factions were trying to rope in Communist factions with different strategy, it is clear that even their moves were coloured by similar considerations. However, these sorts of moves were not unique among the constituents of the ULF. On October 10, the NCP (Lama (Fourth Congress)), Sarvaharabadi Shramik Sangathan and NCP (Mashal) issued a joint statement saying that they were making preparations for unity (Rising Nepal, "Parties to Unite" 1990 Oct. 11). However, the NCP (Masal) did not approve of this unity move. It doubted the intention of NCP (Mashal), and viewed their effort as opportunistic, because it was not considering issues concerning political lines to be adopted for its document stated,

As far as the moves of the 'Sarvaharabadi' and the Lama group [NCP (Fourth Congress)] are concerned there is sincerity in their effort, but we doubt the intention of the other group [NCP (Mashal), under Pushpa Kamal Dahal]. Hidden in their move for unity are several plots and moves for creating more splits ... their moves are simply opportunistic, because they are not basing their unity proposals on well reasoned political line, but on the basis of Party's respect for Marxism-Leninism, Maoist thought and the cultural revolution of China... (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Prastao 2047 Asad [June 1990]" 382) .

From June 6, the issue of Interim Act caught on. Sahana Pradhan, Chairperson of the ULF demanded the Government to pass an Interim Act to replace the Panchayat Constitution to help it function independently (Rising Nepal, "ULF Demands" 1990 June 7). And in it the Party had the support of NCP (ML) for Jan Sharma writes, "The CPN (Marxist-Leninist), a dominant group in the ULF wanted the abrogation of 1962 Constitution and promulgation of an Interim Act ... [because they] wanted sovereignty to reside with the people" (82). It was perhaps their way of outdoing the Congress's stand which was for vesting sovereignty in the people, without diluting the position of the King. Their demand lingered on and in the July 8 suggestions to the Constitutional Recommendation Commission the NCP (ML) reiterated the ULF's demand. And though its suggestions on provisions concerning the wording of the

preamble, the position of the Parliament, the position of the King, the use of Army, and of emergency powers distilled lessons learnt from the political history of the nation, yet they all pointed towards one direction: the Party wanted to demote the position of the King. On the wording of the preamble, it preferred the statement that the Constitution was the outcome of “the power given to people by the movement” to the statement that “it was a gift from the King”. It suggested inclusion of provisions which would ensure the supremacy of the Parliament. On the position of the King and the use of Army, it suggested total control of the Parliament over the institutions. Its other suggestions reflected the then mood of the nation. It demanded inclusion of provisions, which would ensure equality among all ethnic groups; allow all the use of their mother tongue in educational pursuits and official works, a secular State, which barred conversion under duress and allurements, and gender equality in property inheritance and representation in the Parliament (Rising Nepal, “Guaranteed” 1990 July 9). However, its suggestions on the position of the King in the prospective Constitution served nothing more than a propaganda for Hutt said: “under the draft Constitution any change to the status of the monarchy could only be made with the monarch’s prior consent” (39). Other ULF factions like NCP (Manandhar) and NCP (Tulsilal) also emphasised on constitutional monarchy and the need for expressing the People’s movement as the source of the Constitution.<sup>5</sup>In October, the Communists were either asking for immediate promulgation of the draft Constitution presented to the King by the Council of Ministers (Rising Nepal, “Immediate Promulgation ... Demanded” 1990 Oct. 13), or in rejecting the Palace draft (See, p. 133). On 23 October, the ULF demanded the promulgation of the Constitution as submitted by the Cabinet and observed that it was against the Palace draft, because it was trying to establish an institution parallel to the Cabinet (the reference was to the Raj Sabha)

<sup>5</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “People ... Source ... Constitution” 1990 July 6 NCP (Manandhar) suggestion to the CRC and also Rising Nepal, “Suggestions to CRC” 1990 July 20 for NCP (Tulsi Lal)’s suggestion to the CRC.

along with other regressive elements. In the Palace draft, the NCP (Fourth Congress) sensed the King's reluctance in accepting constitutional monarchy (Rising Nepal, "Political Parties Reject ... Draft" 1990 Oct 24). On 27 October, in the ULF organised mass meeting which was followed by a procession, NCP (M) leader, Man Mohan Adhikari warned the King that if the Constitution suggested by the Cabinet were not promulgated then there would be a movement against the King. Similar, were the voices of NCP (Fourth Congress) and NCP (Verma) (Rising Nepal, "ULF Nixes ... Fundamentals of Constitution" 1990 Oct. 28). On October 28, the Patan branch of the ULF organised a successful strike. Pointing out the reason behind the strike, Tulsilal observed that the strike was meant for applying pressure on the King to promulgate a democratic Constitution. According to the statement of NCP (Fourth Congress), it meant a Constitution, which did not acknowledge an individual above the Constitution (Rising Nepal, "Patan ... a Complete Bandh" 1990 Oct. 29). With similar intent the ULF decided to observe a general strike in the valley in November 7 (Rising Nepal, "ULF Calls ... Strike Nov, 7" 1990 Nov. 2). In all these activities of the ULF and its constituents, there was a veiled threat to the King, and they all perceived the King as the source of the crisis. However, NCP (Masal), in its later document, viewed these incidents as the result of Nepali Congress and ULF's wrong tactics, which made the King powerful while entering the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1990 Agreement (See p. 124 ). Similarly, UNPM leaders speaking in a mass meeting held on November 2 pointed out that the crisis would not have taken place had the political parties, after the people's movement, voiced for an election for a Constituent Assembly (Rising Nepal, "UNPM Mass Meeting" 1990 Nov. 3). Thus, in the perception of NCP (Masal) and UNPM the crisis was the result of wrong tactics followed by the parties in course of the *Jana Andolan* and after. Amid such circumstances, the King promulgated the Constitution of Nepal on 9 November 1990. Following the promulgation the nation entered into the Parliamentary phase.

### 1.1. Unity Moves among Communists:

A week after the proclamation of the Constitution, the NCP (Mashal), Proletarian Labour Organisation<sup>6</sup> and NCP (Fourth Congress, Nirmal Lama faction) came together to form NCP (Unity Centre).<sup>7</sup> The unity must have occurred in between 20–30 November.<sup>8</sup> Why was the unity necessary? Commenting on the reasons which drove the factions towards unity the document of the Party points out, that the move was in response to the objective conditions prevailing at that moment. These conditions were “the nation’s cry for its transformation into an independent New Democratic Nepal and the need for a revolutionary Communist Party which could, under the leadership of the proletariat, accomplish such transformation by leading the nation towards a decisive revolutionary victory” (NCP (Ekta Kendra), “Sadasyaharulai Appeal” 1–2). Considered in the context of Nepal Communist Movement, this was a commonplace argument which prefaced every unity move and moves to create a new faction so it carried no substance. Hence, the statements which followed the hackneyed justification carried more weight in explaining what triggered the unity. And those statements were as follows:

<sup>6</sup> See, NCP (Unity Centre), “Communist Movement ... of Nepal (Unity Centre)” 10 After the formation of Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party in 1975 it suffered a split in 1975. The faction which emerged out of the split was named Proletarian Communist League in 1981. Later it turned into Proletarian Labour Organisation.

<sup>7</sup> See, Footnote 4 Bidrohi Masal, which was a group that had split from NCP (Masal) and which was working in the UNPM also joined the Centre. However, the exact date of their union is not known. However, documentary evidence of the exact date of this union is not available.

<sup>8</sup> Two facts support this conclusion. First the 19 November Press Release of NCP (Fourth Congress) announced that its central committee was fully authorised to “give final shape to its unity talks with the Sarvahara Shramik Sangathan [Proletarian Labour Organisation] and NCP (Mashal)” (Rising Nepal, “Fourth Congress Stresses” 1990 Nov. 20). Second, see (NCP (Masal), “RIM Ko Patra” 431), where the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM)’s letter of June 12, 1991 to NCP (Unity Centre) states: “Some time ago we received an important document of the NCP (Unity Centre). This Unity Centre was formed in November 1990 by uniting NCP (Mashal), Proletarian Labour Organisation and NCP (Fourth Congress).”

But, the Communist factions which agreed on basic issues were fragmented and they considered themselves incapable of leading such a revolution. With the objective condition in the backdrop, the unity was forged to create a revolutionary Party under the leadership of the proletariat. In this general objective condition from 1990 a new objective condition was added. That was the establishment of the parliamentary system. This brought before us new opportunities, challenges and many dilemmas. These changes favoured the reactionary classes' interests so it was natural for them to organise themselves to enjoy the fruit of the changes. Hence, they were organising themselves to fully utilise the opportunities generated by the change. For the Communists it was necessary to re-invent the existing organisations and methods of struggle to make use of the opportunities and the challenges. The unity was in response to the addition of the new objective condition to the existing ones ... (NCP (Ekta Kendra), "Sadasyaharulai Appeal" 2).

Thus, had the situation not changed unity would not have occurred. Moreover, if the tone of the statements is considered then it is clear that they also wanted to enjoy the opportunities presented by the changes. And what were the opportunities offered by the changes? Their documents do not answer the question. But, their silence could not stop NCP (Masal) from commenting that it was an "opportunistic move ... with an eye on the forthcoming election" (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Pratibedan Paus 2048 [1992]" 451). In this connection illustrative are the comments of RIM (Revolutionary Internationalist Movement)<sup>9</sup> on "Antarik Rajnitik Pratibedan" the first document of the Unity Centre. In a letter addressed to the Centre the RIM points out that the unity move had brushed aside issues concerning ideology and political line.<sup>10</sup>Besides, it

<sup>9</sup> See, NCP (Masal[Mashal]) 227–8 According to the document the first conference of 13 Marxist-Leninist came together in the autumn of 1980 to strengthen International Communist Movement. In its second conference in 1984 the group formed the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement with the intention to fight against the effects of counter revolution that came in China. Earlier NCP (Mashal), which was under Mohan Bikram Singh, was its founding member. Later, both NCP (Masal) and NCP (Mashal) became its members after the split of NCP (Mashal). This document is of the earlier NCP (Mashal) which after split turned into NCP (Masal), but it has published even its earlier documents in the name of NCP (Masal). Hence, the reference has Mashal within square brackets. The NCP (Unity Centre) also became its member after its formation in 1991.

<sup>10</sup> RIM points out that while forging unity the parties did not identify their

points out that implicit in the document of the Unity Centre (Ekta Kendra) are the messages that it was interested in creating just a large Party ignoring the question of revolution for it stated:

From the entire document it becomes clear that the Centre in evaluating the failure of Communist movement in Nepal ignores the importance of developing rural areas as centres of revolutionary struggle. On the contrary it carries the message that the Centre considers the ability of creating a Party with more public support as the touchstone for evaluating the performance of a movement. In this way the Centre has kept as its goal the creation of a Party which would compete with the opportunistic and revisionist forces ... Considering the objective condition of Nepal, revolution which takes into account the goal of capturing power by creating bases in villages for encircling cities and leading a protracted armed movement is the only option. But, unfortunately the document of the Centre remains silent on this count... (NCP (Masal), "RIM Ko Patra" 435).

Thus, it implicitly supports NCP (Masal)'s claim that Unity Centre had come up with an eye on the upcoming election. The Centre formalised its unity in the Unity Congress held in "VS 2048/8/29 [15 December 1991]" (K. C, Nepalma Communist Bhag 2 131 footnote 127). Meanwhile, NCP (ML) revealed its strategy by saying "our goal is to establish New democracy by thoroughly changing the existing semi-feudal and semi-colonial society of Nepal" (NCP (ML), Bartaman Paristhiti: Oct/Nov 1990 80). And clarifying what was to be considered while framing its tactics it stated:

To achieve our goal we have to go a long way. For that we have to lift class struggle to its revolutionary height. But, at this moment we have the support of the masses. And if there is free and fair election then there is a possibility of Communists coming to power. This indicates the presence of a unique situation. On the one hand there is no possibility of bringing about thorough transformation; on the other, in case of free and fair election the communists have the possibility of coming to power. Therefore, while framing our tactics today we should take the present environment into consideration ... (80-1).

Hence, the immediate activities of the Party were nothing more than the reflection of

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ideological differences rather by maintaining silence they accepted the differences without laying down how the differences were to be worked out. Then RIM states that without ideological struggle it is not possible to form a viable united party. Such unity is, therefore, opportunistic." (NCP (Masal), "RIM Ko Patra" 433).

its tactical position in the changed environment. These were moves for brightening the Party's prospect in the upcoming election. Therefore, to forge unity among its ULF constituents it initiated talks with them. According to its Party organ "Navayug" the discussion lasted from 2047 Kartik 24 [10 Nov. 1990] to 2047 Mangshir 19 [5 Dec. 1990]. In it, the organ claims that the factions succeeded in "thrashing out political and ideological differences and in approving the publication of a document of understanding by 2047 Mangshir 27 [December 13, 1990]" (NCP (ML), "Navayug" 27). But, on December 10 in a press conference NCP (Tulsilal), NCP (Rohit (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party)), NCP (Verma) and NCP (Fourth Congress)<sup>11</sup> announced their dissociation from the ULF. In their statements they underlined the need for creating a new Front which would "accommodate all left forces" (Rising Nepal, Four ... Dissociate ... Left Front 1990 Dec. 11).<sup>12</sup> What they meant by accommodation was explained in Balchandra Mishra's description where he stated: "When the question of sharing leadership berths arose in the discussion, Narayan Man Bijukche [Rohit] and Tulsilal felt that their share, in view of their organisational strength and influence, would be below their level of expectations ... Hence, they pulled out of the unity process" (219–20). Whether Mishra's statements about sharing of leadership berths stood on the way of Communist unity is not verifiable from any documentary sources, but if one takes NCP (Nepal Majdoor-Kisan Party)'s statements then it appears that the unity process was hinged more around the

<sup>11</sup> This is not understandable because by now the NCP (Fourth Congress) was already in NCP (Unity Centre). See also Rising Nepal, "Breakaway Leaders ... Wider Front" 1990 Dec. 20 where the representative of this faction, Leela Mani Pokhrel shared platform with the other three urging Communist forces to forge new alliance. By such tactics this faction was probably trying to rope in other Communist factions in their newly formed party.

<sup>12</sup> See, also Rising Nepal, "New ULF Creation" 1992 Dec. 16 President of NCP (NWPP), Narayan Man alias Rohit blamed ULF for working against other factions and urged other factions to form a new United Left Front considering the forthcoming election. Tulsilal Amatya pointed out that they had pulled out of the Front because its Ministers in the Interim Government were corrupt.

issue of seat sharing in the coming election for its document stated:

To bring all Communist factions under one umbrella we carried on more than 15 talks within a period of one and a half month ... In those talks if other factions were interested in creating '*Ek Bam, Ek Tham*' the NCP (UML) [meaning NCP (ML) and NCP (M)] representatives were interested only on the issue of election. Then we realised that the NCP (UML) was using the talks just to feel the pulse of the smaller factions ... they doggedly stood on their position that they would field their candidates in 180 seats ... they were trying to force us to accept their stand. Besides, their tactics was to push their policies while embroiling us in talks. Their intention was not to take us along, but to destroy our very existence...

In the talks on unity all factions stressed on Communist ethics such as, 'the stronger should support the weaker;' 'the stronger should make sacrifices' etcetera. But, Madan Bhandari of NCP (ML) ended the talks saying 'You are all interested only in saving your earnest deposits, but we are interested in achieving two-third majority ... We protested saying that united movement will be necessary even after election (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Mahanirvachan Singhawalokan 2048 1-2).

Similar NCP (UML)'s<sup>13</sup> attitude was portrayed in later statements of General Secretary, Bishnu Bahadur Manandhar of NCP (Democratic) (Rising Nepal, "UML Authoritative" 1991 March 9). The truth perhaps lay somewhere in the continuum of accusations and counter accusations and if later documents of NCP (UML) is considered—the goal with which unity between NCP (Marxist) and NCP (Marxist-Leninist) was forged—then judgement tilts in favour of the statements of the smaller factions (See p. 422). Nevertheless, the fact remained, the unity talks failed. However, it had its fallout. On 12 December, Hikmat Singh resigned from NCP (Verma) denouncing Krishnaraj Verma's decision to pull out from the ULF as regrettable (Rising Nepal, "Breakaway" 1990 Dec 13). Then on 17 December, the Central Committee meeting of NCP (ML) entrusted its General Secretary, Madan Bhandari and politburo member, Madhav Kumar Nepal to start new round of unity talks with NCP (Marxist) keeping doors of parleys open even for recent deserters (Rising Nepal, "New Unity Talks" 1990 Dec 18). Reciprocating NCP (ML) gesture, the NCP

<sup>13</sup> These accusations were labelled technically against the NCP (ML) but since they were labelled after the formation of NCP (UML), they referred to NCP (UML).

(Marxist) formed a three-member committee composed of Central Committee members namely, Sahana Pradhan, Bharatmohun Adhikari and Kesharmani Pokhrel (K. C, Nepal Communist Bhag 2 98). According to the document of NCP (Marxist),<sup>14</sup>the Committee placed before the NCP (ML) representatives, “a seven-point agenda which the Party felt was to be the basis of unity”. Going through these points, one finds the agenda focused on issues related to strategy and tactics. Of these the important ones were those which made clear that the upcoming Party was to agree upon accepting “New democratic strategy”, “class struggle as the instrument of social development”, “feudal revivalist as the main enemy” and “work together for the protection of democracy” (NCP (Marxbadi (Marxist)), Rajnaitik Pratibedan: 2049 18). Then on January 6, NCP (Marxist) Pokhara National Convention declared that they had reached an understanding with NCP (ML) and that the Party was handing over the task of completing the unification process to its high level leaders (Rising Nepal, “Marxist Endorse ... Unity” 1991 Jan 6). However, the NCP (Marxist) document presents a different scenario. According to them, the Pokhara Convention had taken the decision to add three more points to the seven-point agenda and to hold more talks before reaching any decision. However, it then rues over the course followed to conclude that the decision was reached in a hurry disregarding the ideology of the Party. In sum, it blames Man Mohan Adhikari for such moves for it states:

Though the Ma-Lay [NCP (ML)] had accepted our seven point agenda, the Pokhara conference had added three more points. In the light of the additions it was necessary to hold a second round of talks with the NCP (ML) representatives. Hence, the conference decided to hold a central committee meeting in Kathmandu immediately after its conclusion. But, nothing of this sort happened, because on the day when our Central Committee meeting was scheduled, the then General Secretary of our Party [Man Mohan Adhikari], histrionically presented before us Ma-Lay representatives. Then he proposed a joint meeting of the Central Committee members of both the parties. That Joint sitting, on the basis of majority decision, declared the union between NCP

<sup>14</sup> This is the document of the NCP (Marxist) faction which came out of NCP (UML) in January 1993. Hence, what it says should be taken carefully because its statements related to the unity move must have been coloured by its perceptions of 1993.

(Marxist) and NCP (ML) and named the new Party as NCP (United Marxist Leninist).

The union was therefore achieved in a hurry while surrendering the ideology of the Party ... (18–9).

Documentary evidence suggests that the NCP (Marxist)'s claim that the unity was forged in a hurry is correct, because the document of the NCP (UML), its *Ghoshna-Patra*, published on the 7<sup>th</sup> claims its origin from Nepal Communist Party (Ekakrit Marxbadi Ra Leninbadi [NCP (UML)])<sup>15</sup> Rastriya Parishad (National Council)'s meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> giving the impression that the NCP (UML) existed even before the Pokhara Declaration of the 6<sup>th</sup>. This is something which reason fails to accept if one were to go by the tone and tenor of Pokhara declaration. As for its second view, which subtly implicates Man Mohan's rush for unity at the cost of Party ideology the NCP (Marxist) was probably referring to the NCP (UML)'s identification of the classes whom it was trying to represent because UML's document that is its *Ghoshna-Patra* includes 'general masses' in its set of classes to state:

Nepal Communist Party (Ekakrit Marxbadi Ra Leninbadi [United Marxist and Leninist]) is the Party of the proletariat ... its final goal is to establish socialism and communism. Today's Nepalese society is in the grip of feudal, tout bureaucratic capitalist and imperialist's exploitation. Our minimum goal today is to replace Nepal's semi-feudal, semi-colonial society with New Democratic society ... Hence, in today's Nepal this is the only Party which can shoulder the historic responsibility of transforming Nepal into a rich industrially developed country. Presently, it represents the interests of the working class, peasants, women, youth, students, intellectuals, national bourgeoisie, general masses and the interest of the nation. For such end it is ready to forge any Front ... (NCP (UML), *Ghoshna-Patra*, 2047 1).

Moreover, ideological factors were not so important in the alliance tactics of the two parties become clear from later document of the NCP (UML) where its statements

<sup>15</sup> The document is titled as follows: Nepal Communist Party (Ekakrit Marxbadi Ra Leninbadi) Ko Goshna-Patra: 2047 Sal Paus 22 Gatay Dekhi 23 Gatay [6–7 January 1991] Samma Baseyko Rastriya Parishadko Baithakma Parit Its English rendition comes to this: Manifesto of Nepal Communist Party (UML) passed by its National Council meeting held on the 6th and the 7th of January 1991.

focuses only on ‘number, strength, influence and history’ to point out what the alliance had achieved for it states:

The creation of the ULF during the *Jana Andolan* helped unity moves among the Communists. In the Malay and Marxist unity process the Rohit and Tulsilal Amatya factions were also involved. But, in their own interest and for some unknown reason they tried to destroy the ULF. Despite that it was possible to keep intact the ULF and to forge the unity between the ML and the Marxist. That unity created a unified Communist Party. By this unity the Communist movement became united in number, strength, influence and history. NCP (UML) turned into the mainstream of Communist movement (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 33)

Thus, the NCP (UML)’s document vindicates NCP (Marxist)’s accusation that in forging unity the ideological question was shoved aside. However, it had its effect: it took shape in February 1992 in the re-formation of yet another faction—the NCP (Marxist) (See p. 447). Besides, January 1991 witnessed another unity move among smaller factions represented by Communist leaders like “Krishnadas Shrestha, Nandakumar Prasai, Shakti Lamsal, Sitaram Tamang and K. B Rai” (NCP (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) 1). On 4 January 1991<sup>16</sup> they declared their existence as NCP (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist). Thus, after January 1991 and before 12 May General Election there were a number of Communist parties in Nepal. Of these, a few were continuation from the past, a few were from the past, but with new names and a few, completely new as unions of factions. By name, they were NCP (UML), NCP (Ekta Kendra [Unity Centre]),<sup>17</sup>NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), NCP (Masal),<sup>18</sup>NCP

<sup>16</sup> Here Surendra K. C commits a mistake. He does not consult documentary evidence and simply suggests that the Party came into being on VS 2048 Jeth 22 that is 8 June 1991. See (K. C, Nepalma Communist Bhag 2 152).

<sup>17</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Samyukta Morcha Manifesto” 1990 March 29 Baburam Bhattarai a leader of Bidrohi Masal, a constituent of UNPM, had joined Unity Centre before March. In March 28 he released the manifesto of Samyukta Jana Morcha (United People’s Front, Nepal), the Front organisation of the Unity Centre created to contest the election. See also. Whelpton, “Election 1991” 63 Despite accepting multi-party democracy the United People’s Front was opposed to the Constitution.)

<sup>18</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “CPN (Masal) Split” 1991 March 21 A section of

(Democratic),<sup>19</sup>NCP (Verma), NCP (Tulsilal Amatya) and NCP (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist). And though they presented themselves as two groups following two different strategies, New Democratic and National Democratic, yet they all, excluding NCP (Masal), were ready to participate in the upcoming election. In its Ghoshna –Patra the NCP (UML) accepted, as its immediate goal, the establishment of “a plural society where different political parties peacefully competed in the interest of the nation and the people” (9). So, it welcomed election as a means for establishing its envisioned polity, where it could unleash the forces of “rapid industrialisation and development to move towards its ultimate goal of establishing *Naulo Janabad* [the literal translation is still new democracy]” (Ghosna-Patra, 8). In contrast, NCP (Nepal Majdoor- Kisan Party) was critical of the future polity: it perceived it as a bourgeois system. So, it decided to use election as an instrument to reveal the limitations of the system practising revolutionary ‘parliamentarism’ for its document stated:

We take election as a class struggle and as a means of enhancing and measuring the political consciousness of the people ... in sum we have been using election and strikes as instruments of organising the working class ... we used this election to reveal the limitations of a bourgeois system and we shall use revolutionary ‘parliamentarism’ to let people know how a bourgeois system exploits them. This is the essence of Marxist-Leninist approach towards election which we have used to organise the people against the system ... (NCP (Nepal Majdoor-Kisan Party), Mahanirvachan Singhawalokan 2048, 1)

Similar were the views of United People’s Front<sup>20</sup> Nepal for Jan Sharma writes,

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dissidents who favoured contesting the election went out of the party to form United People’s Forum in March 20, 1991. See also Whelpton, “Election 1991” 58. This group according to Whelpton joined the United People’s Front before the election under the leadership of Shital Kumar calling themselves the true representatives of NCP (Masal). The other group which joined the Front was NCP (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist).

<sup>19</sup> Till December end it was NCP (Manandhar).

<sup>20</sup> See, Whelpton, “Election 1991” 58 At that time the Front did not have posts of President or General Secretary so Baburam functioned as coordinator of the Front during the election period.

The United People's Front Nepal ... [described] Parliament ... [as] a 'bourgeoisie (sic) talk shop' ... [and decided] to contest elections to 'expose the parliamentary system'. They believed that the Constituion [had] institutionalised ... limited democratic rights ... [and] that real democracy [was] possible only through the establishment of *naulo janabad* ... through a 'People's War' (Sharma 123)

In line with such tactics of exposure, Brown observes, in its manifesto the "Samyukta Jana Morcha stated its intention to participate in the electoral process but then to refuse to work with the Government in the event that its candidates were elected" (159). However, NCP (Manandhar), which had by now changed into NCP (Democratic), fell in line with NCP (UML) in welcoming election while declaring, that it believed in "protecting democracy ... and using democratic polity in the interest of the people and for the development of the nation" (NCP (Prajantrabadi) 1). It felt that the system by giving "freedom of association to the workers, the peasants, the students, the teachers ... and the national bourgeoisie ... had empowered them ... to strengthen democracy, which they could use in developing the nation to move towards national democracy" (2). The views of NCP (Verma) (NCP (Verma), Ghoshnapatra 3) and of NCP (Amatya) (Rising Nepal, "NCP (Amatya) Manifesto" 1991 Apr 6) were no different. However, NCP (Masal) decided to boycott the election. It passed an elaborate document titled "*Sansadiya Chunao Bahiskarko Ghoshnapatra*". The document's content which rationalised its boycott move could be differentiated into three broad categories. Its statements such as those which said, "Ne Ka Pa (Masal) emphasises on republic but Nepali Congress and Left Front emphasise upon Constitutional Monarchy. Under a republic, Monarchy is fully destroyed and unless sovereignty passes into the hands of the people even Constitutional Monarchy cannot be achieved" (NCP (Masal), "*Bahiskarko Ghoshnapatra*" 411), fell into the first category, because they added a fresh dimension to their reasoning. It explained why they advocated the transfer of power to the people besides clarifying that they were viewing the then political arrangement not even as a Constitutional Monarchy. In the second category were statements, which were critical of the functioning of the Interim Government or more precisely of the functioning of the Nepali Congress. But, even

among such statements one set reflected their often quoted perception, which viewed “Nepali Congress in the service of Indian expansionism” (NCP (Masal), “Bahiskarko Ghoshnapatra” 415). Such statements being in the nature of repetition can simply be disregarded, because they do not improve the analytical edge of the narrative. However, among such criticisms there were statements, which could be categorised as a third set. These criticisms, which formed the bulk of the content of the document, not only criticised the functioning of the Interim Government, but also clarified what the Party wanted out of a political setup of Nepal or more precisely out of democracy. These criticisms were important, because they clarified what meaning they attached to the political setup which by western standard passed out as democracy. From democracy, the Party expected the fulfilment of people’s aspirations, which, according to it, included “punishment for those involved in criminal activities during the *Jan Andolan*” (414) that is during the Panchayat regime. Besides, it wanted the Government to “realise wealth stashed abroad by corrupt Panchayati functionaries” (414) and “to control the rise in prices of essential commodities” (414). But, above all it expected economic development for it stated:

In the immediate political context the issue of power transfer from the King to the people is important, but even after such transfer of power it is wrong to assume that democracy-bourgeois democracy-would come in the country. It is wrong to think that democracy has dawned after achieving a few basic and political rights. Even for bourgeois democracy the economic structure has to change—in simpler terms the productive forces should be freed from all impediments. Imperialistic and feudal impediments-both political and economic-need to be removed if economic development is to be achieved. Only after the completion of such struggle democracy in the true sense, even in the sense of bourgeois democracy- will come and then only the basic problems of the people can be resolved. But, such struggle for change is not possible under the leadership of a capitalist and opportunistic Party. Moreover, if the leadership rests in the hand of a feudal and tout bourgeois Party such as the Nepali Congress then it is impossible to achieve bourgeois democratic revolution ... (NCP (Masal), “Bahiskarko Ghoshnapatra” 412).

Similarly, its comment on the then functioning of the Nepali Congress reflected its fear about the birth of authoritarianism in future for it said,

The Nepali Congress by encouraging the entry of Mandalays<sup>21</sup> [these were earlier Panchayat members entering the Party carrying Panchayat values] within their fold and by using them in an organised form to work against other political parties is reflecting the future of the polity ... it is set to re-creating authoritarianism out of the womb of multi-Party democracy ... (NCP (Masal), “Bahiskarko Ghoshnapatra” 414–15).

Thus, democracy in its view meant fast economic growth and rejection of authoritarianism, where the latter meant opposition to Panchayat values. The latter tendency, as we shall shortly see, was carried to the extreme by other Communist parties to promise radical democratic values, which the 1991 setup was not ready to accommodate. However, in the NCP (Masal)’s statements, where it frequently foresaw the possibility of such values being absent implied that it was already convinced about the outcome of the election: it had already seen Nepali Congress in the seat of power. This conclusion finds added support in its other statements, which criticises the functioning of Nepali Congress and the trend of politics of the Interim period, when its document states:

The present Government has made no effort in resolving the problems of the workers, peasants, students ... *janajatis* (nationalities), depressed classes, women, people of Terai .... Considering these trends the Government which comes to power after this parliamentary election will solve neither the basic nor the immediate problems of the people ... Under the present Government there is ‘Congressisation’ of bureaucracy, media etc. After election when their position becomes stronger the situation will further deteriorate. Hence, we have decided to boycott the forthcoming election to keep our struggle continuous to serve the interest of the people ... (NCP (Masal), “Bahiskarko Ghoshnapatra” 415–16).

These statements raise questions: was the Party decision to boycott elections influenced by its prognosis of the election? Was it boycotting the election because it saw no important role for itself in the future politics of Nepal? If one considers its past, then its present boycott move was not a new stance. Moreover, whether it won a

<sup>21</sup> See Whelpton, *History* 117, and Brown 156. Before election there was an influx of former *panchas* into the Congress Party. Both authors suggest that this trend influenced the future politics of Nepal. Whelpton, in particular, points out that it made it more difficult for the Congress Party to oppose old establishment.

few seats or none there was nothing to stop the Party from carrying on its struggle in the interest of the people. Thus, what seems to have influenced its boycott move was its conviction about the necessity for transferring power into the hands of the people, because without such transfer of power, it felt that the then polity was neither Constitutional Monarchy nor ‘bourgeois democracy’ capable enough to resolve the problems of Nepalese masses. Hence, its boycott politics was its tactics of denying recognition to a political setup which did not pass out as democratic in its judgement. Therefore, in the future, if the Party’s immediate goal was for seeking transfer of power to the people its tactics involved fighting against the Party which was expected to come to power in a political setup, which they rejected outright.

In contrast to such outright rejection of the political setup, as of the NCP (Masal), the Communist parties participating in the election came up with their manifestos promising radical changes. In their promises there was an element of hope: they hoped to realise them under the setup. Though they, by such participation recognised the setup, yet the intent which underlay their promises were similar to the expectations of NCP (Masal) out of their idea of democracy. They were promising that they would bring economic development and democracy. The latter, besides meaning good governance, rule of law etcetera carried an extra connotation. In their view, multi-Party democracy also meant an end to authoritarianism. Indicating such understanding, the prefatory note of NCP (UML) manifesto said, “For the sake of multi-Party democracy many youths have sacrificed their lives to end authoritarianism” (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 1). And authoritarianism, in their document, implied any tendency which was in one way or other related to the Panchayat system or its values which was characterised by the domination of one class—the feudal class. As such, they carried their idea of democracy too far not only to oppose Panchayat values, but also to emulate Mao’s 1945 line (See p. 430 ). Thus, promising changes in the political setup the NCP (UML) said, that it would “oppose the control of one person, Party or of an organisation in the entire administrative organisations, media, Government offices and

public enterprises to protect *Bahudaliya Prajatantra* or multi-Party democracy and would fight for their [offices and organisations'] freedom and impartiality" (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 6). What such fight for democracy meant was evident in their promise to democratise the Army and the Police force for its manifesto said, "We are for restructuring the relations between Army/Police force and the people with democratic values. We intend to democratise even the relation between the Army/Police officials and their underlings" (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 7). Its other political promises included "basic human rights, fundamental rights and a democratic polity functioning under rule of law and under the direction of the Constitution where a plural society enjoyed freedom under multi-Party democracy" (6). Besides, it observed that it sought to "fight against and, if possible, amend those provisions of the Constitution which stood in its desire to transfer power in the hands of the people" (6). It was in for a "corruption free administration, good governance and actions against all those who had indulged in corrupt practices during the Panchayat regime and perpetrated criminal activities during the *Jana Andolan*" (6). Finally, it said, "The name of the Government should be Nepal Government and it should not be named after the name of a person or after the name of a family; because the Government is not responsible to a person or a family, but to the masses" (7). For ensuring rapid economic transformation of the kingdom's economy it hedged its position. It did not talk about direct State's interventions such as the method of nationalisation, but it said,

Economy is the basis of the society and the nation ... Hence, to end the continuing grip of feudal and imperialist exploitation and to overhaul the economic structure the Party stands for the following changes:

[1]. Considering the link of the various economic sector which are of importance in the economic growth of the nation a long term plan is to be formulated. In implementing such plan there should be proper synchronisation between annual and quarterly plans.

[2]. Since centralised planning fails in taking into consideration regional demands of development decentralised planning should be the main stay of planned development.

[3]. To stop emigration of labour force and to use wasted human resources there should be regional "Employment and Information Centres" and through them the labour force creating "National Development Service" should be made the integral element of the system... (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 8).

And on the question of re-structuring agricultural economy it said, “our main slogan is in favour of restructuring agricultural economy on the basis of democratic principles” (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 11). This was, indeed, a peculiar position for a Communist Party to advocate: it hoped to change economy by changing the administrative arrangements and invoking its notion of democracy. Applying its underlying values—a distaste for Panchayat values—in resolving the problems of *Sukumbasi* or landless people it said, “The problems of *Sukumbasis* ... cannot be resolved through Panchayati principles” (11). And despite the fact that it was copying Mao’s line the Party seemed to have realised the importance of India in the economic development of Nepal so its voice on Indo-Nepal trade relation was toned down. In its statements, there were no words that reflected its [of both NCP (ML) and NCP (Marxist)] usual perspective which viewed the relation in terms of Indian imperial hegemony. It simply said, “After reassessing Indo-Nepal Trade Treaties new treaties based on the principle of mutual benefit should be signed” (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 15). And it declared that it represented the interest of ‘all the classes’ besides its usual set of four classes for it said:

This is a Party that represents the proletariats of Nepal. It protects the interest of the proletariats, peasants, women, students, intellectuals, national bourgeoisie, merchants, employees and *people of all classes* [italics added]. Following the principles of Marxism and Leninism, it accommodates the positive aspects of leaders like Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh ... and preserves the right to carry on revolution within its nation to achieve scientific socialism and communism ... (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 2–3).

In this shift towards ‘people of all classes’, the Party meant the ‘general mass’. This shift came since its formation as NCP (UML) in January 1991 (See p. 421 ). However, Communist strategies are intimately connected with the classes whose interest a Party seeks to lead. As a result of the shift its strategy could neither be classed as anti-capitalist, nor as anti-imperialist. Even then the Party was appealing all and sundry in the name of *Naulo Janabad* or New Democracy to fight against feudalism and imperialism for it stated:

At present the main hurdles in the development of the country are feudalism, tout bureaucracy and imperial exploitation. Without destroying them, social salvation and national freedom cannot be achieved. Hence, at present the minimum strategy of the Party is ... *Naulo Janabad*. The political characteristics of *Naulo Janabad* are plurality, plural society where rule of law, fundamental rights and human rights are guaranteed for the people. In the economic sphere it seeks to ensure land to the tillers and freedom to national industrialists and merchants. It seeks to free them from imperialist and feudal control to ensure independent economic growth of the nation. It guarantees the destruction of all inequality, authoritarian control and special privileges of a few in the realm of language, nationalities, religion and culture ... It makes the *general mass the master of the nation* [italics added] and creates the bases for socialism. Hence, *Naulo Janabad* is not only in the interest of the proletariat, but also in the interest of the entire people. It is in the interest of the nation ... (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 3).

Why was there such a confusion? It was because the Party was trying to woo the entire masses, a compulsion foisted upon it by the parliamentary system. Besides, it was emulating Mao's 1945 line and the future line prescribed in New Democracy without realising what such line implied. To begin, in 1945 Mao was in favour of establishing a coalition Government of different classes nothing more, nothing less for he had said:

Under the over-all premise of annihilating the Japanese aggressors and of building a new China, the fundamental views of us CCP member are, at present stage, identical with those held by the overwhelming majority of the Chinese populace. These are, firstly, that China should not have a feudalistic, fascist, anti-popular system of Government exclusively controlled by big bourgeoisie, because such system has been proved to be entirely bankrupt by the chief ruling cliques of the KMT in their eighteen years' rule. Secondly, China cannot, and therefore should not, attempt to build a state along the old-type democratic lines entirely ruled by the liberal bourgeois dictatorship. For ... there has been born in China a politically powerful new factor that leads the broad masses of the peasant class, the petty bourgeoisie, the intellectuals, and other democratic elements—the awakened Chinese proletariat and its leader, the CCP. Thirdly, in the present stage, while the task of the Chinese people is still to oppose imperialistic and feudal oppression, while the requisite social and economic conditions are still lacking in China, the Chinese people cannot, and therefore should not, attempt to build a socialist state system (Brandt, Schwartz and Fairbank 302).

Then explaining what the Chinese Communist had in mind for the future of China

Mao said:

Then, what is our proposal? We want to build, after annihilating the Japanese aggressors a system of Government based on the support of the overwhelming majority of the people, on the united front and the

coalition of democratic alliances [of parties and groups]. We call this the New Democratic system of Government...

The New Democracy we uphold demands the overthrow of external national oppression and the doing away of the internal feudalistic, fascist oppression. After removing these oppressions we are not in favour of setting up an old democratic political system. Instead, we want to set up a political system based on the united front and alliance of all democratic classes ...

The formation of the governmental structure of this New Democracy should be based on the principle of democratic centralization, with various grades of people's congresses making decisions on the major political policies and electing the Government... (Brandt, et al. 302)

And still later, answering a question on the nature of coalition in New Democracy he said:

This also answers another question, which is this: You communist (Party) members advocate the setting up of a coalition Government, because, at present, there is no democratic election system and a coalition Government is necessary for national unification and for waging anti-Japanese war; but in future too, when there will be a democratic election system, why not let the majority Party in the National Assembly set up a one-Party Government instead of still wanting to organize a coalition Government? Our answer is this: China's historical conditions prescribe a coalition Government. I have mentioned above that matters have been changed by the appearance of a new factor, the CCP, which represents not only the proletariat, but by virtue of its programme and actual struggle, also the broad peasant class, the petty bourgeoisie, the intellectuals, and other democratic elements. Any Government that excludes from itself the CP will not be able to achieve a single worthy thing; this is the basic characteristic of China in the historical stage of New Democracy... (Brandt, et al. 306)

These statements implied that Mao's New Democracy was not tolerant to a system of democracy which excluded the CCP. While advocating such line whether Mao had in mind any specific type of democracy is not clear. Besides, the Government structure which Mao described in New democracy was to be based on democratic centralisation.<sup>22</sup> Both these conditions implied that in Mao's New Democracy there was to be the domination of one Party—the Chinese Communist Party. The UML was quick at copying Mao's 1949 tactical line, because at that point it served them to adjust themselves in the changed condition by pointing out that it was in favour of all the classes. However, it carried the same idea even in describing its strategy of *Naulo*

<sup>22</sup> It is a euphemistic term used to discourage or manage dissidents to stop fragmentation. Therefore, it is basically a means which is against pluralism.

*Janabad*. While copying the Mao's 1949 tactical line the Party was perhaps carried away by the force of Mao's frequent references to a Government of many classes to miss what was implied in his description of New Democracy, the future polity that he prescribed for China. Thus, in the UML's strategy of *Naulo Janabad* there was neither the idea of one Party domination, nor the idea of Government structure based on democratic centralisation. It only contained the 1949 Mao's tactical line expressed as strategy. This is perhaps what the Party meant when it said that it was in favour of accommodating the positive aspects of Mao in its line: it had tailored Mao's New Democracy to the democratic condition of Nepal. Its intention becomes further clear when one tries to question what classes meant in its *Naulo Janabad* of many classes. Its many classes included all those who were "anti-feudal, anti-imperialists and democratic forces" and falling within them were "Communist parties, fronts, professional organisations, employees organisations and even religious and linguistic groups" (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 5). Such idea of classes violated Mao's prescription even while forming a coalition with the KMT, because he was then advocating a coalition among non-sectarian groups. Thus, its strategy of *Naulo Janabad* was a diluted version of New Democratic strategy. In similar line, its advocacy for economic development— at that point of time— could only be explained as its reaction against the kingdom's economic background. However, its two year later document of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress while advocating economic development and the need for administrative change, which meant power decentralisation and democratisation of the polity, suggests that such changes were necessary even for the preservation of socialism. And to reach such conclusion it drew lessons from the fall of Soviet Union. In explaining the causes behind the fall of Soviet Union, it identified two facts: the failure of the Union in unleashing the forces of production and in dismantling its over-centralised administrative arrangement and then it ended with a caveat. It called on all Communists to take lessons from the events to mean that the Party had taken the facts into consideration for its document said:

From the very beginning bourgeois forces had started attacking Soviet socialism ... In its long life, it could successfully tackle external attacks, but it failed in ducking internal attacks, so it disintegrated. In the process of building socialism it failed in maintaining the relation between control and balance. It persisted with State's over-centralised structure; it failed in nurturing the value of responsibility in its various productive units; it did not encourage research for increasing production. While competing with capitalism, it could not identify and analyse the emerging environment to come up with creative means for its progress. It did not give attention to the management of intra-regional competitive forces in the context of ensuring higher production; it plugged the free expression of its society on productive and administrative matters; it rejected democracy, rule of law, and failed to properly manage the relation between the Party and the Government. On the contrary, it gave importance to its gargantuan bureaucratic structure which was there to impose State's centralised decisions in every sphere of Soviet life. Such over-centralisation weakened the innards of Soviet socialism ... Under such situation Gorbachev initiated peace processes and disarmament in the name of complete restructuring of Soviet society [*prestroika* and *glasnost*]. The society welcomed the reforms, but the nature of the reforms, both in terms of class and national [interest] amounted to a surrender. It destroyed socialism and fragmented Soviet Union ... They should have initiated timely reform while preserving the essential bases of socialism ... This is a lesson which every Communist must take to heart ... (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 3).

These statements besides rationalising the Party's changed tactics in favour of democracy and economic development hid another implication. Its call for 'creative means' and for unleashing 'intra-regional competitive forces' for 'higher production' implied that it was not against capitalist path of development in the interest of socialism. It needed the path not only for its survival, but also for facing the competition thrown to it by capitalism. Though such position was not far from reiterating Mao's New Democratic line, where Mao was arguing in favour of free development of private capitalist economy, individual economy of the labouring class, co-operative economy under the New Democratic State (Brandt, et al. 303–4), yet it was different in the UML formulation because it did not take into account Mao's prescription which implied the domination of one-Party in the New Democratic State. As such, UML's economic position under *Naulo Janabad* turned equivalent to achieving full fledged bourgeois democracy both in content and form. Therefore, its commitment towards New Democratic strategy seemed to suggest a gloss over its surrender to the cause of out and out bourgeois democracy. With the advent of

parliamentary phase, the Party had virtually given up its ideology. In the name of communism it had turned into a votary of capitalism. Whether such thinking was at work in the creation of the manifesto is unanswerable if the document is taken at its face value. However, if the Party's silence on the issue of State's role in the management of the forces of production and its insistence on decentralised administration as the solution to the economic problems of the kingdom are considered then it is clear that similar thinking was at the back of creating the manifesto. Compared with the manifesto of NCP (UML), the manifesto of NCP (Verma) was short and its statements on the classes which it sought to represent, vague. Even then its position on economic issues reflected the trend of Communist thinking which favoured democracy and rejected authoritarianism for it said:

Nepal Communist Party, the representative of entire working Nepali people recognises the creative use of Marxism to establish an exploitation free Nepal. We favour socialism based on the foundations of human dignity and multi-Party democracy. We believe that the foundations of future socialist society rest upon enough production, variety of productive activities and availability of enough consumer goods. Hence, we are not in favour of any centralised, authoritarian economic structure ... We believe in supporting market economy based on competition; we are for private enterprises for the improvement of our economy and for creating enough employment and commodities... (NCP (Verma), Ghoshnapatra 3)

And its statements following its stand in the economic sphere, where it rejected all forms of authoritarian and centralised arrangements pointed out what it implied when it said, "The main task ahead is to strengthen democracy" (4) and "Our goal is for institutionalising democracy while democratising every sphere of our national life; supporting rule of law and protecting the rights of the people" (5). Similarly, the manifesto of NCP (Prajatantrabadi [Democratic]) consistently maintained its stand in favour of "strengthening multi-Party democracy" (NCP (Prajatantrabadi) 8). And focusing on issues involved in such effort it reiterated the position of NCP (UML) and NCP (Verma). It stated that it stood for "removing negative features of the Constitution;" "raising issues within and outside Parliament to synchronise prevalent laws with the spirit of the Constitution;" "freeing district development committees

from administrative control,” and “freeing media from Government control” (NCP (Prajatantrabadi) 8) etcetera. And rest of its manifesto is focused on improving the economic condition of Nepal, so much so that even its opinion on Indo-Nepal relation and relation with outside world like Soviet Union and China is influenced by such consideration for it states:

Because of Nepal’s geopolitical situation, its cultural and economic link with India and considering the context of Indo-Nepal open border there should be close relation between Nepal and India. And we should, for the economic development of our country, maintain a close link with socialist countries like China and Soviet Union on the basis of mutual advantage ... (NCP (Prajatantrabadi) 16).

Similar concern influenced its stand on the development of Nepal’s hydro-resources. It declared that “while protecting our national interest we should welcome Indian and foreign capital for the development of our water resources” (20). However, almost at the end of its manifesto, in item number 24 the Party declares its stand against those who had indulged in criminal activities in the Panchayat period. It says:

Ne Ka Pa (Prajatantrabadi) stands against all those who were involved in killing people; in practicing administrative and political repression; in salting national wealth abroad, and in ordering fake encounters ... during the Panchayat period. So, we propose that they should be brought to books ... (NCP (Prajatantrabadi) 23).

This stand of the Party; which was common to the stand taken by all Communist parties, participating and not participating the election, reflected its dislike against Panchayat values: its way of looking at democracy. Besides, like NCP (UML) it also perceived democracy as an instrument which needed to be nurtured in achieving its goal of socialism for it stated:

The main characteristic feature of Nepal’s present anti-Feudal, anti-Imperial struggle is national. In this struggle the increasing participation of working class and middle class sustains the democratic essence of Communist leadership and of the democratic forces. This struggle would progressively entrench and deepen democracy. In this process of achieving and strengthening political, economic and social democracy the increasing participation of working class will help present struggle from transcending the limits of out and out capitalist development. The completion of National democratic struggle against feudalism and imperialism would open the doors to socialism. This is the essence of our strategy ... (NCP (Prajatantrabadi) 3).

And in the election campaign, NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), while criticising the functioning of Interim Government asked the people:

Has the economy improved ? ... What sort of democracy is this where even for the transfer of an ordinary employee one needs the recommendation of Congress District Committee or of the General Secretary of Nepali Congress? ... Our economy is not under our control ... because of common river concept even our rivers are going into foreign hands. Our human resources are leaving the nation in search of jobs elsewhere and so is the status of Terai people (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Mahanirvachan Singhawalokan 2048 5–6).

Thus, during that phase what characterised the Communist movement of Nepal was their common understanding about their ideas and expectations from democracy and the economy of Nepal. This shared view,<sup>23</sup> which was prevalent among Communist parties— both participating and not participating the election—explained their tactical positions in the days to come. In fact, by seeking such changes they were trying to bring about their notion of revolutionary changes through and in a political setup which was not the outcome of a revolution. Such changes, besides others, promised ethnics “to erase constitutional provisions, which discriminated against their language, religion and culture ... promised seat reservation in the *Rastriya Sabha* ... administrative autonomy for the improvement of their languages and ... education in mother tongue” (NCP (UML), Chunao Ghosna Patra VS 2048 26–7). And as Whelpton writes, “the UPF as a whole ... called for ‘reservations’ (i.e. quotas in Government employment) for ethnic minorities and backward classes” (Whelpton, “Election 1991” 67). However, even such shared views were of no avail when the stake was a berth in the House of Representatives. In the election they fought each

<sup>23</sup> All politico-economic commentaries and articles related to this phase of Nepal have disregarded the nature of democracy from Communist point of view. However, in such understanding the most important element which needs to be understood is that their views were not simply against Panchayat authoritarianism. If one limits their understanding only to such reaction then it amounts to truism. What one has to understand here is that their idea of democracy was of the type which was extreme and unrealisable in the political-economic context of the then Nepal.

other bitterly. Illustrative were NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party [NeMKiPa (NWPP)])’s after election comments, which it put in the following terms:

In areas where we were strong<sup>24</sup> the NCP (UML) campaigned against us and in many of those areas they defeated us ... (4)  
They indulged in false propaganda and spread the rumour that our Party was funded by Gyanendra ... to win election it brought itself to the level of Nepali Congress ... In many constituencies it promised people that it would give them land, jobs, gold, houses and even arrange males and females for unmarried spinsters and bachelors ... to win election they brought forward communal and regional slogans ... (8).

Describing the roles of other Communist factions it stated:

In the Sarlahi area ... and in other districts the NCP (Unity Centre) ditched us. Narbahadur Karmacharya, Lilamani Pokherel ... and even Nirmal Lama went to different districts and urged the people ‘to cast votes in favour of the winner’ (5).  
Despite having floated the programme that it would utilise election for the purpose of exposing parliamentary democracy, the Unity Centre stooped to its lowest level to capture as many seats as possible ... (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Mahanirvachan Singhawalokan 2048 23).

## 1.2. Communist Activities after Election: Protests against Authoritarianism

The month, beginning from June was important both within and outside the Parliament. It began with UML General Secretary, Madan Bhandari’s threat that the Party would raise its voice both within and outside the Parliament if the stakes were democracy and national identity (Rising Nepal, “Complete Democracy” 1991 June 6). Opportunity struck when Nepal Journalist Association objected against the Press and Publication Act, 1991. It pointed out that a few of the Act’s provisions contravened the rights enshrined in the Constitution (Rising Nepal, “Press Act Undemocratic” 1991 June 6). Next day, UML’s press release objected against

<sup>24</sup> See, NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Mahanirvachan Singhawalokan 2048 2–3 The Party had categorised constituencies as A, B and C. In constituencies falling under A it claimed that it was strong. In B, less strong and in C, least strong. Constituencies falling under A were Bhaktapur, Dailekh, Zumla, Kalikot and Humla. Constituencies in B were Kavrey, Sindhupalanchok, Kathmandu and Surkhet and constituencies in C were Jajarkot, Nuwakot, Salyan, Acham, Banke and Bardiya.

Government's passing of one Bill after another in collusion with the Royal Palace without discussing them in the Parliament. In the same context, it pointed out that the Act was opposed to Article 13 of the Constitution for it imposed prior restrictions against publication of news and articles (Rising Nepal, "UML Objects" 1991 June 7). The objection implied that the Act was also the result of the Congress-Palace collusion, a trend which the UML was not ready to accept because of its tactical position. Besides, without allowing the newly elected Government to settle leaders began raising demands. Narayan Man Bijukche of NCP (NWPP) was quick at demanding stern actions against administrators of the Panchayat regime. He demanded early release of Mallik Commission Report and formulation of policies to solve ethnic-linguistic issues (Rising Nepal, "Rohit Affirms" 1991 June 7). Adding to the chorus were the voices of several organisations,<sup>25</sup> and leading them all was the voice of Nepal Civil Servants Organisation (Rising Nepal, "Civil Servants' Memorandum" 1991 June 15).

In the last week of June, Nepal Civil Servants Organisation published its programme of protest. According to Mishra, the programme was in support of its demands which were as follows:

- [4]. Implementation of High Level Commission Report on salary reform.
- [5]. Abrogation of recent changes introduced in the 1965 Civil Servants Regulation<sup>26</sup> to allow employees of all level to join the Organisation.
- [6]. Dissolution of the so-called Nepal Civil Servants Association ... (Mishra 231)

<sup>25</sup> See, Rising Nepal, "Trade Union" 1991 June 11; Rising Nepal, "Transport Workers'" 1991 June 13

<sup>26</sup> See, Samanya Prasasan Mantralaya 7–8 The Interim Cabinet in 18 March 1991 had amended the 1965 Civil Service Regulations. The changed regulations barred civil employees from participating in strikes, in pen-down strikes, sit-ins, and in representing their cases to the higher ups through any organisations. However, they could hold offices of Government recognised employee organisations and represent their cases to the authorities. Besides, they could not electioneer and taking part in elections. Finally, the rules barred gazetted officials from being a member of an employee organisation unless such organisation was related with their profession.

And the protest was scheduled to start from July 1. In the list of Civil Servants Organisation's demands, the UML perceived the Organisation's reaction against "Government's machination which sought to fragment their organisation" (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 42). From their perspective, it was "a call for implementing the promises given by the Interim Government and for ensuring economic justice by adjusting their pay to the rising index of inflation" (42). It held the Government "fully responsible for bringing the employees to the street by not respecting its own promises" (42). However, the Government's response to the Organisation's programme was a mix of threat and appeal. Repeatedly, press releases of the Ministry of General Administration urged the Organisation not to launch its movement in the face of the kingdom's economic situation. It warned the Organisation of dire consequences if it continued with its protest movement (Rising Nepal, "Benefits" 1991 June 30; Rising Nepal, "HMG Issues" 1991 July 3). Nonetheless, it began on the scheduled day. A day to day description of the movement contained in Mishra's work reveals that it was a movement marked with unusual means of protests. It started with employees donning black bands around their upper arms. Then from 7 July it was paired with *satyagraha*, which started in the office of the Ministry of General Administration. From 17 onwards it involved partial boycott of duties. On 18, other organisations supported the movement. Together they protested forming solidarity chains at Tundhikhel, Kathmandu and in the districts. On 21 it organised silent processions throughout the capital. August 4 witnessed candle-light processions, and on 23 August masked cyclists rallied around the city (Mishra 231–33). Meanwhile, the Parliament had begun functioning since 20 June. On 23<sup>rd</sup>, while electing Speaker of the House UML withdrew the nomination of its candidate ensuring unanimous election of Nepali Congress's candidate Daman Nath Dhungana to the post (Rising Nepal, "Dhungana Elected" 1991 June 24). In exchange, giving examples of parliamentary practices in South Asian states, the Party sought like behaviour from the Congress's side in the election of Deputy Speaker. However,

when the Congress did not reciprocate UML's gesture, its leaders, Man Mohan Adhikari and Jhal Nath Khanal, characterised Congress's attitude as an expression of majority pride (Rising Nepal, "Elected Deputy Speaker" 1991 July 1). In fact, even during this period it appeared that NCP (UML)'s tactics was in favour of forging a genuine understanding with the Congress in the running of the Parliament, but for Congress's denial the tactics never bore fruit. After the election of the Parliamentary posts the debate in the House turned progressively acrimonious. On 5<sup>th</sup> July Parliamentary debate, which followed King's July 1 address to the Joint House, Madhav Kumar Nepal of the UML criticised the address for having failed in indicating how the Government planned to free the kingdom from foreign domination and feudalism and UPFN leader accused the Government of betraying the civil servants (Rising Nepal, "Council Begins" 1991 July 6). On 7 July NCP (UML) and NCP (Democratic) MPs requested the Speaker to discuss civil servants problems (Rising Nepal, "MPs Demand" 1991 July 8). Next day, answering opposition's questions in the debate on the King's address, the programmes of the Government, Congress MPs, Bal Bahadur K. C said that the civil servants' agitation was politically motivated (Rising Nepal, "False Assurances" 1991 July 9). And on 10 July, when the Speaker failed to allocate time for discussing the civil servants' agitation MPs representing NCP (UML), NCP (Democratic) and UPFN boycotted the meeting of the House (Rising Nepal, "MPs Boycott" 1991 July 11). Following day, in a press release, UML General Secretary, Madan Bhandari accused the Government of plotting against Civil Servants Organisation by creating a parallel organisation and called for immediate talks with the Organisation. He warned that delay would be at the cost of general interest (Rising Nepal, "Call for Talks" 1991 July 12). However, despite opposition's call for early solution to the problem, the Government on July 13 issued directives to the Ministry of General Administration to take action against all errant employees under existing regulations (See, Ch. IV footnote 26). It proscribed 'pamphleting', postering and sit-ins on office premises (Rising Nepal, "Employees Warned" 1991 July 14). By July 15, Government had arrested more than 200

employees in Kathmandu and in the districts. Speaking in the National Council Subash Chandra Nemwang of NCP (UML) accused the Government of dividing, suppressing and resorting to unfair means in its handling of the civil servants who had played active role in the *Jana Andolan* (Rising Nepal, “Council Discusses” 1991 July 18). Then on 22 July the Government, in accordance with the provisions of Essential Services Act 2014 [1967/68], imposed prohibitory orders which allowed it to imprison nonconforming employees for six months. Besides, it activated rule 10.1 Sections 5 and 6 of Civil Service Regulations 2021 [1964/65]. Under Section 5, the Government could relieve an employee without disqualifying him of future Government services, but Section 6 armed it with powers to relieve and to disqualify employees even from future Government services. Moreover other Sections of the Regulation gave the Government the power to withhold pay raises and promotions of the employees (Rising Nepal, “Essential Services Act” 1991 July 23). In the Parliamentary debate of July 24, Bharat Mohan Adhikari of the UML accused the Government of adopting an “authoritarian attitude” and warned that his Party was going to launch a nationwide agitation either from the 26th or from the 27th of July in support of the civil servants’ agitation clubbing it with issues of price rise and of the landless (Rising Nepal, “Lower House Discusses” 1991 July 25). The UML was on its road to implement its tactics of opposing Congress’s authoritarianism (See p. 427 for UML tactics of the period). Same day, the politburo meeting of the UML decided to launch the agitation from July 27 if the Party in power did not shed its “pride of majority”, its “rigidity” and its “prejudices” against the civil servants (Rising Nepal, “UML in the Streets” 1991 July 25). On the scheduled day, NCP (UML), NCP (Unity Centre), NCP (Masal) and NCP (NWPP) came together to organise a demonstration and a mass meeting—the result of similarity in their tactical position. In the demonstration they protested against Government’s hooliganism, its insensitivity towards the issue of price rise and towards the plight of the landless and of the agitating civil servants (Rising Nepal, “Mass Meeting” 1991 July 28). The movement dragged on amid talks between the representatives of the civil servants and the

Government (Rising Nepal, “MPs Eager” 1991 Aug. 6). For the UML “the talks were mere ploys to buy time, an example of Congress’s machination” (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 42–3). On the 9<sup>th</sup>, Communist MPs representing NCP (UML), UPFN, NCP (NWPP) boycotted the Parliament session for the second time asking Government to stop taking actions against agitating civil servants (Rising Nepal, “Left Boycott” 1991 Aug. 10). On 16, Nepali Congress spokesman condemned the 18<sup>th</sup> August Valley closedown and nationwide strike of 22 called by the Communist in support of the movement. He argued that the call was not in the interest of the nation since civil servants constituted only 2% of the population and took away 60% of the national wealth (Rising Nepal, “NC Flays” 1991 Aug. 17). The figures were probably an exaggeration in support of the Government’s repeated economic argument. The *bandh* (strike) call was partially successful. Communist faction (See p. 443 for its formation) like NCP (United) stayed away from the call saying that it would take the streets only when talks between the Government and the Civil Servants’ representatives failed (Rising Nepal, “Involve in Strike” 1991 Aug. 21). By August 24 the movement hit the buffers. The Civil Servants Organisation ended its agitation saying that it believed in the Government’s promise that problems would be resolved once the agitation was over (Rising Nepal, “End Agitation” 1991 Aug. 25). Commenting on its role in the movement the NCP (UML) said:

The Nepali Congress blamed us for having created the movement. The ultra-Left [Masal and UPFN] blamed us for having failed in supporting the employees, for cheating them and for supporting the Congress. But the truth was that we were giving our moral support to the employees from the very beginning against the authoritarian attitude of the Government. Such support from our part to the cause of the civil servants was perfectly in tune with our tactical position (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 43)

Meanwhile, the movement was still adjusting itself with the changed post-election environment. This was visible in the activities of the three minor Communist factions namely, NCP (Democratic), NCP (Verma) and NCP (Amatya). The following paragraph is devoted to the description of their activities.

### 1.3. Formation of NCP (United) and its Tactics

On 19 July 1991, the parties announced their merger (Rising Nepal, “Parties to Merge” 1991 July 20) to form NCP (Samyukta (United)). The opening paragraph of its pamphlet produced on the occasion declared, that the unity was in response to the need of the hour for “a disciplined, revolutionary and nationwide Party subscribing to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, which is free from the tendencies of ultra-leftism, opportunism and fragmentation caused by right deviation” (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Samyukta Ghoshna 1). Whom the Party was referring to in the name of ultra-leftism, opportunism and right-deviation? They were pointed against NCP (Masal) and the UPFN (NCP (Samyukta (United))), Rajnaitik Prastao: 2048 15), and though the content of the pamphlet slighted the then activities of UML, yet its later characterisation of the Party as a faction supporting “mixed economy ... rule of law and support to multi-Party system” it said, was in line with its position indicating that it was not against the UML (NCP (Samyukta (United))), Rajnaitik Prastao: 2048 8). However, at that point of time that is during the civil servants movement it was against the UML for it blamed the Party of playing power game and eroding democratic culture for its pamphlet read:

Today in the context of the existing political environment we are forced to unite to fulfil the responsibilities which have fallen upon us after the *Jana Andolan*. Today the most important political questions that needs to be addressed are those related with the strengthening democracy and democratic culture. Presently, it is being eroded by the activities of the ultra-Leftists, Opportunists and the ultra-Rightists. A direct confrontation between those in power and those out of power has begun in the nation. This is due to their love for power. Whom will it serve? It can be easily discerned.

So, in the present political situation, to save democracy and democratic culture and to eradicate poverty, ill health and illiteracy from the Nepalese society we have come together to form NCP (Samyukta)... (NCP (Samyukta (United))), Samyukta Ghoshna 3–4).

Besides, for the fast-paced economic development of Nepal the Party welcomed lessons learnt from the changes that had come in the international Communist movement for it stated:

From the changes which have come in the world Communist movement, the NCP will take lessons and will apply them in Nepal

considering her objective conditions. It will support multi-Party system, planned market economy and democracy to bring about rapid political, economic and social development and then move forward in the creation of an exploitation free humane society... (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Samyukta Ghoshna 3).

However, such Party line was similar to the line adopted by NCP (UML), because it was also thinking of changing economic structure by supporting the superstructure—democracy, multi-Party system and planned market economy. This democracy which three-months ago had emphasised on combating Panchayat authoritarianism was now against a democratic arrangement which seemed to institutionalise two-Party domination for the pamphlet said:

When we consider the political context which has emerged after the ... electoral competition then we see a distinct polarisation of the forces between the EMaLay [UML] and the Ne. Ka [Nepali Congress]. In this context words are in the round that in future the country will have a two-Party system institutionalised. However, Nepal is a poor country with its society fragmented into various classes and groups. In such context, the contradictions among the fragmented lot is bound to play a vital role in future. Hence, a political culture which moves around two-Party domination is neither practical, nor desirable... (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Samyukta Ghoshna 3).

Thus, the real intent behind the formation of the new Party was essentially for creating a combined bloc against the domination of both the UML and the Congress—a clear indication of the degree of fault that lay in the then Communist movement of Nepal. Besides, it indicated what tactics<sup>27</sup> they were to adopt, and it was reflected in their first decision of August 20 (See, p. 442). It seemed that the Party intended to maintain its independent existence, but 20 days later a change in its tactics was visible when it appealed for the creation of a united high command among Communist factions which

<sup>27</sup> See, NCP (Samyukta (United)), Rajnaitik Prastao: 2048 9 The Party in this document points out the differences that exists between itself and the UML. It says that in the then context UML considers itself as the only alternative to the Nepali Congress, but it believes that the only alternative is a broad National Front. Besides, it points out that it also has differences with the party on the issue of regional cooperation and in creating the National Front. On the former it says, that the UML still is against India meaning it is not, and on the latter it does not evince any interest in creating a Front, but remains guided by its ego.

included the UML (Rising Nepal, “Communist Unity” 1991 Aug. 10). Considering the timing of the appeal, it was perhaps triggered by the attitude which the Congress had reflected in its dealing with the movement of the civil servants. Nevertheless, considering the fast changes in its tactical position it appeared that the Party was in a state of confusion. At times, it was trying to maintain its independent existence, and at another, it was trying to be a part of a larger bloc.

#### 1.4. Reactions Against Mallik Report, Protests Against Price Rise

With the dawn of July, the Communist factions were faced with the Mallik Commission’s Report. However, their responses towards the Report contrasted with the concern which they evinced in the course of the civil servants’ movement. Considering the Commission’s reference, the Report carried much weight in the Communists’ tactical position. But surprisingly, the Communist factions neither clubbed the issue in their July 1991 movement, nor protested against Girija’s inaction in 1992. Their actions were limited either in raising uncoordinated voices in the Parliament (Rising Nepal, “MPs Eager” 1991 Aug. 6), or in inking brief comments in their documents. Following its trend, the UML, in its document of the Fifth Congress, attributed Congress’s action, that is, its failure to implement the suggestions of the Commission, to its changed organisational complexion owing to the entry of the Panchayat activists in the Party (NCP (UML), *Rajnitik Pratibedan*: 1993 14). However, for NCP (Masal) it was an opportunity to condemn parliamentary system by saying,

All along we had been saying that Parliamentary system and elections held under the system is incapable of solving the problems of the people ... Despite people’s repeated demand for punishing the criminals of *Jana Andolan*, the present Government is protecting them and is admitting them in its organisation (NCP (Masal), “*Rajnitik Pratibedan* Paus 2048 [1992]” 447–8)

Its view implied, its commonplace argument that the first thing which was required in implementing the Commission’s Report was to strip the King of his powers by framing a Constitution through a Constituent Assembly. And considering the faint reactions of the Communist factions—the NCP (NWPP) did not even bother to raise

the issue in the Parliament<sup>28</sup>—the Party was perhaps right in making such suggestions. However, such inaction on their part raises many questions. Was it fear of the King that dissuaded them from pursuing the issue? Or, was there, unsubstantiated though, an understanding with the King in the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1990 compromise, as indicated by Brown? Or was their avowed tactics of opposing authoritarianism simply a posture against feudalism? There are no documents to answer these questions with certainty except to surmise—perhaps the fragmented Communist factions were not in a position to challenge the authority of both the King and the Congress at the same time: to a few of the factions the issue was important in exposing the limitations of the Constitution, but for the UML it was not, because it was in favour of strengthening democracy. Hence; with the passage of time, the issue, without the support of the largest Communist faction, just faded into oblivion. From then onwards, the issue of price rise claimed much of their attentions. Paper reports<sup>29</sup> and parliamentary debates were focused on criticising Nepali Congress's economic policies, which the Communists felt were tilted in favour of foreign powers. In the Parliament, a representative view in this regard were the statements of Narayan Man Bijukche of NCP (NWPP) who said:

Nepali Congress while going to polls had floated its manifesto ... to receive public mandate. Its economic policies should have been based on the manifesto.

In its manifesto it had expressly stated that it stood for democratic socialism ... In its present economic policy there is not a single reflection of socialism. Does it, by its programme of socialism seek to copy the Indian model where even after 40 years of its variety of socialism 60% of its citizens are below poverty line? ... In its economic program the Congress in the name of socialism has focused primarily on developing the private sector ... Hidden in such approach is its desire to welcome foreign companies to change Nepal into a neo-colonial State ... For controlling price rise it has proposed no solution. Even in the Interim period it had promised to control prices, but it rose

<sup>28</sup> See, NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Pratinidhi Sabhama Com. Rohit: Pahilo Adhiwayshun Entire Collection . In the entire collection of Naryanman Bijukche's deliberations in the then Parliamentary session compiled by the Party there is not even a single statement on the issue.

<sup>29</sup> See, Rising Nepal, "MPs Eager" 1991 Aug. 6; Rising Nepal, "Immediate Relief" 1991 Aug. 18

by 30-35%. The present Government is similarly not bothered about the rising prices (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Pratinidhi Sabhama Com. Rohit: Pahilo Adhiwayshun 1-4)

It was a perennial issue which found its way into programmes framed by the Communist factions in their protest movements. Interestingly, these protest movements did not take one, but series of issues which were either carry over of the past or the result of immediate Government action. In 1992, their perceptions on Tanakpur issue (See p. 150), tagged with the issue of price rise, spilled over the streets as protests in January and February. In January 23, NCP (Unity Centre) led a procession in the heart of Kathmandu. The procession demanded the Government to check price rise, increase remuneration of employees in proportion to the price hike, check corruption, stop eviction of landless,<sup>30</sup> reduce education fee, stop 'congressisation' and, above all, the implementation of the Tanakpur treaty. It described the treaty as an attempt by the Congress to sell national rivers and demanded not to implement the treaty without the two-third approval of the Parliament (Rising Nepal, "Unity Centre Plans" 1992 Jan 23). Meanwhile, NCP (UML) suffered a split, which led to the re-formation of yet another Communist faction—NCP (Marxist).

#### 1.5. NCP (Marxist): Its Strategy and Tactics and Change in NCP (United)'s Strategy

Commenting on the origin of the split, Surendra K. C points out that after the formation of NCP (UML) in January 1991 a few leaders of the erstwhile NCP (Marxist) began drifting away from the UML (K. C, Nepalma Communist Tesro Bhag 217). The drift ultimately ended in their holding of "7<sup>th</sup> National Conference on

<sup>30</sup> See, Rising Nepal, "Commission on Squatters" 1991 Aug. 5 On August 4 the Government had formed a High Level Commission to identify genuine landless squatters. However, the Commission was composed only of members of the ruling party. Suggestions from the opposition members, MPs of the UML and UPFN to include even members from the opposition in the Commission was vehemently rejected. Other suggestions from the opposition included 1) To take the issue beyond the consideration of vote bank 2) To devise means to ascertain genuine landless people. Add the content of Sukumbasi paper.

VS 2048 Magh 20–21 [3–4 February 1992]” to announce the “formation of NCP (Marxist)” (NCP (Marxbadi (Marxist)), Ghoshna Patra 1). Drawing upon the legacy of NCP formed in “15 September 1949 under Pushpalal” it categorised Nepal in the “semi-feudal, semi-colonial stage of historical development where distortions of Prague-capitalism had set in”. Identifying itself with the interests of “the working class, peasants, middle class, women, nationalities, untouchables and national bourgeoisie” it declared to “free Nepal from feudalism, imperialism, foreign monopoly capitalism”. It pointed out that for achieving its chosen goal it would “ensure New Democratic revolution and lead the nation towards socialism by waging class struggle” (1) against “revivalist, feudal authoritarianism and anti-democratic forces” (7). Thus, in comparison to the orientations of NCP (UML) and NCP (United) it stood aloof: it again brought in the importance of class struggle in the social development of Nepal. However, such struggles in the interest of the “workers, landless and the peasants” were to be carried out in ensuring “workers participation and representation in the management, in imparting skills to make them employable and in industrialising and modernising Nepal” (1–2). As regards its position on the issues generated by the “multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural” complexion of Nepalese society, it said that their “struggle ultimately turns into a class struggle”. And to solve it the Party said, “After the arrival of democracy the linguistic, religious and minorities are trying to evolve themselves as political forces. In their endeavour, NCP (Marxist) will always support them” because, amicable relation that exists among them is essential for the unity of the nation (3). Thus, neither in solving the problems of classes nor in solving the problems of social groups the Party supported violent class struggle. The nature of class struggle which it supported was limited to waging political struggles. This was because the Party stood for preserving “multi-Party democracy, where the Constitution had transferred power to the people” (2). To preserve it the Party thought of industrialising the kingdom, for it noted:

For the preservation of democracy, social stability, people’s rights, country’s sovereignty and unity the most important condition is

economic development. For economic development the most important condition is to end feudal control over land and to make the peasants the tillers of the soil while modernising the agricultural sector and ending the interference of foreign monopolistic capital in the industrial sector of the kingdom (NCP (Marxbadi (Marxist)), Ghoshna Patra 4)

Thus, the Party, unlike NCP (UML) and NCP (United) looked the other way round: for it, economic development was the precondition for ensuring political stability. However, it was opposed to economic development based on “free market economy which was accompanied by the distortions of capitalism such as hoarding, exploitation of workers and artificial deficiencies in commodities” (4). It stood for “controlled economy, which ensured social justice” (4). And this reflected its objections against the NCP (UML)’s position for it observed:

Today in the name of *Bahudaliya Janabad*, competitive democracy and economy all distortions of capitalism have been introduced in our society. Among the people this has created abhorrence against communism itself. We shall expose all these distortions which are being advocated in the name of communism and raise the consciousness of the working class towards the necessity for New Democratic revolution and for establishing socialism (NCP (Marxbadi (Marxist)), Ghoshna Patra 5–6)

Tactically, this meant that the Party position was focused in ensuring the economic development of the kingdom while exposing the distortions that had set in the NCP (UML)’s position in the name of *Bahudaliya Janabad*.<sup>31</sup> Needless to say that such politics of exposure of the Party was also aimed at opposing the neo-Liberal economic orientations of Nepali Congress. Meanwhile, the Communists continued pressurising the Congress in the Parliament. On February 23, the opposition, except

<sup>31</sup> See, NCP (Marxbadi (Marxist)), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 2049 20–22 and 35 The Party holds the view that in the context of Nepal the only suitable strategy is New Democratic strategy because the imperialist are still in existence. Besides, it observes that UML’s *Naulo Janabad* is an opportunistic and non-Marxist line on the basis of which it can unite even with the revivalist or the NDP. However, it does not explain how such line opens UML’s possibility of uniting with the NDP. Perhaps it was saying that the line was tailored in the interest of electoral politics. Moreover, its document classes UML’s line as neo-revisionist line which advocates victory over imperialism by adopting competitive economy. It says that as long as imperialists exist there is always the possibility of war.

NSP, walked out demanding details about the agreements (Rising Nepal, “Opposition Walk-Out” 1992 Feb. 24).

In 24–27 March 1992, the NCP (United) held its First National Conference. Its document described the Nepalese society’s historical stage of development as the stage of “bourgeois democracy” (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Rajnaitik Prastao: 2048 4), where there were still the persistence of “feudal legacies: feudal culture, economic underdevelopment and social settings” (4). Under such situation, the document said that “the challenge before democratic revolution is to ensure rapid industrialisation of the nation while implementing fundamental land reform programmes” (5). And as a prelude to announcing changes in its strategy, it hedged its statements. Without identifying the existing classes it said, “In the present context, the possibility of the rise of industrial workers and industrial capitalists is minimum. The problems of the peasants and of the unemployed youths have multiplied and there exists no identifiable classes: they are all mixed up” (5). Then, pointing out to the changes in the World Communist movement the three factions, as one, without stating clearly, of course, gave up their earlier strategy of National Democracy. The Party statements implied that they, under compulsion, were for neo-liberal model of development without falling into the grip of neo-colonial economic structure for its document noted:

Earlier we had subscribed to the strategy of National Democracy and our goal then was to establish socialism through the non-capitalist path. The crux of the strategy was to ensure rapid economic development of our nation taking help from the socialist countries of the world. However, now the situation has changed. Soviet Union is no more in existence and Eastern European states are not socialist. China, Cuba, Korea and Vietnam are also enmeshed in their own economic crisis ... In such context, Nepal, for its economic development has to take support from developed countries and it has to bank upon its own resources. So, we have to start anew our relationships with the developed countries, especially with our neighbours, and with Western and International Funding Agencies which are under the control of the Western nations ... After the fall of the Soviet camp, these institutions in the disbursement of their fund have begun reducing the proportion of Soft loans in favour of Hard loans to collect more from interest accruing out of such loans. This is a clear indication about their intention. They intend to bind us in the neo-colonial economic structure; however, we have no choices. Under such situation we have to re-evaluate the relation that exists in the Public and Private sector of

our economy and decide how much loan we should take and for which sector... (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Rajnaitik Prastao: 2048 5–6)?

The Party was in a dilemma: outwardly it professed its goal of “establishing a humane socialist system” (2), but inwardly it was out of its wits in devising the course for achieving its goal. Hence, it considered democracy as the panacea for everything even for establishing the rule of the working class for it stated:

After the 1989–90 revolt ... democracy has been installed. With the 1990 Constitution, the 1991 Election and the coming into power of a democratic Government the first phase of democratic revolution is over. Now, we have entered the second phase of revolution. In it we have to protect the Constitution, the rights enshrined in it and through peaceful people’s movement we have to bring a total change in the socio-economic structure with the intention of establishing a democratic State of the general working citizens... (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Rajnaitik Prastao: 2048 2)

Thus, the process of giving up its ideological position was complete. From now on, the word proletariat had found a new substitute in the ‘general working citizens’. These positions brought it closer to the NCP (UML), which in the name of *Naulo Janabad* was advocating similar line. Within a brief period of two years, Parliamentary democracy had triumphed over the Panchayat system in forcing the factions to tailor their position to that of the UML. Hence, in its changed form the Party’s tactics rotated essentially around opposing the “monopolistic, authoritarian and undemocratic rule of the Congress” and the ultra-Leftists (15). In opposing the latter, it was perhaps guided by its fear that ultra-Leftist’s rise would be at the cost of its existence, a conclusion which finds its support when its position on the evolving bi-party domination in the politics of Nepal (See p. 444) is paired with its perceptions regarding the end result of ultra-Leftist politics for it said:

Nepali Congress, because of its policy of compromise with the feudal and imperial forces and because of its authoritarian tendencies, cannot form a National Front consisting of anti-feudal and anti-imperial forces for the sake of the nation’s progress. On account of the development of free economy the country will be progressively shackled in the chain of exploitation. The chasm between the rich and the poor will increase. *The ultra-Leftist Maoists, in the name of socialism, will take the country into the fold of sectarian dictatorship of one Party. It will fail in including the masses and in ensuring the development of the nation in their [masses] terms*[italics added]. Hence, for the all out

development of the nation ... it is essential to create an alternative to the Nepali Congress. Such alternative can be created only on the base of Left Front. In this direction one has to move now (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Rajnitik Prastao: 2048 16)

Thus, in its tactics of creating a “National Left Front” there appeared its intent of preserving its existence (16). It hoped such front to come into being “in course of the understanding which would evolve in the process of fighting against the authoritarian rule of the Congress” (17). According to it, such fight was to be centred around issues of “corruption in the use of revenues by ministers, corruption practised along the Indo-Nepal border ... trade, import” and in keeping “Indian cooperation in Hydro-electric projects within the bounds of international norms” (17). Besides, it indicated that it stood in favour of “introducing improved ceiling laws on land ... full security to national capital ... industrialising the nation with the help of foreign aid ... ending ‘congressisation’ of media ... giving cheap education, free education to the backward classes, developing their languages and culture ... and in supporting freedom of religion” (17–20). After the National Conference the Party formed its Central Committee on March 30, 1992 under the Chairmanship of Tulsilal Amatya. And it urged all Communists, barring NCP (Masal) and UPFN, to unite and face the May/June 1992 local elections as a single front (Rising Nepal, “Forms Central Committee” 1992 March 31). However, its appeal for a united Communist front went unheeded.

#### 1.6. Tanakpur Issue and Communist Protests

On April 6, NCP (Unity Centre) revived the Tanakpur issue. It launched another round of protest as “Movement Day”, where NCP (Masal) provided its moral support, because it said that “the decision was taken unilaterally by the Unity Centre” (NCP (Masal), “Rajnitik Prastao Srawan 2049” 466). It, was, therefore, wholly NCP (Unity Centre)’s show,<sup>32</sup> which according to Whelpton was marked with violence.

<sup>32</sup> See, Whelpton, History 189 He writes that the movement was jointly carried by both NCP (Masal) and UPFN, the front organisation of NCP (Unity Centre). Documentary evidence goes against such statement.

Describing it he writes, “Street ... demonstrations ... turned violent on 6 April 1992, the second anniversary of the Darbar Marg shooting during the *janandolan*. At least, twelve people died in police firing” (189). A late reaction of NCP (UML), viewed in the killing a “planned, deliberate action of the Government ... a plot to keep it engaged before local elections” (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 44). It said, after that “We organised protests extended over a period of two months<sup>33</sup> against the authoritarian<sup>34</sup> attitude of the Government ... The protests<sup>35</sup> included distribution of pamphlets in huge numbers, dozens of processions and collection of twelve lakh signatures demanding the resignation of the Home Minister” (44). However, on April 30 the UML entered into a six-point understanding with the Nepali Congress. Of these, four understandings were related with the smooth holding of local elections. Fifth was for the creation of an Investigation Commission to investigate the April 6, 1992 incident and the last dealt with early formation of a Consumers’ Commission to find ways and means to lower electricity tariff and prices of commodities (Rising Nepal, “NC, UML Hold Talks” 1992 May 1). The UML rationalised its action as means necessary for protecting and institutionalising democracy. Giving same reasons, it rejected both calls of NCP (Unity Centre): the call for Nepal *bandh* on May 2 and its ultimatum to Koirala to resign by 27 April.<sup>36</sup> However, commenting on the

<sup>33</sup> This is perhaps wrong because after April one does not come across any paper reports which indicate UML protests. Besides, this claim, as will be seen, does not square with its activities later for it entered into an understanding with Nepali Congress for the smooth holding of local elections.

<sup>34</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Judicial Inquiry” 1992 April 10 In the Parliament Man Mohan Adhikari characterised Government action as the expression of a party intoxicated with power.

<sup>35</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “UML Sit-In” 1992 Apr 23; Rising Nepal, “Candle Procession” 1992 April 24 The UML’s protests during these period included sit-ins, candle processions and forming solidarity chains.

<sup>36</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “UML and Nepal Bandh” 1992 May 1; Rising Nepal, “Bandh No Significance” 1992 May 2

nonparticipation of UML in the Nepal *bandh* programme NCP (Masal) perceived in it the fruition of Nepali Congress's tactics of "isolating and weakening the UML" (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Prastao Srawan 2049" 466). Thereafter, in the May–June election for the creation of the Local bodies each of the Communist factions fought independently. In their failure to come together there were perhaps some deep seated perception against each other. In case of NCP (Masal) there were its perceptions regarding Unity Centre's character which it expressed in the following terms: "In the present context we also believe that ... there should be a united front ... but considering the past activities of the Ekta Kendra [Unity Centre] which, during *Jana Andolan* period, was opportunistic, dishonest and aimed at engineering splits we do not see any such possibility" (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Pratibedan Aswin 2049" 482). However, in the local election, NCP (Masal), which had boycotted the 1991 General Elections,<sup>37</sup> was a participant in the name of its All Nepal Peasants Front (Rising Nepal, "Masal on Elections" 1992 May 21). In taking such stand the Party was strengthening its organisation and practising its tactics of exposing the

<sup>37</sup> See, NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Pratibedan Aswin 2049" 475–76 Explaining why it did not take part in the 1991 General Election but in the Local Election the party gives three reasons. First the General Election was held in the context of the 1990 *Jana Andolan* where the main goal was for transferring power to the people by struggling for the creation of the Constituent Assembly. Hence, in that context it was necessary to boycott the Parliamentary election to keep the struggle continuous. Second, there are differences in between the parliamentary elections and local elections. In the former the issues are national, but in the latter the issues are related with the day to day lives of the people. So, politically the local elections are less important. Third, candidates who are elected for the Parliament come in contact with reactionaries of the highest rung and they get more material facilities as a result there is high possibility of them being changed into reactionaries. However candidates winning local elections come in contact only with local people and they do not enjoy material benefit. In the last two elections both these considerations went into our decisions. The first and the third reasoning are straightforward, but the second needs a little explanation. By giving the second reasoning the Party was perhaps trying to say that in the election, which are politically more important its line would have more impact hence it was necessary to boycott the parliamentary elections.

reactionaries<sup>38</sup> for its document said:

... On the question of our participation in the local elections in support of the Peasants' Front we have this to say. Despite their [elections] undemocratic and reactionary character, we participated in these elections to promote our politics and improve our organisational strength. We used the elections as instruments to expose the many plots and dictatorial character of the Government. We have achieved a few successes in Pyuthan and in a few villages. However, our successes should not be judged only on the basis of our numerical successes, but on the basis of our achievement in exposing the nature of various reactionary forces (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Prastao Srawan 2049" 469).

However, their performance was not up to their expectations. Even UML could capture only 26.1% of the total seats allocated for the creation of the Village Development Committees and the Municipalities (See, p. 156 ). Similarly, in the June 1992 election for the creation of District Development Committees its position was below its expectations. Accounting for its capture of "only 18% positions in the D.D.C elections" the UML blamed Congress for its "plots" and observed, "Considering the overall result ... our achievement has considerably dwindled. Besides, their [Congress's] victory in those constituencies where we had won in the last General Election has emboldened them" (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 44, 45). Analysing the causes behind the falling influence of the Communists in the elections, NCP (Masal) condemned the activities of the other Communist factions by pointing out to their nature of functioning which was "only for votes," (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Prastao Srawan 2049" 467) as such, unlike those of Communist parties for it said:

The local elections indicate the plummeting influence of the Communist factions among the people. Such fall is due to the existence of various opportunist Communist factions in the political arena and the non-existence of politics aimed at exposing them. In the country

<sup>38</sup> See, NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Prastao Srawan 2049" 467 and. NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Pratibedan Aswin 2049" 471–2 In these documents the party characterises both NCP (UML) and NCP (Unity Centre) as the reactionaries and opportunists who had opened their organisational doors to all elements including revivalist, that is Panchayat members, to tailor their politics to the immediate goal of winning elections.

not only the Soviet revisionist [the NCP (United)], but also the UML and the Unity Centre are posing themselves as Communists ... In the last General Elections people gave votes to the UML considering it as a Communist Party. Hence, the people gained the impression that their activities were the activities of a Communist Party. As such their faith in communism wore away. The same was the impression they gathered regarding the activities of the Unity Centre ... In such condition we have to make effort to expose these forces to raise the faith of the people in communism (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Prastao Srawan 2049" 468).

For the balance of the period, issues of corruption<sup>39</sup> and later, Tanakpur once again came to the forefront. On 5 September Communist factions<sup>40</sup> including UML, NCP (Unity Centre), NCP (Masal), NCP (United) and NCP (NWPP) declared their decision to protest against the Government on the Tanakpur issue. There was, however, a marked change in their tone of protest: their demand was focused more on the appeal that the treaties should be implemented only after their ratification by the Parliament (Rising Nepal, "Leftists Protest" 1992 Sept. 6). On the 9<sup>th</sup>, they submitted memoranda to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Chairman of National Council urging them to bring the matter to the Parliament (Rising Nepal, "Leftists Assail" 1992 Sept. 10). The politics involved in such demand was apparent—Nepali Congress would have certainly failed to ratify the treaties if they were required to pass through the two-third majority of the members of both the Houses. After Supreme Court verdict on the issue (See p. 158), the Communist

<sup>39</sup> See, Rising Nepal, "Bhandari Urges" 1992 Aug. 1 On July 31, Madan Bhandari, UML General Secretary thanked Sailja Acharya for her bold step in revealing the corrupt nature of Koirala Government and giving several examples of corruption prevalent in the National Trading Corporation he accused the Government of being soft towards controlling corruption.

<sup>40</sup> This coming together of the Communist factions is not explainable if one considers their tactical position. Tactically the UML was for strengthening democracy and so was NCP (United). In forcing the Nepali Congress to go through the Parliamentary process it had the advantage to claim that it was trying to strengthen the Constitutional provision and thereby democracy. However, the tactical position of NCP (Unity Centre), NCP (Masal) and NCP (NWPP) was to reveal the weaknesses of Parliamentary system and to destroy it. How could both these tactical position come together at the same time is not understandable.

protests were focussed in demanding the removal of Koirala. On December 16, Communist factions; UML, UPFN, NCP (Masal) and NCP (NWPP), organised protest rallies demanding Koirala's resignation (Rising Nepal, "Left Parties Demonstration" 1992 Dec. 17). Then there was a brief interlude. With the coming of 1993 the UML was engaged in its own affairs. From January 27 to February 2, the Party organised its Fifth National Congress, where it reaffirmed its faith in its leaders: it re-elected Man Mohan Adhikari and Madan Bhandari as the Chairman and the General Secretary of the Party. Explicating its strategy, its document identified the kingdom in "semi-feudal, semi-colonial stage" of historical development, where "the entire working class [was] suffering under the exploitative control of feudal class, tout bureaucratic class and foreign monopolistic capitalism" (NCP (UML), Krantiko Karyakram 1). Hence, it said, "our goal is to end the control of feudalism and imperialism" to move towards "scientific socialism and communism" (1, 4). Then clarifying its immediate goal it said:

But without industrialising the nation ... socialist society cannot be established. Hence, the task, at present is to develop national capital and industries. For this both feudalism and imperialism needs to be destroyed. Hence, at this stage, the important task is to achieve bourgeois democratic revolution ... After that we can move towards socialism" (NCP (UML), Krantiko Karyakram 4).

And explaining what stood in its way to achieving bourgeois democratic revolution the Party implicitly identified the Nepali Congress by presenting it as the representative of feudal and tout bureaucratic capitalist class, which was then in power for it said:

But until today no outside force has been able to exercise its direct control over Nepal ... Hence, the main contradiction which we have to resolve today is internal. It is the contradiction between the people and the State power where the State power is under the control of the feudal and tout bureaucratic capitalist class ... At present, the main contradiction is, therefore, between the people and the Congress Government ... (NCP (UML), Krantiko Karyakram 3).

Then to explain why it called its strategy the strategy of *Bahudaliya Janabad* it argued, unconvincingly though, that such strategy was in the interest of the working class and that it had certain unique features peculiar to the context of Nepal for it said:

Revolutions aimed at ending feudalism and imperialism have been variously called as New Democratic, National Democratic or People's Democratic revolutions. In the context of Nepal we have introduced many political, economic, and foreign policy elements. These are: supremacy of the Constitution, multi-Party competition, open society of multiple groups, administrative arrangement under rule of law, Government of the majority and opposition of the minority [Party in minority], human rights, basic democratic rights and institutionalisation of peace within a Constitution ... Hence, we have defined it as Bahudaliya Janabad. This revolution which will be led by the proletariat will be democratic in the interest of the general masses. It will establish the rule of the people and not of the capitalist class ... This is not the dictatorship of one class ... (NCP (UML), Krantiko Karyakram 5).

Moreover, the document did not clearly identify either its enemies, or its allies except to point out that its enemies were all those who represented the feudal class, tout bureaucratic capitalist class, foreign monopolistic capitalism and imperialism (21). However, its other document passed in the same Congress identified its enemies in the Nepali Congress, National Democratic and Nepal Sadbhavana Party. It identified two of the Communist factions as its allies, but with certain reservations. In Nepali Congress it viewed the representations of “feudal class, tout bureaucratic capitalists” and “middle class tilted towards the right”, who were interested in serving the interest of “International capitalism, especially the multinational companies and Indian monopoly capitalists”. In the then context, it perceived Nepali Congress as “the Constitutionally established exploiter and representative of imperialists within Nepal” (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan: 1993 21). In the National Democratic Party (RPP) it saw the representation of “erstwhile Panchayat activists aligned to the feudal and the tout bureaucratic class aimed at serving the interest of International capitalists” (21–22). The NSP, according to it, represented “rich merchants and peasants serving the interest of the feudal and tout-bureaucratic class” and, in particular, India (22). However, it felt that the NSP as well as the NCP (Unity Centre) and NCP (Masal) could be its allies at least in opposing “the autocratic and authoritarian rule of the Nepali Congress” (22–3). Needless to say that the strategy was not clear. It did not explain why and for what would the proletariat lead in the interest of the general masses? Besides, there existed a clear confusion in the position of the Party, because

at one end it deferred its struggle against imperialism—the main contradiction was not against it—but at the other end it was interested in destroying tout bureaucratic capitalist—element connected with imperialism. As for its tactics, it said that “it was in favour of amassing and increasing its strength to move towards socialism” and this involved “the protection of democracy achieved so far and its strengthening by struggling for more democratic values and garnering masses around revolutionary forces for bringing about fundamental change in the society” (NCP (UML), Karyaniti: 1993 7). In concrete terms this meant that the Party was going to “oppose Congress’s autocratic ... authoritarian regime”, “oppose revivalist forces”, “oppose undemocratic provisions of the Constitution and corruption”, “stand in favour of human rights” (7–8), “oppose all unequal treaties that existed between Nepal and India”, “stand for revolutionary land reform to transfer land to the tillers” (8), “support economic policy which favour[ed] the growth of national capital”, “support an education system that makes [made] youths employable” and “fight for equality among all sections of society divided along linguistic, religious and ethnic lines while opposing the monopoly of one language, religion and ethnic group” (9). And pointing at the then tactical need it says, “For the present the tactics is ... to pressurise the Government for the fulfilment of people’s pressing needs and for it ... one of the important area of struggle is the Parliament. To come out victorious in this field means to win the faith of the people and to form the Government” (10). Hence, the Party says that its tactics is for creating “a progressive Government by winning the elections” (11). The other aspects of its tactics were focused on encouraging Party unity and the formation of united front. However, on the former its stricture was as follows: “Party unity is important ... but for unity we should not collect all those who differ from our ideology, goal and our path” (16). Finally, to clarify the type of united front needed the document emphasised on differentiating the ‘main enemy’ for it said:

United front should be created among all forces, even if those forces represent the enemy class or a section of the enemy and if they can be used against the main enemy. However, under any circumstances or time, mistake should not be committed by aligning with a class or a

section which represents the main enemy identified in a particular moment (20–1).

With the Congress over, from February 11, four Communist factions; NCP (UML), UPFN, NWPP and CPN (Masal) again began their demonstrations. It was organised before Singha Darbar, the Secretariat of the kingdom (Rising Nepal, “Left Demo” 1992 Feb. 12). Within the Parliament, it continued demanding the resignation<sup>41</sup> of Koirala (Rising Nepal, “Opposition Rumpus” 1993 Feb. 15). Acrimonious sessions began when the Government side revealed, in line with the findings of the Baral Committee, that the Interim Government, where UML leader Jhal Nath was also at the ministerial position, was responsible for taking decision on the issue on 15 April 1991 (Rising Nepal, “Poudel Revelation” 1993 Feb 23). From then onward; the opposition, especially the UML, shifted towards questioning the legal basis under which the Government had formed the Baral Committee and divulged to the Committee the Cabinet decisions of the Interim Government (Rising Nepal, “Debate Shifts” 1993 Feb. 26). Khanal declared to resign if his involvement in the decision were proved. However, the Government did not furnish the proofs. Meanwhile, despite having reached a consensus on the process to be adopted in evaluating the impact of Tanakpur, Communist factions continued their protests outside. At times, these protests<sup>42</sup> took the form of “Torch Light Demonstrations” or

<sup>41</sup> See, NCP (Marxbadi (Marxist)), Chunao Ghoshna-Patra 2051 9 In explaining the UML’s preoccupation for the resignation of Koirala, the NCP (Marxist) document points out that this tendency was owing to UML link with a lobby of the Nepali Congress. This observation linked with UML explanation that its no-confidence motion failed because a few Nepali Congress’s MPs did not respond as expected seems to support NCP (Marxist)’s claim and, thereby, the preoccupation of the UML in the resignation of Koirala (for UML explanation on the failure of no-confidence motion see page 469). See also Brown 169 Unable to explain this tactics of the UML, she calls it an “unorthodox tactics”.

<sup>42</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Torch Light Demos” 1993 Mar. 14 and Rising Nepal, “Bandh Disrupts Life” 1993 Mar. 15 The Torch demonstration was organised by six Communist factions namely UML, NCP (Masal), UPFN, NWPP, NCP (Mashal) and Communist League. The Bandh was organised by NCP (UML), NCP (Masal), UPFN and NCP (NWPP). One important point to be noted in these combinations is that a

ended in “Valley Bandh” which were punctuated with violence. All along they demanded the resignation of Koirala (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 14 Apr. 1993). Meanwhile, from March 11–15, 1993, NCP (United) held its Unity Congress in Gaur. Though its document of the Congress did not explain why it was Unity Congress, yet in the backdrop of 1992 July and December events along with its characterisation of UML in its document of the Unity Congress it seems that the Congress was called to set its house in order and to protest against the UML’s activities directed against it. In July 1992 the Party, while condemning the undemocratic attitude of UML, had suspended its Central Committee members, who joined NCP (UML) later in December 1992.<sup>43</sup> The document of the Unity Congress, which was held after the event, characterised the UML as a Party “infested with middle class activists” with “vacillating lumpen political character” (7). Instead of “sincerely working towards the building of a united Communist front” the Party viewed UML as a practitioner of “plots and treacherous moves aimed at fragmenting” the movement while “preaching opposition against Congress’s hegemonic tendencies” (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Agami Rajnitik Karya 7–8 and 8).

In the days to come, the continuing Communist protests received added impetus after May 16 when UML General Secretary, Madan Bhandari and its politburo member, Jivraj Ashrit were killed at Das Dhunga when their vehicle moving towards Kathmandu plunged into the Trishuli river. However, the driver of the vehicle Amar Lama escaped the accident with minor injuries (Rising Nepal, “Bhandari, Ashrit Missing” 1993 May 17). Next day, Home Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba formed “a

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few of the factions claiming separate existence were not separate for instance UPFN represented the front organisation of NCP (Mashal) and Communist League. As a result, Communist claims and paper reports often have a tendency to awe an uninitiated readers of the movement by their numerical strength.

<sup>43</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “NCP (United) Expels” 1992 July 24 and. Rising Nepal, “Faction Joins UML” 1992 Dec. 7

one-man Inquiry Commission under Supreme Court retired Judge, Prachanda Raj Anil to investigate the accident” (Mishra 275). Little realising how its act would question the legitimacy of the Government’s effort, the NCP (UML) formed its “own team under Khadga Oli” to carry out its investigation. Added to it, on 19 May, “under the initiative of an organisation, which used to publish a monthly newspaper Mulyankan” a third “Public Investigation Committee, to come up with an unprejudiced findings on the accident”, was formed “under Padmaratna Tuladhar ” (Mishra 275–76). Their findings were at variance: Anil Commission reported the negligence of the driver and the other two perceived in the accident well orchestrated plot to kill the leader (Mishra 276–88). The difference in their finding, in an already vitiated environment, added fresh lease to the cycle of protests. Joint Press release of Communist factions; NCP (UML), UPFN, NCP (Masal), NCP (NWPP), Nepal Communist League, NCP (MLM) and NCP (Amatya),<sup>44</sup> declared “Valley protests in Asad 14 [28 June] and nationwide protests in Asad 15 [29 June]” (NCP (UML), Samyukta Bigyapti 27 June 1993). Subsequent UML’s press release clarified the perception that propelled the movement for it stated, “The seven Left’s struggle launched since Asad 13 [27 June] is on its path to remove the killer Girija Government from power”. Besides, it warned: “if the Government suppresses the planned Asad 19 [3 July] Torch demonstration and Asad 20 [4 July] all Nepal bandh, then today’s all-Party coordination meeting has decided to carry on movement for additional three days” (NCP (UML), “Prajatantrako Rakshaka Lagi” 1 July 1993). The 9<sup>th</sup> July press release of the UML changed the complexion of the movement. Announcing the Seven Left’s programme of “Chakka Jam [transport strike]” in 19 and 20 July and of all Nepal bandh in 12, 13 and 14 of August, the Party brought forward a host of issues in their list of demands. They demanded “end to congressisation, formation of an Inquiry Commission to investigate

<sup>44</sup> The manner in which the Communists tried to project in their protests the involvement of numerous faction is clearly indicated by the name of NCP (Amatya) in the list of factions coming together in protest movement. The NCP (Amatya) faction presents an interesting case for the following reasons:

the Das Dhunga incident, resignation of Koirala, end of anti-national attitude of the Government, compensations to those killed in the protests, end to insecurity and an end to inflation” (NCP (UML), “Press Bigyapti” 9 July 1993; Rohit 10). After the August cycle of protests, on 17, the UML entered into a nine-point agreement with the Government and unilaterally<sup>45</sup>suspended all its future protest movements (NCP (UML), Madhav Kumar Nepalko Baktabya 17 Aug. 1993). In the nine-point agreement the UML pressed the Government for the fulfilment of the following demands:

- (1) Formation of a Judicial Inquiry Commission under a serving Supreme Court judge to investigate the Das Dhunga accident....
- (2) Release of all activists taken into police custody during the protest movement....
- (3) Additional Rs. 25, 000/ grant to the family of all those protestors killed in movements launched after restoration of democracy in the kingdom....
- (4) Reforms in educational structure in tune with the democratic change of the kingdom...
- (5) Extension of time for Parliamentary all-Party committee to forge consensus on Tanakpur issue in line with the interest of the nation.
- (6) Constitutional amendment of Treaty Act to be done in the spirit of democracy by placing it in the Lower House.
- (7) Formation of an all-Party Commission to control and monitor price rise.
- (8) Formation of a five-member task force ... to study and recommend the release of political detainee since the Panchayat period.
- (9) Formation of a three member task force ... to study the possibility of reinstating civil servants suspended or fired during the Civil Servants’ agitation (K. C, Nepal Communist Tesro Bhag 256).

However, the outcome of the agreement left one question unanswered. Why did the agreement contain nothing to address the issue of Girija’s resignation? Radha Krishna Mainali, a UML functionary pointed out that “the concerned side”<sup>46</sup>in course of the

<sup>45</sup> As in earlier press releases, this press release does not bear the signatures of leaders representing the different Communist factions.

<sup>46</sup> See, *Rising Nepal*, “UML Calls Off” 1993 Aug. 17 The agreement was signed in presence of the High Commands of the two parties. Representing the Nepali Congress were its President, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Supreme Leader, Ganesh Man Singh. From the UML side were its General Secretary, Madhav Kumar Nepal and politburo member Bam Dev Gautam. The signatories representing the Nepali Congress were, Tarini Dutta Chataut, Taranath Ranabhatt and Arjun Narsingh K. C. and those from the UML side were Bharat Mohan Adhikari, Pradeep Nepal and Devi

discussion, had “assured” the Party on the issue (Rising Nepal, “Recent Pact” 1993 Aug. 20). Same day, Bharat Mohan Adhikari of the UML, in course of Parliamentary debate, informed the House that Nepali Congress had agreed to change the Prime Minister through its own procedure (Rising Nepal, “Accord Democratic” 1993 Aug. 20). The UML’s document, published after the conclusion of its National Council’s first plenum on VS 2051 Jeth 16 [30 May 1994], tried to explain its position, but the statements carried added implications. They were couched in such a manner as if the Party were suggesting that the list of demands including the demand for Girija’s resignation had emerged from other Communist factions. Besides, the tone of the statements down played the issue of Girija’s resignation for it said:

The formation of Anil Commission, its concocted report ... and the negative attitude of the Government towards only one of our demands for the formation of an impartial Commission under a serving judge of the Supreme Court actuated the movement. The Government repression fuelled it to develop into a nationwide seven Left parties movement, which demanded the resignation of Girija and the fulfilment of a list of other demands of the public. After the pressure of the public, there was a nine-point agreement with the Government. On the issue of Girija’s resignation there was an oral understanding (NCP (UML), Bartaman Paristhiti: 1994 22).

The statements which followed the explanations still seemed to suggest that the Party perceived in the agreement sufficient reason to believe that the Congress had atoned for its action and that others were responsible for keeping the movement alive. In its tone, there was an element of condemnation against other factions’ decision for it said:

The Government agreed to rectify its past mistakes in writing. This had never happened before. There was a need for understanding its importance and press the Government with another movement for the implementation of the agreement, but for the ultra left tendencies of the NCP (Unity Centre), and their anti-UML attitude other Communist factions continued with their movement (NCP (UML), Bartaman Paristhiti: 1994 22).

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Prasad Ojha. Communist claims of concerned side naturally pointed towards Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Ganesh Man Singh.

However, Unity Centre alone was not the faction which was against the agreement. There were also others: NCP (NWPP) MPs, Narayan Man Bijukche, speaking in the Fifth session (27 June–16 September 1993) of the Parliament objected against the agreement.<sup>47</sup> His statements reflected that the NWPP had many reasons to oppose the agreement. First, he perceived in the agreement a compromise between two parties, which represented similar class base and that it was hammered out to maintain their bi-party domination for he said:

I am not surprised about the agreement because every political Party is based upon a political principle—upon a class base. I have repeatedly told in this House that in this country the dictatorship of two Party is on the rise and that democracy is the victim. Today it has become clear and I feel what I had spoken was correct. As far as the agreement is concerned, it was in this very House where the slogan ‘anti-national Girija, give resignation’ was raised several times. How was the agreement signed without the resignation of ‘anti-national Girija? There is another thing, in this very House they had repeatedly raised the slogan ‘until our demands are fulfilled and until Girija resigns we will not enter into an agreement’. This agreement therefore smacks either of left opportunism, or of left ‘surrenderism’ and of nothing else (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Pratinidhi Sabhama Com. Rohit: 1993–94 2).

Second, in the agreement he pointed out two flaws, which he considered were not conducive to the “spirit of democracy”—the usual UML pretext for leading movements and for terminating them.<sup>48</sup> He said, the agreement “by remaining silent on the issue of future security of opposition members had gone against the very democratic spirit which had propelled the movement”, and it had failed in “detering the Government from repressing future democratic movements” by limiting the agreement in just “raising compensation without asking for a Commission to inquire into why and who were responsible for suppressing the movements” (2, 3). Finally,

<sup>47</sup> The tactics of the UML seemed to suggest that it was still trying to forge an understanding with the Nepali Congress and this time the response of the Congress for the first time was positive, perhaps because it was besieged by the protest movement.

<sup>48</sup> See, *Rising Nepal*, “Recent Pact” 1993 Aug. 20 The UML was arguing that it had suspended the protests for strengthening multi-party democracy. This was the natural outcome of their tactics of the period.

clarifying how other factions viewed the agreement he said, “even at the time of reaching the agreement Sambharam Shrestha of NCP Communist League had sensed ‘betrayal’ in the process” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Pratinidhi Sabhama Com. Rohit: 1993–94 3). Thus, the 17 August agreement, except for reducing the frequency of protests, failed in freeing the kingdom from protests. On 20 August, a procession organised by four Communist factions; UPFN, NCP (Masal), NCP (MLM) and NCP (NWPP) denounced the agreement (Rising Nepal, “Procession” 1993 Aug. 21). Meanwhile, on the ground there were nothing to suggest Government’s initiative in implementing the understanding reached on the 17<sup>th</sup>. With the approach of September, the parties were engaged in fixing their candidates for the upcoming 7<sup>th</sup> February parliamentary by-elections in constituencies 1 of Jhapa and Kathmandu, which had, after the death of Madan Bhandari, been lying vacant. The Ninth Plenary meeting of the UML, held in between 22–27 September, decided to field Mrs Vidya Bhandari, the widow of Madan Bhandari, as its candidate in the Kathmandu constituency (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 1993 Sept. 27). Running parallel to these events, the document representing a section of leaders identified as representatives of “*Bhinnamat*” or “alternative-view” existing within NCP (Unity Centre) reports of changes, which had set in the perception of the Central Committee of the NCP (Unity Centre) from the time of the local election. It says, “While carrying campaigns in the local election the Central Committee began supporting views which considered such participation [participation in elections] as futile merry go round exercises that yielded nothing” (NCP (Ekta Kendra), “Antarparty Sangharsa” 30). Following such change, their other document notes, “The Central Committee, during the by-election for the Jhapa and Kathmandu No 1 constituency, forcibly tried to change Party’s earlier decision to participate in the election” (NCP (Ekta Kendra), “Sadasyaharulai Appeal” 9). The change was reflected in the statements of Baburam Bhattarai, the convenor of the UPFN, when on 25 January he declared the front’s decision to boycott the elections (Rising Nepal, “UPF Firm” 1993 Jan. 26). According to UML’s document, Baburam took such decision by saying that “elections were only in the

service of the Palace” (NCP (UML), Bartaman Paristhiti: 1994 19) meaning the feudal forces. However, other factions did participate in the elections, but on the 9<sup>th</sup> when the results were declared, Vidya Bhandari defeated Krishna Prasad Bhattarai by polling 43, 319 votes against 41, 490 votes. Congress candidate Sitaula won the Jhapa seat by defeating Lila Udai Khanal of the UML. And in both the constituencies the united<sup>49</sup>NDP came third (Rising Nepal, “Victory for Bhandari” 1994 Feb. 10). Then on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1994, the UML and the UPFN in unison, quoting Art. 59 (2) of the Constitution, registered their submission to the Speaker of the House expressing “no confidence in the 33 month-old Girija Government”. Citing reasons for loss of confidence in Koirala Government, the parties highlighted its failures in respecting “the spirit of the Constitution, the interest of the nation and human rights”. They said, the Government “encouraged corruption and nepotism in the name of privatisation” (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 20 Feb. 1994). Implied in Bijukche’s statements made in the course of the Special Session of the Parliament, which was held in between 24 February to 7 March for tabling the no-confidence motion, there were his objections and warning against UML’s tactical position. The statements implied that the UML’s tactics was occasioned by the breach in the Nepali Congress’s organisation, and that it was meant for searching a Parliamentary alternative to Koirala Government. Besides, it warned that such tactics may end in uniting the Congress for he said:

We have some reservations against the UML ... It did not bring the no-confidence motion in the past when we had asked ... why is it using this tactics today which it did not use yesterday? ... Even today, I consider Congress’s internal wrangle a temporary phenomenon and if this no-confidence motion serves to patch their internal problems then it will be unfortunate. Besides, if this no-confidence motion is passed without considering the nature and policies of the alternative Government ... then the nation will plunge into a state of confusion (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), “Pratinidhi Sabhama Com. Rohit: 1993–94” 16–7).

However, if the two month later document of the UML is considered then it appears

<sup>49</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “NDP Party Unification” 1992 Feb. 5 The Thapa faction and Chand factions came together on 4 February 1992.

that its tactics then was not confined only to seeking Parliamentary alternative. In the event of the fall of Koirala Government, it seems, the Party was also in favour of mid-term poll for its document said, “considering the unpopularity, inefficiency and failures of the Congress it has no chance of winning mid-term poll, this assessment applies even to the condition of the NDP. Hence, in totality the Communists will win and our Party is poised to capture power” (NCP (UML), Bartaman Paristhiti: 1994 43–4). The question is: was the kingdom ready to lug the economic burden of such outcome? Perhaps, these parties never seriously considered the variable while framing their tactics. Hence, in the name of considering “public wave against the Nepali Congress’s rule” Narayan Man also said he was “in for the no-confidence motion”. He joined the chorus that condemned the Congress for its failure. Speaking in the no-confidence motion, he characterised the Congress as a Party of “the feudal and the tout bourgeois class” and condemned it for keeping “intact the distinction between ‘national’ and ‘non-national’<sup>50</sup>Party in the Constitution” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), “Pratinidhi Sabhama Com. Rohit: 1993–94” 14, 14–15, 15). In his reiteration of UML’s version he added a few more issues to substantiate his statements. He objected against Nepali Congress’s policies on “Tanakpur, the retrenchment of employees ... electric supply, which was irregular, dual land ownership, which was persisting ... privatisation, and price control” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), “Pratinidhi Sabhama Com. Rohit: 1993–94” 16). On 28 February, in line with Bijukche’s prognosis, the Congress group in the Parliament decided to face the motion united (Rising Nepal, “NC Parliamentary Party” 1994 Feb. 29). In the March 7 voting, the motion was defeated by a majority of 113 against 81. There was no cross-voting from the Congress side and the Communist factions also rallied together. Their votes breakdown were: UML, 69; UPFN, 9 and NCP (United)

<sup>50</sup> The reference was to the 3% of the total votes which a party had to secure in the General Election failing which it was disqualified from being a national party in subsequent elections.

and NCP (NWPP) contributed two each to the pool as independents. Both Sadbhavana Party and the NDP abstained (Rising Nepal, “Victory for All” 1994 Mar. 8). The Government survived. In its explanation of the outcome, the UML document clearly indicated that it had, in its decision to table the no-confidence motion, relied on the support of other MPs besides those from the Nepali Congress and when it did not come the motion failed for it said:

The Special Session of the Parliament ... discussed threadbare the functioning of the 34 month-old Girija Government. It made public its inefficiency, inertia and failures. We asked for the resignation of Koirala for his failures in protecting the cause of nationalism, democracy and people’s interest, but for the opportunistic, pro-power MPs of NDP, NSP and a few MPs of Nepali Congress the exercise ended dramatically ... (NCP (UML), Bartaman Paristhiti: 1994 29).

After the end of the no-confidence motion, April witnessed breakdown in the Central Committee of NCP (Unity Centre). A pamphlet titled “Rastriya Sammelan Ayojak Samitiko Ahawan” declared:

The Central Committee formed by the Unity Congress has been dissolved. There were 23 members in the Committee. Out of them 11 were removed when disciplinary actions were taken against them. Then Com. Mitra resigned on the ground that he too represented the ‘*Bhinnamat*’. His resignation came on 2050/12/24 [6 April 1994]. As such there is no majority of members elected by the Unity Congress in the Central Committee. Hence, as per the tradition of International Communist practices the Central Committee of the Unity Centre stands dissolved ... In such situation the responsibility of leading the Party has fallen on ... the shoulder of the “*Bhinnamat*” ... (Rastriya Sammelan Ayojak samiti NCP (Ekta Kendra) 47).

Thus, NCP (Unity Centre) split on 6 April 1994. Explaining why the split occurred, the document of the *Bhinnamat* points out that “since the Unity Congress of the Party a section of the leadership had indulged in plots and had forced their views as the majority view” (NCP (Ekta Kendra), “Sadasyaharulai Appeal” 5) and, after that, they had progressively gone against the “principle of democratic centralism ... and the decision of Unity Congress to tolerate alternative opinions” (NCP (Ekta Kendra), “Sadasyaharulai Appeal” 4). Besides, they claimed that the leadership forced their members into the Central Committee whenever such opportunities came (NCP (Ekta Kendra), “Antarparty Sangharsa” 32). The other factor which they identify as the

cause behind the split is the role played by the RIM. They claim that the RIM had tried to split the Party even in the past by pointing out that “NCP (Fourth Congress) is a rightist and there should be no unity with it” (NCP (Ekta Kendra), “Sadasyaharulai Appeal” 7). As for the opinion where the *Bhinnamat* differed from those of the majority view they claimed that they were against the majority view, which was “mechanically following the prescriptions of RIM to launch unconditional struggle” besides pointing out that they were “in favour of considering RIM simply as a supervising centre and not as a directing centre” (NCP (Ekta Kendra), “Sadasyaharulai Appeal” 7). The other area where the *Bhinnamat* was opposed to the majority view was regarding the question of launching guerrilla war. If the majority view was for “the immediate launching of class struggle in the rural areas, which meant the start of guerrilla war” the *Bhinnamat* was against such tactics for it wanted “preparation before the start of such struggle” (NCP (Ekta Kendra), “Antarparty Sangharsa” 31). Explaining where the two groups concurred and where they differed on the question of armed struggle the faction charged the majority leadership for following a mechanistic outlook, which is divorced from objective conditions or reality for its document states:

In the present stage the main contradiction is between Nepal, Nepali people combine against imperialism especially Indian expansionism and reactionary State within. There is no difference in the general political line that for the resolution of the main contradiction a strategy based on agricultural revolution under proletariat leadership which ropes in all democratic and patriotic forces should be launched to destroy the State of the feudal, the touts and the tout-capitalist class to establish New Democratic Republic through armed struggle. But, there are differences on the question regarding the forms in which ... armed struggle and military line (which is an important element of the general political line) should be implemented in the immediate context. These differences are important because they influence the methods to be used for achieving the political goals....

Mechanistic thinking ... rejects objective analysis. Divorced from the consciousness of the masses and the objective conditions, the leadership of the *Bahumat* group [majority view], which still harbours the tendencies of earlier Mashal, imposes slogans and programmes which are ultra-leftists. It thinks that the stage for immediate armed struggle is ripe. It talks about launching a protracted armed revolution based on the strategy of encircling towns by villages, forming base areas and of capturing power at the local level. On this basis it has disregarded the decisions of Party unity committee. Encouraged by

mechanistic thinking ... it disregards the fact that people are the architect of history. Therefore, thinking that revolution can be shouldered by a few brave souls expressions about making 'team actions' as the main instrument is often heard ... It holds the mechanistic view and reiterates the view that unconstitutional forms [of struggle] are always the main and constitutional forms [of struggle] are unimportant. Whereas all forms of struggle are aimed at readying for the unconstitutional form of struggle. Hence, the leadership of the majority on the one hand neglects the objective conditions while framing the programmes of struggle and takes recourse to ultra-leftist opportunistic politics and on the other hand it does not sincerely implement the decided programmes. Hence, its only characteristics is its 'expression of revolutionary vocabulary' (NCP (Ekta Kendra), "Sadasyaharulai Appeal" 16–7).

Supporting one of their claims about the causes behind the split the Sixth Congress document of NCP (Masal) noted:

In the process of unity of the Party the main role was played by the 'centrist' forces. In their effort there was no sincerity. In their process of unity they did not allow with sincerity others to express their dissenting views. Even after their unity the trend continued ... Even after their fifth Congress they removed from their Central Committee all members, who were opposed to their line ... Because of such attitude of the 'centrist' forces the Party could never come up as a single group and its constituents functioned independently ... (NCP (Masal), "Rajnitik Pratibedan 2051" 517).

Later, document of NCP (Maoist) points out that the Unity Centre split in May 1994 and it identifies the reason for the split in Party's "two line struggle" where the "political line of protracted people's war" was victorious and the "right liquidationist clique ... was ... defeated and expelled from the Party" (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) 8). According to Surendra K. C, Prachanda is said to have stated in 2006 that the leaders who were expelled in May were "Nirmal Lama and Ruplal Biswakarma" (290). The split was also reflected in the activities of the UPFN. On April 10, in a press conference, UPFN convenor<sup>51</sup>Baburam Bhattarai, following the tactics of the Party to expose the Government and perhaps to impress the rebel leaders within, announced his six-point demands. He made it clear that the UPFN was opposed to the

<sup>51</sup> Whelpton calls him as the coordinator, but throughout the paper reports he is identified as the convenor of the Front.

Tanakpur Treaty, the work permit,<sup>52</sup> Indianisation of the economy in the name of privatisation, which he said posed a threat to Nepalese nationalism. Besides, he asked for a thorough investigation into the Baneshwor incident, end to administrative terrorism, price rise and communal discrimination. He pointed that the Party would launch Nepal *bandh* if the demands were not fulfilled as if they could be fulfilled within so short notice (Rising Nepal, “SJM Demand” 1994 Apr. 11). As promised, the *bandh* was launched on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May where the protestors were reported to have protested against Indian expansionism and raised slogans in support of Nepalese nationalism (Rising Nepal, “Bandh Peaceful” 1994 May 5). Then on May 22, under the leadership of Niranjana Govind Vaidya, a group of Communists namely, Chandeshwor Prasad Shrestha, Krishna Das Shrestha, Nand Kumar Prasain, Sita Ram Tamang,<sup>53</sup> and Jagdish Chandra Bhandari, rejected Baburam Bhattarai’s leadership within the UPFN. They claimed that he was imposing NCP (Unity Centre)’s decisions upon smaller factions of the Centre, practising one-man rule and ‘group-ism’ and sacking founder members from the Central Committee of the Unity Centre. They declared a new convenor of the UPFN—Niranjana Govind Vaidya (Rising Nepal, “Bhattarai Ousted” 1994 May 23). Later, in a press conference held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, Baburam Bhattarai, while castigating Vaidya group, informed the press that the UPFN was divided and 5 of its MPs had already joined a new Party and a front with the same name. He blamed the split as the handiwork of external and internal reactionaries, who wanted to weaken the nationalist movement which his Party had

<sup>52</sup> See, Sharma 165 The Supreme Court in September 1993 had already passed a judgement annulling Section 4 (1) of 1992 Labour Act making it mandatory for foreign nationals to seek Labour Department’s approval before entering the job market. He was probably asking for the implementation of the judgment.

<sup>53</sup> Three of these names Krishna Das Shrestha, Nand Kumar Prasain and Sita Ram Tamang are the leaders of NCP (MLM). This means they also were a part of the group claiming to represent the *Bhinnamat*. Besides, UML document, NCP (UML), Bartaman Paristhiti: 1994 17 indicates that they were with Nirmal Lama, the leader of NCP (Fourth Congress [Nirmal Lama faction]).

been successfully waging (Rising Nepal, “Baburam Blasts” 1994 June 31). On July 2, UPFN under Niranjana Govind Vaidya claimed that five MPs; Lila Mani Pokhrel, Amik Sherchan, Bishnu Bahadur Tamang, Kamal Prasad Chaulagain and Kaman Singh Lama were still with his group. He invited Baburam to his faction’s first National Conference scheduled on 14 July to explain his position (Rising Nepal, “SJM War” 1994 July 3). And if one goes by Whelpton’s statement, then majority of UPFN members went to Vaidya faction leaving Baburam faction with only “three MPs from Rolpa and Rukum” (204). Meanwhile, the two factions of the UPFN under Baburam and Vaidya were pleading each others’ case in the Election Commission claiming their constitutional status. On August 15, the Commission, on the basis of the documents supplied by the factions, recognised Vaidya faction as the officially recognised UPFN (Rising Nepal, “SJM (Vaidya) Official” 1994 Aug. 19). The decision formalised the split in the front organisation of the Unity Centre. Thus, before the November 1994 election the NCP (Unity Centre) and the united UPFN had given way to the creation of NCP (Unity Centre) under Nirmal Lama and NCP (Unity Centre) under Prachanda along with two UPFN s.

After the fall of the Koirala Government in July 10, 1994, the UML read in the fall “the victory of the people over a force that was treading a path which was against democracy” and asked the King not to dissolve the Parliament, but to allow it to explore the possibility of forming a Government (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 1994 July 11). However, its subsequent press release of VS 2051 Asad 28 (12 July 1994) described the dissolution of the House unconstitutional, since it was based on the advice of a person who had “changed into an ordinary member of the House” after the defeat of his policies in the Parliament. It viewed in the King’s act “an attack upon the sovereignty of Parliament”, because his decision had deprived the sovereign Parliament the chance “to resolve the crisis on its own”. It demanded the formation of an all-Party Government and the immediate removal of Koirala led Council of Ministers (NCP (UML), Samachar Bulletin (Prakashnartha Presit) 1994 July 12). On 15 July, Communist factions; the UML, NCP (United), NCP (Masal) and NCP

(Communist League) came together to condemn the decisions of the King as unconstitutional—“a ploy of International reactionaries” and warned him of fresh cycle of protests (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 1994 July 15). When he stuck to his decisions, the kingdom was again sieged under fresh cycle of protests until the approach of November election.

#### 1.7. 13 November 1994 Election: UML in Power

Communist factions participating 1994 election could be categorised, as in 1991, into three broad groups. NCP (UML), NCP (United) and NCP (Marxist) fell into the category, which accepted the 1991 Constitution and the democratic arrangement as a springboard towards socialism. NCP (NWPP) and NCP (Masal) participated the election with a view to expose the deficiencies of bourgeois democracy and to educate people about the need for New Democratic revolution. However, for lack of evidence the position of Niranjan Govind Vaidya led UPFN, the front organisation of Nirmal Lama led NCP (Unity Centre), cannot be ascertained. There was a third group, Prachanda led NCP (Unity Centre), which boycotted the election. On the basis of their main slogan NCP (UML) and NCP (United) were nearer to each other. If the former called the people to “Defeat Totalitarian Nepali Congress!” (NCP (UML), Election Manifesto ‘94 1), the latter gave the call to “Dislodge Congress [and] stop revivalist from raising their heads” (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Chunao Ghoshnapatra 2051 2). The NCP (Marxist), however; did not have a slogan that reflected their focus. Declaring “Multi-party Democracy ... has enthused ... in us to remain active for nationalism and democracy” (1), NCP (UML) manifesto vowed to protect and consolidate the system by opposing “one-Party dictatorship and authoritarian tendency” and by protecting “fundamental rights”, “pluralistic open society” autonomy of “public institutions and media”, “decentralization of power ... to village, municipal and district development committees”, changing laws to make “the Election Commission free and powerful” and “opposition” honoured (14–5). On foreign policy, its stand was in favour of maintaining friendly relations with all on the basis of “Panchasheela” while working for the review of all “unequal and derogatory

treaties ... signed by the Nepali Congress, Panchayat and earlier Governments ... [on the basis of] equality, mutual respect and benefit (16). On the economic front it proposed “Tenancy rights [to] real tillers of land” (17), “planned development” (22), “Effective policy ... to end the adverse effect of monopoly of the foreign capital on national economy” (25), “trade diversification” and review of Indo-Nepal “Trade and Transit Treaty ... on the basis of ... mutual benefit” (27). On the issue of developing water resources it proposed a clear definition on “the status and rights of border rivers and national rivers of Nepal” (42). Besides, it proposed punishment to those reported against in the “Mallik Commission report”, end of “discrimination [based on] ethnicities, languages, religions and cultures ... through the enactment of appropriate laws”, “property rights to women”, change in “labour Acts” etcetera (47, 49, 51, 52). To end “social inequality it promised rapid economic development under a planned economy” (22) and the granting of “autonomy” to “the local development organs” (NCP (UML), Election Manifesto ‘94 49). Blaming Nepali Congress for “bartering Nepalese sovereignty with India and for converting Nepalese economy into a haven for Indian capital and market at the cost of Nepalese national capital”, NCP (United) manifesto drew attention towards “the growing link between NDP (RPP) and Girija”, which according to them was “reflected in the exposure given to the NDP in the media” (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Chunao Ghoshnapatra 2051 3). In the economic front, it proposed “a mixed economy for industrial development” where “the participation of national capital and foreign capital was to be encouraged” (7). On foreign policy, it proposed “modernisation of 1950 treaty” and “development of water resources on the basis of mutual benefit between India and Nepal” (6). On the changes to be sought in the Constitution, it proposed “the King to be brought within the ambit of Art. 35 (2) to force him appoint ambassadors, members of Rajparishad and National Council on the basis of the recommendations of the Council of Ministers”, and it advocated “citizenship on the basis of 2036 [1980] referendum list” (4). For developing the language, culture ... and literature of *janajatis*” it proposed the “establishment of Museums and National Foundations” along with “Radio, T. V

broadcast in their languages” (5). It promised to raise “their representation in bureaucracy by 50% in the next ten years” and to “reorganise districts along linguistic line” (6). Likewise, with their faith in the 1991 Constitution, which had transferred “sovereignty in the hands of the people”, NCP (Marxist) fought the election with a five-point agenda. Among them the important ones were “(1) Protection and permanence of democracy. (2) Development of national economy ... (4) Protection of *janajatis* ... downtrodden and women and (5) nationalism ...” (NCP (Marxist)), Chunao Ghoshna-Patra 2051 3). For protecting democracy its programme suggested “implementation of Mallik Commission’s Report”, “removal of undemocratic Constitutional provisions”, “power decentralisation at the local level”, “distribution of citizenship without prejudice”, “framing laws which protected people from being jailed on false charges” and “leading politics towards the end of feudalism and imperialism” (10–1). For development of economy, it stood in favour of “revolutionary land reform” “corruption free economy ... where in the name of ‘privatisation’ and ‘open market’ the kingdom was not turned into a haven for foreign capital and imperialist exploitation” (12–3). For women it sought “property rights” and for the development of *janajatis*, “the protection of their languages, cultures ... employment opportunities on priority basis” (17). Finally, for the protection of nationalism it proposed the “annulment of all treaties which were detrimental to the sovereignty ... and nationalism of Nepal” (19). However, NCP (NWPP) manifesto observed: “Nepal Majdoor-Kisan Party does not believe that socialism can be reached through bourgeois democracy ... so the election should not be used simply to reach the seat of power, but to educate the masses about the deficiencies of bourgeois democracy” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party), Nirvachan Ghoshna-Patra 2051 6). Its programmes were focused on the resolutions of the problems of “land reform”, “*Sukumbasis*”, “development of tourism ... as a sector for earning foreign exchange”, “trading practices ... which were tilted more towards India”, “economic policies” which were focused on “privatising every sector at the cost of social welfare” and which did not give importance to “mixed economy”, “uneven development of the

regions ... lack of transport facilities in North, which impeded their development”, preferential treatment of “one religion”, “nepotism ... corruption and dominance of one caste group in administration” (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12). On the sensitive issue like development of water resources it said, “In projects like Koshi and Gandaki we do not want Nepal and Nepalese people to be cheated again, this is how we differ from the UML and Nepali Congress in our stand on Mahakali water, electricity and sovereignty” (15). On Nepal’s foreign policy it proposed a change, which, it said, was to be aimed at protecting Nepal’s “independence and sovereignty” while freeing her from threats of “economic blockade”. And on citizenship issue, it wanted the process to be made simple so that “people of Terai” could easily get it (16). However, commenting on the failures of Nepali Congress it said, “On Tanakpur issue ... and on issues of foreign policy Nepali Congress turned into a follower of imperialist. The Government failed in replacing feudal nationalism with nationalism in the interest of all. It failed in its most important duty of protecting country’s sovereignty and by allowing free entry to foreign monopoly capitalists ... it hit hard on national capital” (1). NCP (Masal)<sup>54</sup> participated the election with similar intent for it document said, “Though our Party knew that within a reactionary system elections are always ... undemocratic, yet we took part in the elections to use it as a medium of struggle and to expose its undemocratic ... and anti-people nature”, while “educating people that their problems can be resolved only through armed struggle and New Democratic revolution” (NCP (Masal), “Madhyawadi ... Prastao” 598, 596). Its main plank was to frustrate “Girija Government’s effort to establish a Fascist rule” (NCP (Masal), “Tatkalik Rajnaitik Marg 13” 600). And the issues which it brought forward were, “transfer of power to the people, creation of Constituent Assembly” and issues of “nationalism and day to day problems of the people” (NCP (Masal), “Madhyawadi ...

<sup>54</sup> See, NCP (Masal), “Madhyawadi ... Prastao” 598 The party participated the election as A.N.R.J.M that is Akhil Nepal Rastriya Jana Morcha (All Nepal National People Front).

Prastao” 598). However, in the final results the Communist factions, which survived the poll were only the UML and the NCP (NWPP). The UPFN drew blank and its vote share in comparison to its share in 1991 was considerably reduced: from 3, 51, 904 it came down to 1, 00, 285. It seems that it was because of their fragmentation. The pattern of the UML’s win tapered towards the West, but in comparison to the pattern of 1991 there was a change: it did not draw blank in the Far-Western region. Its win of seats in the Eastern Region was 26; in Central Region, 28; in Western Region, 8; Mid-Western Region, 6 and in the Far-West, 11. NCP (NWPP) won two seats in Bhaktapur and 1 each in Dailekh and Jumla (both in the Mid-West) contradicting poll analysis, which tended to attribute Communist win in areas with nationalities in the majority. Moreover, the UML’s inroads in the Far-West, where in 1991 it had drawn blank, seemed to suggest that issues of nationalism had helped them in reaping poll benefits for Tanakpur lies in the Western border of Nepal. Commenting on its win of all seats in the Valley the UML press release of 20 November 1994 congratulated the Valley electorate for “playing their role as sentients of nationalism and democracy” (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 20 Nov. 1994). Its later document described its win as the result of “peoples’ faith”, which the Party had gained out of its “continuous fight for national independence, sovereignty, people’s rights ... nationalism and democracy” (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan 2052 [October 1996] 2). However, to explain the loss of the UPFN, NCP (Masal) said: “In many areas the ‘boycottist’ helped the reactionaries ... they opposed NCP (Masal) and *Samyukta Janamorcha* [UPFN] (Vaidya faction) and asked people to vote either the UML, Congress or the Rastriya Prajatantra Party [NDP]” (NCP (Masal), “Tatkalik Rajnaitik Marg 13” 601).

Then on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, the UML, against all odds, formed its minority Government. And since its strategy of *Bahudaliya Janabad* acknowledged the virtues of competitive market economy one could hardly expect radical changes in its economic policies. Besides, after coming to power its tactics was to stay in power for its document said, “Since the 18<sup>th</sup> Central Committee meeting of our Party had hailed

our forming of the Government as a historic achievement there was no doubt that we were to leave no stone unturned to remain in power” (NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan, 2052 [February 1996] 23). Thus, its December 23<sup>rd</sup> policy statements were tailored to achieve both its strategic and tactical goals. It declared its commitment towards open economy and privatisation while promoting the atmosphere of national consensus. However, while continuing privatisation drive, it promised to transfer public undertakings to “national investors”, but in the development of power sector it announced that it would seek the support of both national and foreign investors. In the agricultural sector it proposed speedy collection of data and the establishment of a High-Level Commission to solve the problems of land reform, bonded labourers and landless agricultural workers. In tune with its focus on sectors, which had the potential of delivering “immediate results”, it announced its programme of “Build Your Village Yourself” with claims to ensure “direct implementation of programmes through effective mobilisation of local resources”. In order to resolve the problems of human rights and citizenship it announced that it would form a High-Level Human Rights Commission and a Citizenship Commission (Rising Nepal, “HM Addresses” 1994 Dec. 24). Among these, the High Level Land Reform Commission “to end dual landownership” was immediately established in 2051/9/26 [10 January 1995] under the chairmanship of Keshav Badal, a UML MP (HMG Acknowledgement). And by January 24, 1995 a Commission to resolve the problems of the *Sukumbasis* (landless squatters) began functioning in 21 Terai districts, the areas where the problem was acute (Rising Nepal, “MPs ... Squatters” 1994 Jan. 26). According to Jan Sharma, the Commission’s “target was to grant by 16 July 1995 land ownership rights to 1, 00, 000 landless ... [settlers]” (254). Considering the tactical stand of the Party, these commission approach to resolving problems could be explained as ploys to buy votes, but there were exceptions. In case of the establishment of High Level Land Reform Commission, the Party could not be negatively indicted, because so far the Congress had done nothing in this direction. However, the practitioners of exposure politics like NCP (Unity Centre)’s leader Prakash (Narayan Kazi Shrestha) viewed in the UML’s

move “its prisoning itself within the limitation of the Constitution”. He said, “In power, the UML should have sought to amend the Constitution if the Constitution were a hurdle in the implementation of revolutionary land reforms ... but it did not do so instead it tried to implement land reforms within the limitation of the Constitution” (Prakash 48). In making such comments, it seemed, Prakash was not aware of the fact that the strategy of the UML was for strengthening democracy and not in weakening it by exposing it. However, its budget allocations for opening the income earning opportunities of native communities like Raute, Dom, Chepang etc, allocation for the students of backward communities, for the disabled, for elderly pension schemes seemed to reflect its genuine tilt towards the welfare of the public. But, the same could not be judged in the allocation of Rs. 2, 651 million for the launching of its “Let’s Build Your Village Yourself [LBOVO]” programme (Rising Nepal, “Govt. Budget” 1994 Dec. 27). In the Parliament, the opposition MPs vehemently opposed the programme. They questioned why was it necessary when the Village Development Committees were already in existence (Rising Nepal, “Paper Like ... Previous” 1994 Dec. 26) ? Under the programme each VDC received Rs. 300, 000 as grants for development works. Jan Sharma categorises it among the Party’s “populist” programmes, aimed at mobilising “local cadres” (250, 251). Similar was its other programme—the *Nau Sa* programme.<sup>55</sup> On it the Party allocated Rs. 2 million each to the 205 electoral constituencies. Commenting on the nature of these programmes, NCP (United) said that they “lacked direction in their implementation and they had nothing in them to raise the standard of living of the poor villagers. They were floated

<sup>55</sup> See, NCP (UML), Rajnitik Pratibedan 2052 [October 1996] 7 The document claims that the programme was launched to hasten balanced development in the village. It included nine development objectives in each constituencies. They were implemented to provide concrete facilities to the rural communities. These objectives were the development of Siksha (education), Sadak (road), Sinchai (irrigation), Swacha Khaney Pani (clean drinking water), Shipmulak Talim Ra Rojgar (employable skill development), Samudayik briksha ropan (community afforestation), Sana Jalabidhyut (minor hydro-projects) and Sana tatha Gharaylu Udhyog (Small cottage industries).

just for garnering votes in another mid-term poll” (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Rajnitik Report: 2052 [1995] 1). In their assessment, the UML was “squandering national exchequer” through the programmes and its tactics was aimed “not in hastening class struggle, but in trying to delude the masses” (1, 2). Coming from a Party which had by now tailored its strategy to that of the UML, the criticism appeared a bit offhand. However, given the dominance of the Congress in the VDCs and the importance,<sup>56</sup> which the Party gave in the implementation of the programmes, especially the LBOVO, it was clear that beyond their pious intent to develop the nation through the development of villages lay their plan to whittle Congress’s rural support base.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> December, the Das Dhunga Accident Judicial Investigation Commission submitted its report. The report rejected planned conspiracy in the death of UML’s two leaders putting to rest the controversy, which the UML, in the past, had used to implement its tactics (Rising Nepal, “Das Dhunga” 1994 Dec. 24). Finally, when the controversy on Mallik Commission again came up for discussion in the Parliament the Party could do nothing except to eat opposition MPs’s challenge. It did not oppose them when they questioned if it had guts to punish those identified by the report (Rising Nepal, “MPs Squabble” 1994 Dec. 25). Meanwhile, the UPFN (Vaidya faction) submitted its memorandum of 33 demands. Leading those demands were demands for the abrogation of all unequal Indo-Nepal treaties, closure of Gorkha recruitment centres, re-working of Tanakpur Treaty, regularisation of Indo-Nepal border and a Commission to investigate Baneshwor incident etc. (Rising Nepal, “Janamorcha ... Demands” 1995 Jan. 27). However, the memorandum carried no threats of protests. Contrary to such demands, the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Council meeting of

<sup>56</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “LBOVO Review” 1995 May 26; Rising Nepal, “116 VDCs Complete LBOVO” 1995 June 28 Of the various programmes launched this programme was propagandised as the one necessary for the development of the villages and through it the kingdom and it was the only programme which the Government was monitoring closely.

NCP (Marxist) urged the Government to develop better ties with India in the interest of mutual benefits (Rising Nepal, “Develop Ties ... India” 1995 Jan. 3). On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, M. K. Nepal, the Deputy Prime Minister left for India with two aims: to review the friendship ties between the two countries and to consolidate them. Before leaving he clarified that both the countries should not feel cheated out of the ties (Rising Nepal, “DPM Engaged ... New Delhi” 1995 Feb. 7). Later document of the CPN (Unity Centre (Nirmal Lama faction)) considered the UML’s review proposal a “positive” move “only in the sense that it [was] for the first time that a formal proposal [had] been put forth at the governmental level”. However, in its later document it said, “The Party statement on this matter was made clear. Because of the ... special relation and expansionist hegemony, not friendship and equality, are the foundation-stone of the treaty, [hence] revision is not sufficient—the treaty must be completely revoked” (NCP (Unity Centre), *All Patriots* 7). Describing what transpired in the talk between Nepal and Rao, the then Indian Prime Minister, Jan Sharma presents a very negative picture for he writes:

After two rounds of discussions, Rao told Nepal: (a) It was not possible to amend the 1950 Treaty but it could be replaced by a new one; (b) reciprocity does not mean equality in the relations between Nepal and India; and (c) the treaty was the result of the bilateral relationship and not the cause ... When Nepal proposed that the Treaty be updated and revised because it did not provide for amendment, Rao said, ‘Then go ahead and cancel it’. Replied Nepal, ‘Yes, we can do that ... But ... that would not be in the interest of both the countries (Sharma 264).

Though Sharma quotes Peoples’ Review to substantiate the discussion scenario, yet it is difficult to accept it, because intimate diplomatic talks are rarely divulged. Besides, could Rao be so curt in dealing with a foreign dignitary? Sharma’s portrayal of the talk scenario seems to reflect what Brown describes as the prevailing mood of “large sections of the Nepali press” which was bent on portraying “his mission ... fruitless”. She further writes, “their assessment was inaccurate”, because she contends that the “Indian Government later announced its readiness to review the 1950 Treaty” (203). On coming back, Nepal also claimed that India was ready to resolve Tanakpur issue on the basis of mutual benefit, and that he had asked India to reduce the indigenous

content requirement of exportable commodities to reduce the gaping Nepal's trade deficit with India (Rising Nepal, "Visit ... Satisfactory" 1995 Feb. 10). The same month, according to Brown, the kingdom witnessed "UML's shake-up of the bureaucracy". It replaced "fifty-five of Nepal's seventy-five Chief District Officers" and selected "new managers for state enterprises". According to her, the replacements and appointments were interpreted by Government "critics" as a policy of 'UML-isation' (198). Then in the second week of April, as a follow-up to Deputy Prime Minister's visit, Prime Minister, Adhikari visited India. According to Gyawali and Dixit, the visit, ended in the UML forwarding a package deal,<sup>57</sup> which was framed "after receiving signals from India's CPM" (249). They say, the deal "proposed increasing the quantum of electricity and water to ... Nepal, but [it] required Nepal to agree to the construction of a ... storage dam at Pancheswor ... [the] very linkage of the Tanakpur Barrage with the Pancheswor that the UML had previously opposed ... and whose dissociation was secured ... during ... Rao's visit" (249). Later, document of the Party says that in framing the Mahakali package it had to enter into a "give and take process" (NCP (UML), Mahakali Nadiko ... Wastawikta 30). What it gave was clear: it allowed India to use Pancheswor in a bid to resolve the Mahakali issue. It was perhaps the price that it had to pay for resolving the issue and to get India's response to review the 1950 Treaty—a response which was necessary to prove that it stood for Nepalese nationalism. However, the outcome was seen by the UPFN (Baburam faction), the front organisation of NCP (Maoist), which had come into being in March 1995, as UML's backtracking from its earlier commitment. Addressing a rally, UPFN leader, Pampha Bhusal declared that the faction was on its way to organise protest movements. Reminding UML that it was a reiteration of its past demands, the faction put forward a set of 38 demands, which included the abrogation of 1950 Treaty, the

<sup>57</sup> See, NCP (UML), Mahakali Nadiko ... Wastawikta 7 The document points out that the idea of Mahakali package had evolved within the Party at the time of the Deputy Prime Minister's visit to India.

cancellation of Tanakpur Treaty, control of Indo-Nepal border, implementation of work permit, banning of vehicle which plied within Nepal with Indian license plate and end to the harassment of their activists in the Rolpa region. The faction claimed that the Government was framing them in fabricated charges. It threatened to go on strike on May 4 if its demands were not met with (Rising Nepal, “SJM ... Abrogated” 1995 Apr. 25). By now, their tactics of exposure politics had assumed a design. It included a set of long, knotty demands and threats of protest movements if those demands were not fulfilled within an unreasonable span of time. It was a deliberate move, which was aimed at developing armed struggle (See chapter V Maoist tactics no.4). The Government was coming under pressure from both the opposition and the Communist factions. The functioning of its Landless Squatters’ Problems Resolution Commission that is the *Sukumbasi* Commission, which by April 17 had claimed to have allotted land to 9, 538 families,<sup>58</sup> came under the attack of the UPFN (Vaidya) faction and the NCP (Masal). In a joint press statement the two factions blamed the UML Government for having failed in allotting land to 1335 landless squatters of Gaighat region (Rising Nepal, “SJM, Masal Flay Govt” 1995 May 25). The landless squatters of the region probably represented the parties’ interest for the document of the NCP (United) claims that the *Sukumbasi* Commission “distributed land selectively to the supporters of the UML without considering the plight of genuine candidates” (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Rajnitik Report: 2052 [1995] 4). On the 4<sup>th</sup> of May, within Communist rule, the UPFN (Baburam) faction carried out its first and last threat: it shut the kingdom down amid incidents of violence (Rising Nepal, “Baton-Charge” 1995 May 5). When the House was dissolved in June and fresh election was slated in November, Communist factions like NCP (Masal) declared its willingness to fight the coming election, but to make people understand “how democracy within Parliamentary system gets distorted into ... dirty

<sup>58</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Land Allotted” 1995 Apr. 18

game”. The Party said, “Participation in election ... is our auxiliary tactics our main tactics will always be centred around developing people’s struggle outside the precinct of the Parliament” (NCP (Masal), “Chunaolai ... Upayog Garau” 746, 747). However, strange was the behaviour of NCP (United) and NCP (Marxist). They joined hands with Mongol National Organisation, an ethnic group, to form a front to fight the election (Rising Nepal, “Leftist ... National Front” 1995 June 25). The NCP (Maoist) declared not to participate in the mid-term election dubbing the exercise as a symbol of “another reactionary conspiracy against the needs and struggle of Nepalese people” (Rising Nepal, “Maoist .. Boycott Election” 1995 June 25). Finally, when the Supreme Court decision in September restored the House and the UML lost its power NCP (United) came up with a long list, which sought to explain the reasons behind the fall of the UML led Government. In essence, it hit upon the UML’s tactics. It said that its failure was owing to “its insistence upon forming a Government on its own ... with plans to win majority through a mid-term poll” (NCP (Samyukta (United)), Rajnitik Report: 2052 [1995] 2). Similar was the perception of NCP (Unity Centre)’s leader Prakash (Narayan Kazi Shrestha) for he said, “the NCP (UML) ... was only the largest Party in the Parliament. To form a Government under such a situation was nothing but an indulgence into a delusion” (46). The year came to the close with the protest rally of the UPFN (Baburam faction). In a mass meeting held in Kathmandu, three of its leaders Babu Ram Bhattarai, Pampha Bhusal and Hisila Yami informed the crowd that a contingent of 1500 policemen were terrorising the people of Rolpa district (Rising Nepal, “SJM Holds Protest” 1995 Dec. 9). This was the Government’s Romeo operation, which according to Home Minister, Khum Bahadur Khadka, had been launched in Rolpa to arrest people possessing illegal weapons, committing arson and manhandling regular police forces. He promised to send an all-Party Parliamentary team in near future to assess the situation (Rising Nepal, “Team to Be Sent ... Soon” 1995 Dec. 12). The all-Party Parliamentary team which was sent there on a fact finding tour informed the Parliament that the nature of the clash, which involved the two parties, the UPFN and the Congress, was political (For details see, p. 524). It

asked the Government to immediately terminate the operation and to find a political solution to the problem (Rising Nepal, “Stop Operation Romeo” 1996 Jan. 4).

#### 1.8. Communist Movement: January 1996–1999, the Beginning of Maoist Movement

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of February UPFN leader, Baburam informed the press that the faction has submitted a 40 point demand to the Government. He threatened the Government with dire consequences if the demands were not fulfilled (Rising Nepal, “SJM ... Treaty is Treason” 1996 Feb. 6). Since, this was a patterned behaviour of the UPFN (Baburam) faction, the Government must have taken the declaration on the go. From February 8, NCP (UML) held its second National Council meeting in Janakpurdham (city in the southern border). In it, the Party vowed to pull down Deuba Government to install UML led progressive Government for the preservation and promotion of nationalism. It called upon its cadres to mobilise themselves toward that end (Rising Nepal, “Let’s Consolidate ... UML” 1996 Feb. 9). However, when it failed to bring down the Government in March 1996, it began raising objections against the issue of ratifying the Mahakali Treaty. A fresh twist was given to the issue of the Treaty when its 9<sup>th</sup> September press release said:

...The 28<sup>th</sup> Central Committee meeting of the Party ... has discussed the Report of task force created to study the Treaty ...  
 ...After thorough discussion it has decided to ratify the Treaty.  
 ...However, the meeting has decided to ratify the Treaty only if the Government of India and the Government of Nepal guarantees us in writing that they would scientifically solve the border issues, remove the Indian Army post from Darchula region [region in the West of Nepal], ensure irrigation of Terai region of Nepal ... (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 9 Sept. 1996).

Opposing the release, on 19 September, a joint Press Release of ten members<sup>59</sup> of the Party said, “Since, this Treaty seriously damages national interest we along with 26 other MPs have decided to boycott the Joint sitting of the House convened to ratify the Treaty” (NCP (UML), Mahakali Sandhi ... Samyukta Baktabya 19 Sept. 1996). On

<sup>59</sup> They were Sahana Pradhan, Bamdev Gautam, Chandra Prakash Mainali, Radhakrishna Mainali, Trilochan Dhakal, Keshavlal Shrestha, Siddhilal Singh, Hiranyalal Shrestha, Kamal Koirala and Hemraj Rai

the 20<sup>th</sup> the Treaty was ratified in the House's Joint sitting, where thirty-one MPs of the UML were absent. Among them were Bamdev Gautam, Sahana Pradhan, Chandra Prakash Mainali and Radhakrishna Mainali (Rising Nepal, "Ratification ... Consensus" 1996 Sept. 21). The dissent was ominous. In a later press release of the Party, its President, Man Mohan Adhikari "directed Party colleagues to brace themselves to fight against elements who were trying to fragment the Party" (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 30 Sept. 1996). Then a press release of 15 October, coming from Radhakrishna Mainali indicated that the Party had decided to hammer out the differences to ensure unity in the Party (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 15 Oct. 1996). Even then tussle was going on within the Party; because in its February 1997 Central Committee meeting, members aligned with existing General Secretary, Madhav Kumar Nepal registered a counter charge-sheet against Bamdev Gautam, whose group had filed a charge-sheet<sup>60</sup> against Madhav Kumar Nepal. They had asked Nepal to resign from his post in favour of Bamdev Gautam (Rising Nepal, "Tussle ... Continues" 1997 Feb. 25). However, all such news and Party press releases just vanished after the Party formed a coalition Government under Lokendra Bahadur Chand in March 1997. Later, when it performed well in the local elections its document perceived in the result the fruit of "its good governance in the nine month Government" and the role of "the Party's strategy, *Janatako Bahudaliya Janabad*", which it had adopted "in the Fifth Party Congress" and which "expressed the Party's faith in democratic processes and peaceful multi-Party competition". It said, "our victory in elections is owing to the faith that the people have reposed on our ideology" (NCP (UML), 2054-2-5 Gatay Baseyko ... Committeeko ... Prastao 9 June 1997). In power, the Party was all praise for its Fifth Congress strategy and tactics. However, after the fall of the Chand Ministry in October 1997, clashes reappeared in the Party.

<sup>60</sup> See, NCP (M-L), "Bibhajanka Karanharu" 18 According to the document of NCP (M-L) which came into being later in 1998 the charge-sheet against Madhav Kumar Nepal was filed in the 32nd Central Committee meeting by 22 members of the Committee as such he was in the minority.

In its Sixth Congress; held in 25–31 January 1998 at Nepalgunj (mid-Western part of Nepal), controversy arose in between the two groups, one under Madhav Kumar Nepal and the other under Bamdev Gautam. Considered on the basis of the documents produced in the Congress, both the groups supported the strategy of *Janatako Bahudaliya Janabad*. However, the Bamdev led faction raised objections against the tactical line<sup>61</sup> adopted by the Congress. In the document produced by the faction, Bamdev argued that the Fifth Congress document had wrongly interpreted the tactics suggested by Madan Bhandari. He said, that the document had “considered the main tactics as the goal of the Party”, giving the impression that “the tactics of strengthening power was itself the goal of the Party” or “its strategy” (NCP (UML), “Bartaman Paristhitima ... Karyaniti (Farak Mat)” 26). Thereafter he said:

The aim of our present tactics should be to serve our strategy of completing *Janabadi* [total power to the people] revolution by strengthening the democratic rights of the people, by acquiring more rights for them and by protecting country’s sovereignty, integrity, independence and nationalism. Since such revolution is against feudalism, tout bureaucratic capitalism, expansionism and imperialism ... our tactics should always be aimed against our enemies. In the past we adopted a soft attitude towards American imperialism and disregarded the role of Indian expansionism which was out there to establish its control over our natural resources ... From now on our tactics should always forward the cause of nationalism ... (NCP (UML), “Bartaman Paristhitima ... Karyaniti (Farak Mat)” 30–1).

However, the document of the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress, which was brought out by the UML did not prescribe such tactics—tactics aimed towards the enemies. It simply reiterated its faith in the tactics fixed by the Fifth Congress (NCP (UML), *Bahudaliya Janabadko ... Karyaniti* 2). The Party finally split in March 5, 1998.<sup>62</sup> However, the faction formally

<sup>61</sup> See, Whelpton, *History* 197 The cause behind the split is interpreted as the differences between Bamdev Gautam and C. P Mainali’s support for Mao’s New Democratic Strategy and UML’s strategy. However, neither documents nor paper reports of the period supports such claim. Besides, the later activities of NCP (M-L), as shall be seen, was also not in tune with the claim of Whelpton.

<sup>62</sup> See, *Rising Nepal*, “CPN-ML Registered” 1998 Mar. 6 On this day the faction was registered as CPN-ML in the Parliament Secretariat.

announced its formation as NCP (M-L) in its “National meet of 27–29 Fagun VS 2054 [11–13 March 1998]”. Rationalising its birth, its document said, “This Party has come into existence out of the Parliamentary group of the NCP (UML), which represents its revolutionary trend. It is against UML’s liquidationist policy decisions on national issues” (NCP (M-L), “Ghoshna-Patra” 1). Its document, which pointed out the various causes<sup>63</sup> behind the split, observed at one point:

American imperialism and Indian expansionism are the main enemies of Nepalese revolution ... but the leadership of the UML in its documents of the Sixth Congress has removed these issues ... as a result the Madhav-KP Oli group has given up those issues which the Communist Party had been raising so far (NCP (M-L), “Bibhajanka Karanharu” 5).

The document of the NCP (M-L), published a few months later had this to say regarding its strategy: “Presently, on our shoulder is the historic responsibility of protecting and developing the strategy of *Janatako Bahudaliya Janabad*” (NCP (M-L), Bartaman ... Karyaniti 16). And amplifying its tactics, which was at the heart of its dissociation from NCP (UML) it said:

The intention of our tactics is to strengthen the democratic rights of the people ... and country’s sovereignty, integrity and independence ... Hence the tactics which we forward should always be against the enemy of our revolution. In the past we had softened our stand towards American imperialism and Indian expansionism. We disregarded the increasing Indian pressure over our natural resources. Despite our softened approach they did not stop interfering in our internal affairs and they went on plotting against our revolutionaries. Presently, the Indian rulers have shamefacedly begun laying their claim over our land, Kalapani and have stationed their soldiers there ... From now on our tactics should always be directed towards the protection of our nationalism and democracy and we should use all means of struggle towards that end ... (NCP (M-L), Bartaman ... Karyaniti 29–30).

Following the split, Gautam was nominated as the leader of its 46 MPs in the Parliament and Sahana Pradhan (widow of Pushpalal) was elected as its President.<sup>64</sup> Then a pamphlet published in April 1998 declared

<sup>63</sup> See, NCP (M-L), “Bibhajanka Karanharu”

<sup>64</sup> See, Rising Nepal, “Gautam Nominated” 1998 Mar. 8; Rising Nepal,

Today on 2055 Baisakh 4 [17 April 1998] a joint meeting of the following different political parties ... discussed the ordinance brought in the Parliament to amend the Offence Against the State and Punishment Act 2046. This ordinance goes against the spirit of the 1990 movement. Reaching a decision to stall the ordinance the following parties have decided to lead a joint movement ... To discuss issues related with nationalism, day to day problems of the people and the country's sovereignty the meeting has decided to meet again in Baisakh 6 [April 19] (NCP (Unity Centre), "Anusuchi 1" 34)

The parties signing the document were NCP (Unity Centre), NCP (Masal), NCP (MLM), NCP (United), NCP (ML), NCP (M), NCP (NWPP), UPFN, and *Samyukta Rastriya Janandolan Samyojak Samiti* (United National People's Coordination Committee).<sup>65</sup> The 'Nau Bam' or Nine Left Parties' movement had begun. As scheduled, the Nine parties met on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April and decided to submit, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, a memorandum to the Government. From then on, it decided to launch protest movement from 27 April. The memorandum, published by one of the constituents of the Nine Left combine, NCP (Unity Centre), was focused on three issues:

- (1) Withdrawal of the ordinance meant for amending the Offence Against the State and Punishment Act 2046.
- (2) Raise issues concerning nationalism and national interest, ask Government to initiate the removal of Indian soldiers from Kalapani, annul all unequal Indo-Nepal treaties and revise them on the basis of equality and mutual benefits, ask Government to initiate moves against Indian encroachment of Nepal's territory in Pasupatinagar<sup>66</sup> and in other areas.
- (3) Control corruption and price rise and pressurise the Government to form a Commission to investigate the wealth of ministers and other corrupt officials (NCP (Unity Centre), "Baisakh 6 Gatayko Nirnaya" 34).

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"Sahana Pradhan Elected President" 1998 March 14

<sup>65</sup> This was the front organisation of the NCP (Maoist). For its sudden appearance in the scene, see Chapter IV

<sup>66</sup> See also, NCP (Unity Centre), "Gyapanpatra" 35 The group claimed that India had encroached the no-man's land in the Pasupatinagar area which is in the Eastern side of Nepal bordering Indian state of West Bengal.

Besides, an appeal coming from the leader of NCP (Unity Centre), claimed that the amendment of the Act was being sought by the Government “to legalise State terrorism in the name of controlling the ‘Maoist People’s War’” (NCP (Unity Centre), “NeKaPa (Ekta Kendra) Ka ... Awahan” 3). As part of their second phase protest movement NCP (ML) declared that it would launch its ‘Let’s Go to Kalapani’ programme on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June. The programme included the march of hundred students and journalists to Kalapani to protest against Indian intrusion (Rising Nepal, “ML to Launch ... Kalapani Drive” 1998 June 1). On the 29<sup>th</sup>, the group submitted its appeal to the UN through Kathmandu based UN Representative, Carroll Long. In the appeal they asked the world forum to mobilise peace loving countries of the world to pressurise India to withdraw her troops from Kalapani (Rising Nepal, “Nine Left Appeal ... UN” 1998 June 30). Meanwhile, rumour about NCP (ML)’s possible inclusion in the Government began doing its round. Commenting on the rumour Prakash (Narayan Kazi Shrestha) said, “If they join the Government then they would lose their very foundation—their very claim that they are different from NCP (UML) and it would be suicidal” (NCP (Unity Centre), “MaLay ... Hamro Karyabhar” 12). However, the rumour turned into a reality when on 16 August NCP (ML)’s Central Committee member, C. P Mainali declared that his Party has reached an agreement with the Congress and that it was joining the Koirala Government. According to him, the Congress leadership had assured them that they would initiate the removal of Indian troops from Kalapani besides resolving other border issues (Rising Nepal, “ML ... to Join ... Govt.” 1998 Aug. 17). 13 of their MPs joined the Government; the movement lost its steam. Then in August 22, the so-called Nine Left group also entered into a nine-point agreement with the Government. The content of the agreement rotated around three issues. Point 1 through 3 of the agreement were related with issues of Indo-Nepal border and other treaties. Point 4 through 5 were related with the process of managing the Maoist movement in which the Government, their document claimed, had agreed not to indict activists of other political parties in

the name of controlling the Maoists and rest were focused on controlling prices (NCP (Unity Centre), “Nau Bam ... Bhadra 6 ... Samjhauta” 38). However; indicating what the movement had primarily focused on, Prakash said, “The main thrust of our movement was on forcing India to remove her soldiers from Kalapani and to force the Government from withdrawing the ordinance” (NCP (Unity Centre), “Sangharsalai Naya ... Ekjut Hoau” 7). The issue of price rise was, therefore, just a means for mobilising the masses—their commitment towards the people. After the fall of Koirala Government the Communist factions again began bracing themselves for the third General Election.

#### 1.9. Communist Perceptions in May 1999 Election:

Communist factions taking part in the 1999 General Election were: NCP (UML), NCP (ML), NCP (NWPP), UPFN, and Rastriya Janamorcha (National People’s Front). Rastriya Janamorcha, the electoral Front of NCP (Masal) had “electoral understanding with NCP (MLM), NCP (Marxist) and NCP (United)” (NCP (Masal), “Aam Nirvachan ... Baktabya [1999]” 647). In terms of seats contested, the major contenders among them were NCP (UML) and NCP (ML). They fielded their candidates in 195 and 197 constituencies respectively (Election Commission 14–5). The UML contested the election with a view to strengthen the democratic system. It was for “political stability, good governance, development, security, justice, equality, nationalism and in favour of forces which helped these ideals” (NCP (UML), “Chunao Ghoshna-Patra 2056” 9). It sought to appeal the people on the strength of its performance in its brief period in power. It reminded people of what it did for “the deprived section of the society” and for “revising the 1950 Treaty” etcetera (10–4). In future, it promised “corruption free governance”, “a poverty-free kingdom” under “planned economy” (31–2). As in the past, it promised that it would pass laws “to ensure equal property rights for the women” (56), laws to ensure “equal linguistic, cultural, and religious rights for the *janajatis*” (58). And for preserving their culture and history it promised “to establish National Foundations[!]” and “felicitate their eminent personalities[!]” (59). However, the manifesto of NCP (ML) declared that it

was “not for incremental reforms, but for a total change”. It said “We intend to establish a *Janabadi* system which is truly pro-people by destroying the present semi-feudal, semi-colonial structure”. It further said, “In the present situation we are the only Party, the only national alternative on whom the people can repose their faith ... other Communist factions ... and even UML which has kowtowed before Indian expansionism, imperialism and feudalism cannot be an alternative before the nation” (NCP (M-L), “Chunao Ghoshna-Patra 2056 [1999]” 5). Leading its long list of promises to the electorate was its claim that it intended to preserve progressive Nepalese nationalism. Explaining the components of such nationalism it said,

The main aspect of progressive nationalism is the protection of Nepalese sovereignty, geographical integrity, unity and tolerance among all *Janajatis*, linguistic, cultural and religious groups while ensuring improvement in their economic condition. The conglomeration of all these is our nationalism (NCP (M-L), “Chunao Ghoshna-Patra 2056 [1999]” 5)

Following it were promises to annul 1950 Treaty and all unequal treaties between India and Nepal, to resolve the problem of Kalapani, to use kingdom’s resources in its service, to implement the work permit needed for foreigners working in Nepal and to end the concept of open border (6). However, in the political front it promised “to amend the Constitution in favour of the working class” and “to make the *Bahudaliya* system strong enough to withstand the onslaught of the revivalist forces and forces against the sovereignty of the country” (7). The other entries in the manifesto promised “efficient ... honest administration” (8), “independent judiciary” (9), “independent economy” (11), “revolutionary land reform” (12), “trade and transit facilities which are in tune with the rights of a land-locked State” (16), “development of villages under decentralised administration” (22), “balanced regional development” (24) etcetera. However, it had nothing to say on the Maoist problem, except to point out that the then governments “have killed thousands of innocent, unarmed people in the name of controlling ‘Maoists’” (2). And considering earlier trends one cannot perhaps go wrong in saying that the attitude of NCP (United) and NCP (M) were also in favour of strengthening democracy. In comparison to these the NCP (NWPP) took

part in the election saying, “In the past half a dozen governments were formed but they could not solve the problems of the people ... the so-called big national parties’ lust for power and position and their dishonesty ... have disillusioned the masses towards democracy” (1–2). So, it said, “We shall use the coming General Elections to tell the masses that the problems of the working class can be resolved only under socialism” (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party (NCP (NWPP)) 2). In similar vein, NCP (MLM) took part in the election with a view to use it for “revolutionary purposes” that is to “Demolish the claims of the existing reformatory and liberal parties’ that there is no alternative to parliamentary democracy while trying to free people from their lies, anti-people activities and anti-national attitudes” (NCP (MLM) 1). The NCP (Masal)’s front Rastriya Janamorcha came up with a long 21 issues where the important ones were the appeal for “nationalism, democracy”, “end to corruption” (Rastriya Janamorcha 1), “end to State terrorism carried in the name of controlling the Maoists” (3), “end to the exploitation of peasants ... by ending dual land ownership”, “end to the interference in the autonomous status of local bodies”, “end to the discrimination practised by the ruling parties against the people of Terai” (5, 7, 8) etcetera. However, its document passed before the election indicates that it was also using the election to “educate people regarding the necessity for New Democratic revolution” and to fight against the “rise of revivalist and Fascist forces” (NCP (Masal), “Aam Nirvachan ... Baktabya [1999]” 643, 647). By Fascist forces it was particularly referring to the Nepali Congress (647). Similar, was the intention of NCP (Unity Centre) for its leader Prakash said, “The NCP (Unity Centre) has clearly indicated in its manifesto that parliamentary system cannot serve our nationalism and resolve the day to day problems of the people ... using non-parliamentary struggle as its primary tactics it intends to use election as an auxiliary tactics to destroy parliamentary system” (Ne. Ka. Pa (Ekta Kendra) 4–5). Thus, in the 1999 General Elections there were, as in the past, two broad groups. Of these, one group believed in strengthening parliamentary democracy by participating in the election and another, in destroying it. However, the election results went in favour of the Nepali Congress

(See p. 182 ). Analysing the Congress win, NCP (Masal) blamed the system and Congress's corruption for it said, "The results have vindicated our repeated claim that Parliamentary system is not a democratic system. Elections held under such system do not reflect real results ... In the elections the Girija Government to come to power misused power, police force, and its lumpen elements to capture booths and to distribute money while violating election code of conduct" (NCP (Masal), "Nirvachanko ... Prastao" 649). However, NCP (NWPP) pointed out that NCP (Maoist) also served the Congress by boycotting the polls for it said, "When the election results were declared then the districts, which were under the influence of the Maoists' 'People's War' and their 'boycott policy', returned candidates of 'Fascist' Nepali Congress and 'anti-nationalist' UML. From the two constituencies of Rolpa the seats went to the Congress candidates, and the two constituencies of Rukum returned one UML and another Congress candidates" (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party (NCP (NWPP)) 8). In the failure of NDP (Chand) faction if NCP (Masal) saw "the fall of pro-Monarchy forces" it viewed in NCP (ML)'s loss "the failure of a patriotic and democratic force" (NCP (Masal), "Nirvachanko ... Prastao" 651). Analysing why it fared badly in the election NCP (ML)'s document pointed out towards nine reasons such as, "its weak organisation", "plots of foreign reactionaries", "its inability to arouse among its activists enough hatred against anti-national forces", "its failure to oppose the Congress's lumpen elements" and "the black money which was used by both the UML and the Congress" (NCP (ML), "Rajnitik Pratibedan: September 1999" 22–23). Perhaps, corruption in election was a set characteristics of Nepalese democracy.

After election, the UML, in tune with its tactics, began obstructing the Parliament. In August, for a week its MPs boycotted the House proceedings when its demand for the creation of a parliamentary body to probe irregularities in May election was denied (Rising Nepal, "House Deadlock Continues" 1999 Aug. 30). From October onwards, it took up its favourite tool—price rise, to oppose the Government. Evaluating the six month functioning of Bhattarai Government it said,

“The general people had hoped for ... new momentum of development ... However, the Government has not done anything ... even after six months. It has proved itself irresponsible by increasing the prices of essential commodities. It has increased the price of fertilisers by 40% ... kerosene and diesel by 23 and 48.8%” and “electricity by 30% per unit” (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 1999 Oct. 27). From November, it declared that it would launch its first phase of protests from VS 2056/7/20 [6 November 1999]. It involved the use of processions throughout the kingdom and Nepal Bandh in November 13 (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 1999 Nov. 1). However, its later statements revealed why it had picked up the issue. In its programme of protests, which underlined five issues for which the protests were being organised, number 3 stated, “The Government has decided to spend Rs 10 crores in its Bisheshwar with Poor programme ... Under this programme the Government is channelising money in the villages through its committees formed in the centre. It, therefore, goes against the autonomy of local bodies and is against the institutionalisation of democracy” (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 1999 Nov. 19). By now, its tactics of leading movements were clear: it always tagged price rise to mobilise forces in order to serve its political ends. The movement dragged on until December first week.

#### 1.10. Communist activities: 2000–October 2002

When crisis assailed Nepali Congress in February 2000, the UML declared that it would lead a series of protest movements from March onwards. This time, it picked up the issue of corruption and considered it as the main cause behind all ills for it stated:

People elected this Government to end corruption. Those who cannot end corruption cannot manage a Government. The same thing applies to their inability in ensuring security, in protecting nationalism and in controlling price rise. A Government which cannot resolve issues of democracy, nationalism and day to day problems of the people should by itself give up its responsibilities (NCP (UML), Press Baktabya 2000 Feb. 28).

What seemed to explain such demands was their other statement where it said “In this phase our Party shall mobilise forces against corruption ... it will mobilise people to

oppose Congress's authoritarian rule and its plot to destroy the autonomy of the local bodies" (NCP (UML), Press Baktabya 2000 Feb. 28). Thus, at this stage one finds a curious mixture in their tactics: they were perhaps seeking Congress's recognition of their existence—the reflection of their tactics after 1991 elections where in the name of fighting against Congress's authoritarianism they had sought their recognition in the Parliament from the Congress—coupled with their post 1993 tactics, which was aimed at evolving as a competent force in parliamentary struggle. However, while announcing their movement they rationalised their actions by criticising the Nepali Congress “as an irresponsible Party involved in internal struggle when the country at large was suffering from insecurity” little realising that the same criticism, at least of being irresponsible in leading movements, was equally applicable to them (NCP (UML), Press Baktabya 2000 Feb. 28). Their movement dragged on sometimes with ten point demands and sometimes with 17 point demands.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, UPFN leaders met Deuba led Maoist Problems Resolution and Recommendation Committee. In their suggestions to the Committee they pointed out that Maoist problem should be solved politically since it was a political problem, and that the Government should not use Armed Police Force for that would only perpetuate State terrorism. Besides, they pointed out that for resolving the problem the Government should also seek to preserve nationalism and solve problems of poverty, unemployment, price rise, economic disparity and corruption (Rising Nepal, “SJM ... Meet Deuba” 2000 Apr. 5). However, until November, except focusing on dialogues between the Government and the Maoists none of the Communist factions explained what they meant when they said that the Maoist problem needed a political solution.

<sup>67</sup> See, NCP (UML), Press Statement 2000 Mar. 20 NCP (UML), Press Baktabya: Mangharu Pura Gareyos Bhanney Baray 2000 Apr. 11 NCP (UML), Press Baktabya 2000 Apr. 16 In its 16 April statement the Party forwarded 10 point demands where demand No. 1 was to end corruption and it was followed by other demands like preservation of nationalism and the autonomy of local bodies. Its later statements, see, NCP (UML), Press Baktabya 2000 May 5 added seven more demands to the 16 April demands.

But, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November UML indicated that by political solution it meant a thorough amendments of the 1990 Constitution (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 2000 Nov. 7). So, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November the Party decided “to carry on parleys with all political parties and to mobilise masses in support of its concrete proposals for the amendments of the Constitution” (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 2000 Nov. 28). However, even then the areas where it favoured amendments were not clear. Its later document gives some clue regarding the areas where it sought to amend the Constitution, but if these clues indicate the nature of the Party’s proposal then they were not significant for it simply reiterated its earlier demands for “electoral reforms ... progressive land reform, control of corruption, decentralisation, local bodies’ autonomy, social justice, and recognition of linguistic, religious and ethnic issues” (NCP (UML), “Pratibedan: VS 2058 [Aug. 2001]” 9). From March 2001 onward, it was again leading protest movements along with other Communist factions for the resignation of “corrupt Koirala” (Rising Nepal, “UML ... Joint Struggle” 2001 Mar. 24). It continued throughout April<sup>68</sup> and in the following month only to be intervened by the Palace incident of June 1. Following Koirala’s resignation in July, they were totally focused on resolving Maoist insurgency through dialogue. With the failure of the talks and after the imposition of emergency from November 2001 there were hardly any protests. However, when Army actions against the Maoists seemed to yield results they were all in a hurry to end emergency in the name of preserving the spirit of 1990 *Janandolan* and the Constitution. Besides, year 2002 witnessed two unity moves among the Communist factions. The NCP (ML) united with NCP (UML) in VS 2058/11/1 [15 February, 2002] (NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 2002 Feb. 15) and just before October 4, 2002 when Gyanendra was on his way to usurp power five Communist factions came together on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October to announce the formation of

<sup>68</sup> See, NCP (UML), Samyukta Press Baktabya 2001 Apr. 16; NCP (UML), Sangharsha Sambandhi Bishes Baktabya 2001 Apr. 16 and NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 2001 Apr. 19; NCP (UML), Press Bigyapti 2001 May 26

Samyukta Bam Morcha (United Left Front). These five parties were NCP (Marxist), NCP (United), NCP (MLM), NCP (ML) and a lesser known Socialist Movement of Nepal (Rising Nepal, “Five Parties Form Bam Morcha” 2002 Oct. 4). There was no doubt that their unity was aimed at contesting the much speculated November election. Gyanendra’s 4<sup>th</sup> October broadcast to the nation must have pulled the rug from under them. With Gyanendra’s action the parliamentary phase in the political development of Nepal came to an end mellowing Communist activities. However, their activities throughout the 90s exhibited a pattern in their ideological orientations, choice of issues and in the nature of their protests which were perhaps the reflection of their class/social base. Hence, drawing upon the study of the Communist movement carried so far, the following section will briefly describe their ideology, their choice of issues out of the major issues facing the kingdom and the nature of Communist protests while dealing a little elaborately the class basis of the movement.

#### 1.11. Communist Ideologies and Strategies, Major Issues, Forms of Protests and Support/Social Base.

On the basis of the study carried so far, it is clear that the ideological orientations of Communist parties like NCP (UML), NCP (Marxist), after their dissociation from the UML, and NCP (United) were liberal. They were all struggling for the establishment of freedom of speech, freedom of press, a system of free and fair election, equality, good governance characterised by decentralisation of power and transparency in the functioning of the Government. In the process, the major issues which they highlighted were those about citizenship, equality of women, and an economic arrangement which ensured rapid economic development without sacrificing public welfare. In the economic front the central goal was for the development of an independent economy, a free economy tilted towards the growth of national capitalists. However, confusion persisted in their stand on the degree and the nature of free economy, because for public welfare they also advocated a mixed economy free from corruption. Their search for an independent economy went hand in hand with their advocacy for an economy free from the control of the kingdom’s

southern neighbour, which, on account of geopolitical compulsions, invariably led them to advocate their variety of nationalism. It offered them the explanation for all the woes of the kingdom—it was used even to explain the persistence of feudalism in the kingdom. As such, much of their time in the 90s were spent in opposing the rise of feudal forces and in combating the autocratic, undemocratic rule of Koirala which they claimed was tilted in favour of Indian expansionism and imperialism. Besides, a few of them diluted their strategies to tailor them in the context of the changed environment. NCP (UML)'s strategy of *Bahudaliya Janabad* and NCP (United)'s strategy of National Democracy, despite their claim in favour of classes (whose definition was diluted to include all), were, in essence, tailored to project their outright support for a market based economy and liberal democracy. The NCP (Marxist)'s strategy of New Democracy did not dilute its claim in favour of the four classes, but even their goal was essentially focused on the development of democracy which they argued was dependent on the economic development of the kingdom. At the other end there were other Communist factions like NCP (Masal), NCP (NWPP), NCP (Unity Centre) and NCP (MLM) who advocated New Democracy as their strategy, but they were also using the same issues to point out that they cannot be achieved under the Parliamentary system. Hence, they were saying that people should opt for the New Democratic system, where they claimed that it would be possible to achieve what the UML and the NCP (United) sought to achieve. This implied that their ideological orientations were also liberal. The only aspect, which differentiated the latter group from the former was that in advocating those liberal issues they were, in their documents, championing the cause of the working class, peasants, national bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois classes. In that sense, theirs was a class approach to the issues of liberalism. Hence, Communist movement of Nepal from 1990–2002, was like the 19<sup>th</sup> century European liberal movements. Besides, the nature of their protests reflected distinct characteristics. On occasions, such as in the Employees' movement in 1990, their use of cycle rallies, candle-light processions and human chains to draw the attention of the Government were unique, but they were invariably for issues

characteristic of old movements. As regards the multiple protests carried out under the leadership of the UML with the support of other Communist factions the issues were mostly political. They had nothing in them to reflect the interest of the classes whom the parties claimed to represent. In the beginning of the nineties, the focus of the protests were for the protection of Nepalese nationalism. Later, it was lopsided against Girija Prasad Koirala. And even at the close of the nineties the two dominant issues were either nationalism or the removal of Koirala. These protests were motivated by their immediate political goals, that is to harass the Government of the day and were always wrapped with one issue: their protest against price rise. Besides, they did not take up issues about the status of peasants, women, *janajatis* and for the resolution of the problem of citizenship which were the demands of the day. In nature, these protests used to be violent and of a long-drawn type, which were fully exploited by those Communist factions, including the UPFN, which practised the politics of exposition. In contrast, when the CPN (Maoist), on their own, launched protests their demands packaged the entire issues facing the nations. They skillfully projected gender, regional, ethnic issues and issues of nationalism as class issues resulting out of national and regional oppression inherent in a *Khas* dominated centralised feudal structure. In nature, their protests were of short duration seeking fulfilment of all their packaged demands within a short period of time. The motive behind such protests were always to expose the weaknesses of the parliamentary system and to whittle the legitimacy of the Government rather than solving the problems of the proletariat, peasants, national bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois classes whom they claimed to represent. And though their avowed strategy was for creating a Communist State by destroying the feudal structure, yet if one were to take the article of Baburam published after Gyanendra's coup in 2002, it reflected that they were essentially fighting for a bourgeois democracy. Thus, neither their protests, nor their People's War reflected a class bias. The reason for such complexion of the movement lay in the class/social bases of the movement. Hence, the following paragraph is devoted towards the consideration of the class/social bases of the movement. In doing so it

will take the documentary evidences and the biographies of a few Communist leaders available in paper reports.

While going through the different documents of the entire Communist factions one comes across a statement, where they all admit that the numerical strength of the proletariat in Nepal is low, but is expected to grow (For examples see, p. 368 & 520). There is virtually no role of proletariat in this movement. Besides, while commenting upon the nature of Communist leadership they all point out that they are primarily the representative of the middle class.<sup>69</sup> These statements make clear the social basis of the movement. However, the question is: who are these leaders representing the middle class? If one takes the background of the leaders who came to limelight after 1990 then they are as follows:

Man Mohan Adhikari was educated in India during the forties and he joined as a simple labourer to participate in the Biratnagar Jute Mill movement in 1947 (Rising Nepal, "Long Innings" 1991 May 26). When he assumed his office as Prime Minister in 1994, he had 20 tolas gold, 2 Kattha and 21 Anna land, one house in Biratnagar and one under construction in Kathmandu. Besides, his account had a total of Rs. 12 Lakh 34 thousand in the bank (Rising Nepal, "PM, Nepal ... Disclose Assets" 1994 Dec. 14). Similarly, Jan Sharma, while writing about the background of Madhav Kumar Nepal says that he was earlier a "bank clerk", who had joined the NCP (ML) in 1971 (243). His assets in 1994 included five housing plots spread throughout the kingdom and two double storeyed buildings which included one in the prime location of Kathmandu. He possessed ten tolas gold and shares in different factories (Rising

<sup>69</sup> NCP (Pushpalal) 75 In 1968 NCP (Pushpalal)'s document was saying that the leadership of the Party was in the hands of the middle class. One of the fragmentation in the NCP (Pushpalal) group was caused by the claims of the dissociating group that the Party was led by the middle class (See, p. 341). See also NCP (Masal[Mashal]) 271 where the party points out that it was essentially a movement led by the upper caste leaders. See, also NCP (Unity Centre), "Communist Movement ... of Nepal (Unity Centre)" 21 The Party expressly states that its leaders are all from the petty-bourgeois class.

Nepal, “PM, Nepal ... Disclose Assets” 1994 Dec. 14). In similar vein, C. P Mainali another Communist leader was a graduate, who was linked with the Jhapa movement of the 70s (Rising Nepal, “C. P. Mainali ... Biography” 1994 Dec. 16). In 1994 he possessed several housing plots spread across Nepal and bank deposits, shares, gold and silver up to 100 tolas (Rising Nepal, “6 More ... Declare Property” 1994 Dec. 16). And though property details of Pushpa Kamal Dahal and of Baburam Bhattarai are yet to be disclosed, yet their biographies reveal that they both came from middle class background. The former was qualified up to B.Sc in Agriculture Science. He was a teacher before entering politics. Baburam earned a Ph.D long after joining politics. He claimed that he came from a peasant family, which was dependent upon his *purohit* father (Rising Nepal, “From Rebel ... Head of Govt” 2006 Aug. 16). Thus, they all represented the educated middle class who had supplanted Communist leadership which was supposed to be in the hands of the proletariat. In fact, in the entire Communist movement of Nepal, if there was anyone who had even an inkling of proletariat background then it was Man Mohan Adhikari. With such leadership, it is no wonder that the movement evinced a liberal orientation.

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## Chapter 5

### Revolutionary Groups (Non-Parliamentary Politics)

#### Emergence of the Maoist as a Major Force, Maoist Strategy, Maoist and Parliamentary Democracy

##### 1. Revolutionary Groups

In the context of Nepal, Chapter IV has already discussed that there were two broad groups among the Communist factions. One group, which was represented by the UML, NCP (Marxist), NCP (ML), in its later form, were all in favour of preserving Parliamentary system and hoped using it as a plank for bringing about socialism. However, there was a second group, which participated in the system without any faith in the system. This group was represented by NCP (Masal), NCP (NWPP), NCP (Unity Centre) and NCP (MLM). Even after the split of NCP (Unity Centre) in May 1994 when two factions of the Centre came into being that is NCP (Unity Centre) under Nirmal Lama and NCP (Unity Centre) under Prachanda (Pushpa Kamal Dahal), the Lama faction continued as a group without faith in Parliamentary system. Their participation in the system was always guided by their tactics to expose the system and to destroy it to usher New Democratic revolution. In this sense, they qualified as a revolutionary group. Since, their strategy and tactics have already been dealt in Chapter four, the present Chapter will focus on the rise of CPN (Maoist) out of the group.

##### 1.1. Emergence of CPN (Maoist): Its Strategy and Tactics

The emergence of CPN (Maoist), as seen in Chapter IV, is closely linked with the activities of CPN (Unity Centre)/UPFN from 1991. After the first General Election the areas of Rolpa and Rukum (Kham Magar dominated area) proved to be their stronghold, because three of their candidates, one from Rukum and two from Rolpa had succeeded in winning the elections. In accounting for the successes of the Centre in these areas, writers often credit NCP (Masal)'s leader Mohan Bikram Singh. They point out that he had, in his long carrier as a Communist leader, sensitised the people of Pyuthan, which bordered Rolpa, along Communist line. The writers contend

that the UPFN just reaped the benefit of his long campaign (Whelpton 203; Thapa and Sijapati 65). Besides, there were other factors: the exodus of *mandales* into the Nepali Congress and the UML in the pre-1991 Election and the UPFN's campaign against earlier *mandales* who had, as "usurers" and "cheaters",<sup>1</sup> cheated the people of the area (Thapa, et al. 68–9; Onesto 152–4). This had, they say, helped the UPFN in gaining popularity among the people there, but it had also brought the UPFN in conflict with the parties since the usurers and cheaters against whom the UPFN campaigned were affiliated with either the Nepali Congress or the UML. However, when Girija came to power in 1991 the animosity between the UPFN and the Congress became more intense, because Thapa and Sijapati claim that Girija, because of his past experiences, came to power harbouring a deep seated "antipathy and distrust" towards the Communists in general (68). As a result, in 1992–93, clashes between the UPFN activists and the Government increased in the area leading to situations where both parties violated human rights (Thapa, et al. 69–70). Majority of the writers<sup>2</sup> writing on the birth and the later evolution of CPN (Maoist) explain the emergence of the Party as the result of such clashes. And the tenor of their argument suggests that in these clashes the Government wronged against the UPFN/Maoist activists by treating them inhumanely. However, such explanation in accounting for the rise of Maoism and in its development neglects the influence that the RIM had on the Party. As pointed out the Party was linked with the RIM ever since its formation in 1991 (See, p. 416), but there was another Party, NCP (Masal) with similar link with the RIM. Since, documents of CPN (Unity Centre) before 1994 are not available one has to refer to the documents of NCP (Masal) to understand how RIM was influencing CPN (Unity

<sup>1</sup> See, Onesto 155 This was the party's tactics of class struggle implemented at the village level.

<sup>2</sup> See, Thapa, et al. 68–74; Karki and Seddon 20 and Sales 80 The Maoist in their several statements try to project similar arguments to paint the state in its vicious form.

Centre). In one of the documents of NCP (Masal), published in 1994, the Party indicates of a controversy rotating around the questions about “Maoist thought”, “Maoism”, and “third stage of Maoism” (NCP (Masal), “Mao Bichardharabarey 2051” 557–9). However, the content of the document is not clear—one cannot understand what constituted the third stage of Maoism— except in denouncing those who attested to the idea of third stage Maoism by pointing out that such groups were “going against the principles of Leninism” (NCP (Masal), “Mao Bichardharabarey 2051” 559). But, NCP (Masal) in its VS 2052/5/21 [6 September 1995] document reveals a letter sent to it by RIM welcoming the Party’s Sixth Congress. In it the Party indicates that the RIM had been insisting on its constituents to follow Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as their ideology to lead armed struggle in Nepal. RIM’s logic in advocating such line were as follows: in the letter, it says, “Mao, while leading Chinese struggle had developed many principles” bringing about “a qualitative development in Marxism-Leninism”. Hence, his contributions represented “a leap forward in Marxism-Leninism” making it “an integral component of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism”. Then pointing out Mao’s contributions the letter states, “In the context of establishing socialism he developed a universally applicable principle of revolutionary violence—the tactics of encircling cities by villages, and the principle of cultural revolution to raise the level of ideology to its third stage”. Hence, according to RIM’s logic, “Mao’s contributions deserve[d]to be raised to the level of Maoism”. Then it says that “Maoism qualifies as a new paradigm,<sup>3</sup> without which Marxism-Leninism cannot be properly understood” (NCP (Masal), “Nepal Communist Party ... RIM Ko Abhiwadan” 587). NCP (Masal) had not accepted RIM’s logic, so in the letter RIM asks NCP (Masal) to “voluntarily resign” from the Body, but recognises “CPN (Maoist) as its member” implying that CPN (Maoist) were following its directions (NCP (Masal), “RIM Ko ... Prastao” 627) . The extent to which the CPN

<sup>3</sup> If so then only Maoism should have been the sufficient ideology, but it presents the ideology as Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

(Maoist) were under the ideological spell of the RIM was partially expressed by its 1997 statement, where it extolled “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism” as an “almighty ideology” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Editorial ... War!” 1), and fully by its later document of 2001 where it said:

In the face of complex situation, Mao seriously thought over the class-struggle in socialism ... put forward ... a scientific analysis of class-struggle ... a concept of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat as the principle to prevent restoration of capitalism and led the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution ... This great contribution established Mao as the propounder of a new, third and higher stage of Marxism, i.e. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism...after Mao’s death ... it has grown as a beacon for future revolutions (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “The Great Leap Forward ... History” 29).

Besides, when the Party split in May 1994 the Nirmal Lama group had specifically drawn attention towards Prachanda factions’ advocacy of the RIM’s line as the cause behind the split. Hence, both in the evolution and in the birth of the CPN (Maoist) as a violent faction the role of the RIM cannot be disregarded<sup>4</sup>. So, in leading the armed struggle CPN (Maoist) was following the dictate of a foreign body which was not conversant with the objective condition of the kingdom. After its split in 1994, its front organisation, the UPFN, also split into two factions in August 1994. One of them was UPFN (Baburam) faction. It was aligned to NCP (Unity Centre) under Prachanda. This Unity Centre under Prachanda, Mohan Bikram Baidhya (Kiran) and Baburam held its Third Extended meeting in VS 2051/11/2–4 (14–16 February 1995).<sup>5</sup> The document produced on the occasion came out in the name of CPN

<sup>4</sup> The other factor which has been grossly neglected in explaining the growth of Maoism, is the faulty tactics of the UML. The study of the period reveals that the UPFN exploited the tactics of the UML and other Communist factions to implement its tactics of exposing the Parliament. By doing so, it de-legitimised the Parliamentary system to create an environment where it could legitimise its violent tactics. Hence, in the evolution of the Maoist the role of UML and other Communist factions, especially their tactical stance, should also be taken into consideration.

<sup>5</sup> See, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Strategy and Tactics ... in Nepal” 19 The Party organ, English edition, gives a different month that is March 1995. So, many works have quoted this date. Besides, there is also difference in the

(Maoist). From it one has to draw out its strategy, because it is not properly structured. As usual with all Communist factions, it also describes the historical stage of Nepalese society as “semi-feudal and semi-colonial” (CPN (Maoist), “Nepali Naya Janabadi ... Karyadisha” 9). Under such a society, it identifies a series of contradictions clarifying that its enemies are the feudal forces, Indian expansionism, tout and bureaucratic capitalist who are under the umbrella of Indian expansionism for its document says:

To resolve the contradictions that exists between the feudal forces and Nepali people; imperialism, especially, Indian expansionism and Nepali people, tout and bureaucratic capitalist and Nepali people and the contradiction of the Nepali people against Nepalese reactionaries represented by the feudal forces, bureaucracy and tout capitalists who are aided and abetted by Indian expansionist is the goal of our armed struggle ... (CPN (Maoist), “Nepali Naya Janabadi ... Karyadisha” 7).

And like all other Communist factions of Nepal, it also fails in presenting its class analysis. So, as a substitute, it presents a social analysis of the usual type, prevalent among the Communist factions of Nepal, to identify its allies in (1) The proletariat class, which it admits is “numerically insignificant” (2) The peasants, which “includes the *Sukumbasis* and all ... workers like tempo drivers and wheel cart pushers working in the towns”. (3) Middle class peasants who “make their ends meet after working in their field for one whole year ...” (4) Rich peasants who “employ one or two labourers in their holdings” (5) Petty bourgeois class represented by “school, college and university teachers, students, doctors, engineers, lawyers, small traders and

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title of the Nepali version and English version. The English rendition of the Nepali version is, *The Political and Military Line of Nepali New Democratic Revolution*. And there are subtle differences in the content for example in the English version the Northern neighbour with whom Nepal had fought is identified as the Chinese, but in the Nepali version it is Tibet of China. However, if history is taken then Nepal had fought valiantly with Tibet, but when supported by Chinese forces it had to pull back. Hence, the Nepali version seems to carry the right content. See also, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “The Great Leap Forward ... History” 47 In the Third Extended meeting CPN (Unity Centre), under Prachanda, gave up its earlier name and adopted its new name, CPN (Maoist).

artisans” and finally the national bourgeois class, which the Party says “is in a state of transformation and is trying to establish its independent existence” (CPN (Maoist), “Nepali Naya Janabadi ... Karyadisha” 7–8). Then it states its strategy of establishing communism in the following terms:

On the basis of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology ... the strategy of our Party is to carry out New Democratic revolution while destroying feudalism and imperialism to establish people’s dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat based on the peasant -proletariat unity. Our future goal is to establish communism keeping intact the dictatorship of the proletariat while carrying on cultural revolution (CPN (Maoist), “Nepali Naya Janabadi ... Karyadisha” 7).

However, while advocating its line of “protracted war<sup>6</sup> based on villages surrounding the towns” (CPN (Maoist), “Nepali Naya Janabadi ... Karyadisha” 7) the Party, to exhort the masses towards violence, romanticises Nepali valour<sup>7</sup> and their love for violence and falsifies historical facts for it says:

In the historical process of the development of many Kings and principalities the Nepalese by circumstances were trained to be violent ... Later they fought with valour the forces of Tibet and the trained and well accoutred British forces from the south. Fighting war against the imperialist with the help of their own resources ... the people of Nepal succeeded in imprinting fear and anxiety in the minds of the imperialist and by doing so they have established an example of their bravery in the history of the world. This is a matter of pride and self-respect for

<sup>6</sup> In the past, Communist factions advocating protracted war have always expressed the fear of aggression from Nepal’s Southern border. When NCP (ML) in the 70s propounded this tactics the same fear was there. This was probably because they viewed the need for such tactics in the event of Indian support to the feudal forces. However, if one takes the documents of NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) then it points out that it was just a propaganda to see to it that such aggression did not take place (See, p. 364 ). The Maoist document, however, considers it as a process of People’s War where the struggle needs to pass through a simple to a more complex form which ends in the capture of state apparatus. This means they were saying that the protracted nature of the struggle was a tactical mile stone, a complex tactics, which needed to be used in the ultimate capture of the State. In their document the usual fear from India cannot be detected.

<sup>7</sup> Such romanticisation is interspersed throughout its various statements and documents. For another example, see, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Editorial ... War!” 1 where it rejoices in the “obvious significance” of “the people’s war in the land of the legendary Gorkha fighters”.

all Nepalese. *The manner in which, Karl Marx, the advocate of Marxism, praised Nepalese role in those wars is a matter of pride* [italics added].

But, the present leadership of Nepal under the influence of foreign imperialist ... has bartered Nepali valour. We intend to pass on to Nepali people their legacy of bravery to encourage them to take their destiny in their hand (CPN (Maoist), “Nepali Naya Janabadi ... Karyadisha” 2).

Besides, to present its set of armed tactics it itemises six characteristic features of Nepal which are as follows:

1 In area, Nepal is a small State with 17% Terai land. Rest of its area is composed of hostile mountainous regions inhabited by people of diverse caste, languages and Janajatis. It is a land-locked State hemmed in by expansionist India from the South and revisionist China from the North.

2 From a very long period Nepal is under an autocratic, medieval monarchy with a strong and a permanent military establishment. His rule is mostly centred in the towns. Nepalese enemy are not only within but also outside: the Indian expansionist.

3 There is regional imbalance in the development of Nepal. It is a country where 90% of its peasants are spread across its villages.

4 Communists are popular among the people, but the influence of reformist and revisionists is also pervasive.

5 The ... ruling class of Nepal, at present, is passing through a crisis and this is reflected in the political arena.

6 A large section of Nepalese population are working in other parts of the world and out of it a large section is in the Indian Army (CPN (Maoist), “Nepali Naya Janabadi ... Karyadisha” 9).

On the basis of the above characteristics it then draws out the six components of its armed tactics which are stated in the following terms:

Considering the first characteristics, where we do not have a large area, jungle and a neighbour who is ready to help us, our geographical situation allows us to carry on guerrilla war by developing our close contact with the people. In doing so we can utilise the dissatisfaction that exists among the *Janajatis* (nationalities) against the caste group. The second characteristic shows that in Nepal there is no possibility of capturing power through direct military conflict ... Hence, the enemy should be engaged in several areas to weaken them progressively while increasing the military strength of the people ... Third characteristic shows that the foundation of the movement should be peasant revolution, where guerrilla war has to be carried out by developing good relation with the peasants. The fourth characteristic shows that if politics of exposition exposes the right deviation then there is possibility of people's support for armed struggle. The fifth characteristic shows that armed struggle for peoples' rule will help in the development of the struggle ... The sixth characteristic shows that the armed struggle will be successful if political works are carried on among Nepalese staying in India (CPN (Maoist), “Nepali Naya Janabadi ... Karyadisha” 9–10)

Thus, the centrality of the politics of exposition in the set of tactics as an auxiliary of

its armed tactic was obvious. However, this did not mean that the Party tactics was focused only on armed struggle for its document said that its cadres should also carry out “constitutional struggle”, “activities in the towns”, “involve themselves in *janandolan* [people’s movement]”, and “form front organisations” giving “primary importance to unconstitutional”, “rural”, “underground activities”, while carrying on “guerrilla war” and developing “militarily” to “strengthen Party’s organisation and its independent power” (CPN (Maoist), “Nepali Naya Janabadi ... Karyadisha” 10–11). Besides, it said that the Party should also give importance “to gaining international support” (CPN (Maoist), “Nepali Naya Janabadi ... Karyadisha” 11).

Following the document, the Party, in June/July 1995, brought out its another document, which elaborated the tactics of the Party until the initiation of the People’s War. It was its first plan consisting of several sub-plans. In essence, it outlined four tactical components namely propaganda, sabotage, guerrilla war and annihilation of class enemy. Its sabotage tactics directed its cadres to “destroy, in a planned way, the property of feudal class, zamindars, tout capitalists, Government, local exploiters and spies”. Besides, it directed them to “damage or destroy means of communications, roads, bridges and electric supply lines ... to lessen the power of the enemy” (CPN (Maoist), “Pahilo Yojana” 19). However, the document warned that they should not “give up mass movements”, but organise “such movements ... around issues of nationalism, democracy and day to day problems of the society to ... avoid the possibility of armed action from turning into an isolated tactics” (CPN (Maoist), “Pahilo Yojana” 21). The aim was, probably, to maintain its contact with the people without whose support, it said, “the enemy will ... destroy” its “leaders to nip the revolution in its bud” (CPN (Maoist), “Pahilo Yojana” 16). Then it declared, that on a “future date People’s War will be simultaneously initiated throughout Nepal” along with the use of “guerrilla war, sabotage and propaganda tactics” (CPN (Maoist), “Pahilo Yojana” 22). Thus, at this stage, annihilation of class enemy was not a part of its tactics. Thereafter, possibly before or after the Third Extended meeting of February

1995,<sup>8</sup> the Party began its Sija campaign named “after the two big mountains, Sisne ... in Rukum and Jaljala ... in Rolpa”. The campaign, according to Onesto’s Report, was focused on developing the Party organisation, in helping people—to arouse the masses and heighten their political consciousness—and in developing links between the people of Rolpa and Rukum (155). Then in December, the Maoist claim that the Government launched its Romeo operation against their rural class struggle<sup>9</sup>, which it had been waging from sometime in Rolpa (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “One Year of People’s War” 8). According to them, in the backdrop of the “repressive” Romeo operation the “Central Committee of the Party ... met briefly in January 1996” and selected “the date of the historic initiation for February 13 (i.e., the first day of the month of Falgun ...)” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “One Year of People’s War” 8). To rationalise its chosen path it identified the ever present “objective

<sup>8</sup> There is no document which gives an exact date regarding the beginning of this campaign. See, Thapa, et al. 71 and Onesto 155 These works are confusing because Thapa and Sijapati claim that the campaign started in September 1995 and Onesto claims that the campaign was carried out for a year before the initiation of People’s War. Going by the claims of the Maoist, it seems Onesto was correct because the Maoist Organ, see, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Editorial: Red Salute to the Immortal Martyrs of the People’s War!” 3 also reports that there was a preparation period of one year and it turned intense after September.

<sup>9</sup> See, Thapa, et al. 71 and Onesto 156 Both write that the Romeo operation was against the Sija campaign, but there are reasons to doubt their information. First, Onesto’s Report, which is based on the narration of a Maoist narrator, indicates that the Romeo operation was launched in October/November. This is opposed to the Maoist’s claim that the Romeo operation began in December. By the same count, Thapa and Sijapati’s claim that the Romeo operation began in September is not acceptable. Besides, paper report also indicate the existence of Romeo operation only in December. Thus, if they could go wrong even in informing about the date of the Romeo operation there is every reason to doubt that they were not correct in saying that the operation was against the Sija campaign. Besides, the Maoist themselves claim that the operation was against the class struggle that they had been implementing there. Finally, the Sija campaign, as described by Onesto had nothing which could end in conflict between the Maoist and the Government, except, of course, if within the programme of raising the consciousness of the masses there were the component of class struggle. Hence, till further evidence comes to light it would be safer to go by the Party’s version.

conditions for ... the revolutionary transformations” of the Nepalese society in four factors (7). These were: 1) The “semi-feudal & semi-colonial” nature of the country. 2) The persistence of a feudal structure bound by “various semi-colonial unequal treaties with foreign powers (particularly India)” within which the “hegemony of the feudal and comprador & bureaucratic capital[ist] classes” had grown even after 1990 (6). 3) Low level of economic development characterised by “Total stagnation of society and absolute low level of productive forces ... engendered by imperialist/expansionist domination and attendant burgeoning bureaucratic capitalism” (6, 7). 4) The “political, economic and cultural domination” of “Mongoloid and Austric races ... who constitute a combined majority of the total population” since “the days of formation of the centralised state” under the Shahs. 5) Existence of a “vast mountainous regions and remote areas ... turned into sort of ‘internal colonies’ of the centralised state” owing to the “dynamics of polarised development inherent in bureaucratic capitalism”, and 6) The existence of a “reactionary state ... within the ambits of its old structure”, which had failed in resolving the “multifarious class, national and regional contradictions” and which was “sliding into deeper crisis as manifest in the ‘hung’ parliament, frequent change of the governments, pervading environment of instability and increasing recourse to fascist measures against the people” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “One Year of People’s War” 7). Considering the low level of industrial development in Nepal and the numerically insignificant position of the working class, it was obvious that the Party was viewing crisis not in the frequent, widespread lockouts in factories, but in the frequent changes of the Government. As for the needed subjective conditions, it says that an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal feeling was there in Nepal “ever since 1816” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Editorial ... War!” 7) and adds, “What was essentially lacking was the conscious subjective efforts of the vanguard Party of the proletariat”. Then it claims that such need was fulfilled by the creation of CPN (Unity Centre) in “December 1991” (7, 8).

On the day when the Party initiated the People's War, it claims that its activists struck in Gorkha (Central), Sindhuli (Eastern Nepal), Rolpa and Rukum (Western) districts.<sup>10</sup> In Gorkha, it claims that its cadres "took possession ... of ... an Agricultural Development Bank" and seized "loan papers ... and land registration certificates ... deposited by peasants as collateral". Then they burnt the loan papers and returned the land registration certificates to the respective peasants. In other areas they captured police posts with the aim of looting arms (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Review ... Initiation and After" 4). The pattern indicated that they were targeting the State and propitiating the peasants. Thus, from the very beginning it was a peasant based revolution which, as it becomes clear from its Appeal, was fuelled by linguistic, religious, ethnic and nationalistic considerations. The Appeal, which they distributed on the occasion, complemented their action. It denigrated the State for having "handed over the whole economy of the country to a dozen families of the foreign comprador and bureaucratic capitalist" helping them amass wealth at the cost of "the toiling masses", who reeled "under unemployment and poverty" (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Appeal" 11). It viewed it as a structure which had for centuries maintained the "hegemony of one religion (i.e. Hinduism) language (i.e. Nepalese) & nationality (i.e. Khas)" to discriminate, exploit and oppress other "religions, languages & nationalities" conspiring "to fragment the forces of national unity ... development and security of the country" (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Appeal" 12). Besides, it tried to invoke national sentiment by pointing out that the State structure was in the interest of the imperialists and expansionist for it said:

[I]t has been prostrating before the foreign imperialists and expansionists and repeatedly mortgaging Nepal's national honor & sovereignty to them. The present state has been shamelessly permitting the foreign plunderers to grab the natural resources of Nepal and to trample upon our motherland. If this process is let to continue for some

<sup>10</sup> See, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Editorial ... War!" 9 In spreading the area of attack the Party was trying to avoid the concentration of the repressive force of the state in a particular area to minimise its losses.

more time ... the very existence of Nepal will be in jeopardy (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Appeal" 12).

The Appeal brought into open the areas, where the Party wished to focus in future to mobilise its forces. It condemned the State for spreading, in league with the imperialists, their "corrupt, licentious and distorted culture"<sup>11</sup> to "corrupt the people culturally ... [and to] preserve their own heaven of plunder". It categorised the then State as a "moribund ... structure", which had "forced ... the people of different categories ... to live in a state of scarcity, injustice and terror". It further said, that it treated "women as second class citizens"<sup>12</sup>; implemented an "educational system" which was tuned "to produce slaves of state", and victimised people of all profession including the "national bourgeoisie" in the interest of "feudal and comprador & bureaucratic capitalist". And in the name of democracy it "repeatedly ... [used] guns against the political activists or the ordinary masses that [held] political beliefs counter to the interest of the rulers" (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Appeal" 12). Explaining why the country had reached to such "critical" stage of "nationalism, democracy and livelihood", where the State was openly at war "against the people" it pointed out to "the alliance of feudalism [with] imperialism"<sup>13</sup> (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Appeal" 13). Hence, as a solution to the state of affairs it observed, "Except for radical changes in all sphere, any possibility of reform has now become a mere chimera" (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist),

<sup>11</sup> Its later attacks on private English schools were in tune with its denigration of imperialist culture.

<sup>12</sup> The state had failed even to pass a Bill in support of equal property rights for women till 2002. Hence, it was taking them into its fold by appealing to their condition.

<sup>13</sup> See, Biswas 45–7 This article by Pushpa Kamal Dahal/Prachanda brings out exactly the relation that earlier Communist factions like NCP (Mashal) had perceived in between nationalism and democracy revealing that the Maoist perceptions were also guided by the idea of equating democratic ideal in nationalism to turn nationalism into an instrument of mobilisation. There was nothing superior in their versions which rationalised their violent tactics.

“Appeal” 12). The Appeal was in no way different from the documents of other Communist factions, at least, in projecting the woes of Nepal in the role of the imperialist and the expansionist. However, it differed on two counts. First, it was for the first time that a Party had raised objections against the very nature of the State (the documents of other factions focus on the ruling class) while calling for a total change. Second, it appealed the emotions of nationalities while denigrating the role of the *Khasas*.

From its beginning in 1996, Communist factions characterised CPN (Maoist) leadership and the revolt in various ways conveying similar perceptions. However, in NCP (UML)’s version there was a mild tinge of fear in losing its base. It characterised the revolt as a terrorist movement and its leaders as ultra-Leftist for it said:

When the popularity of Communist movement and NCP (UML) is on the rise, the NCP (Maoist) have started a violent, anarchist ‘People’s War’. By saying that there are no real Communists in the world they have generated among the people a dilemma and a pessimistic frame of mind ... Because of the entry of lumpen elements in its organisation ... its leadership has turned into an ultra-Leftist terrorist group. While remaining blind to the changing national and international scene ... its activities have only provided a support to the reactionary forces to work against the Communist movement. It has come up as a serious challenge to the movement (NCP (UML) 11)

In similar vein, NCP (NWPP) said: “From ideological point of view the ‘Maoist’ activities are an example of ‘Left’ opportunism and the State by its terrorist activities is supporting it” (NCP (Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party) 6). And using exactly the same words, NCP (Unity Centre) document said, “The ‘leftist’ opportunist group is now working under the name of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)” (NCP (Unity Centre) 12). Other Communist factions, like NCP (MLM) commented, “The Party’s so-called People’s War lacks the basic ingredients needed for a genuine People’s War and its development”. However, NCP (Marxist) categorised it as a political problem demanding political solutions (Rising Nepal, “‘People’s War’ Criticised” 1996 Feb. 28). But, its later document commented:

The NCP (Maoist) represent the ultra-Leftist stream of the movement. Without analysing the present objective condition of the nation, its geopolitical characteristics and the power balance in the international

system ... the Party is waging its armed struggle on the basis of its subjective understanding. This will be suicidal for the Communist movement and will only invite repression which the movement will not be able to bear (NCP (Marxbadi (Marxist)) 18)

Finally, NCP (Masal) wrote:

The so-called People's War of the Maoist is a sign of 'Left' deviation. It will immensely harm the Communist movement of Nepal. We have reached this conclusion after thorough analysis of the country's subjective and objective conditions ... In fact, there is no People's War going on in our country, but what is going on in the name of 'People's War' is 'Police War' which the police is waging against the common people of the country (NCP (Masal), "RIM Ko ... Prastao" 630).

Thus, none of the Communist factions seemed to support the revolt. However, none of them explained why they considered the revolt as an act of terrorism or as an ultra-left deviation. Perhaps, at the back of their thinking was the class base of the Communist factions which conditioned their thinking to consider the CPN (Maoist)'s leadership from the same perspective. The CPN (Maoist), perceived in their reactions the polarisation of the parties into three distinct trends while pointing out that even within each group there was differences of opinion regarding the nature of the People's War for its document said:

On the basis of their reactions towards the people's war, it is clearly seen that they are divided into three main political trends ... Despite the differences of opinion within each group on whether to view the question as a political one or a purely terrorist activity, all in the reactionary camp are unanimous in repressing the people's war as 'anti-constitutional' and 'anti-democracy' activity, and the Nepali Congress (NC), the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP [NDP]) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) are the main ones in this category ... The '*Bahudaliya Janabadi*' ... faction of this clique has been particularly aggressive to instigate the Government for repression and is conspiring to form its own Government & go into repression.

In the centrist camp fall mainly those small petty-bourgeois reformist groups that talk of Mao Thought & New Democratic revolution. These groups are trying to save their existence by hoodwinking the ordinary masses ... through their pretension of opposing both the people's war & the Government repression. Despite a qualitative difference, as the basic character of these groups is reformist & parliamentary cretinist, they are hurling the identical accusation of ultra-leftism to the people's war ... What has been seen in real life is that the honest & revolutionary cadres of these groups (particularly the liquidationist 'Unity Centre' and the neo-revisionist 'Mashal [Masal]') have been helping the people's war somehow or the other (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Review ... Initiation and After" 17)

In pointing out that the minor factions were worried about their existence the Party

was perhaps correct, but in saying that there were differences within each group regarding the nature of People's War it was indulging in the spread of lies<sup>14</sup>. The Party was possibly doing so to fragment them—a revisit of Prithivinarayan's 18<sup>th</sup> century tactics which he had used in weakening his enemies. Immediately, after the initiation of the People's War the Government stepped up its security to check the Maoist activists, whom it viewed as terrorist. By February 22, the Home Ministry's spokesman declared the arrest of sixty people for taking part in terrorist activities (Rising Nepal, "HMG Steps up Security" 1996 Feb. 23). The RPP [NDP] which formed a constituent of the then Deuba Government viewed the movement as the result of deteriorating economic condition of the kingdom. It urged the Government to launch programmes to raise the living standard of the people. However, it also asked the Government to maintain law and order which seemed to carry a euphemistic connotation for stringent police action (Rising Nepal, "RPP Concerned" 1996 Mar. 11). By April 2, various Human Rights organisations were claiming that the Government was arresting people without prior notice and warrants; torturing them without presenting them before court within 24 hours, filing fake cases against them and killing them in fake encounters (Rising Nepal, "Rights Bodies Flay Govt" 1996 Apr. 3). Coming from independent Human Rights bodies, these complaints, seem to vindicate the Maoist claim that the "reactionary state" had thrown "into dustbin all pretensions of bourgeois democracy and rule of law" to let loose "fascist repression" against its activists. By the middle of May 1996, it claimed that the repression had taken the lives of 27 of its activist in Gorkha, Rukum, Rolpa and Sindhuli districts (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Review ... Initiation and After" 6–7). Meanwhile, the Maoist held in 2052 Chaitra 10 [23 March 1996] their Politburo meeting at Syngja<sup>15</sup> to declare their second plan or a set of tactics, which they called

<sup>14</sup> Throughout the 90s neither their documents nor their actions reveal such differences of opinion.

<sup>15</sup> See, CPN (Maoist), "Janayuddhako ... Agami Rananiti [23 March 1996]" 30

as their future strategy. The document produced on the occasion declared that the initiation of People's War had fulfilled its objective of putting the "politics of armed struggle in the forefront<sup>16</sup> in the country" (16) and observed, "The initiation of the people's war was historic; but now the grave question of whether we are able ... to continue, defend and develop it is looming large before the Party" (17). Therefore, with the twin objective of giving continuity and developing the revolt the Party declared its set of tactics<sup>17</sup>. In brief, these were aimed at "prolonging the war" in a situation where there was a "balance of forces". In such a condition, its tactics was to "use the strategy of defence", "to harass the enemy, tire [it] out and attack at [its] weak points at the time & place of [the Party's] convenience [and] according to [the Party's] own plan" besides maintaining "constant interaction with the masses" (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Review of Historic Initiation" 18). However, what it said after that needs to be noted for in those statements, which were stated as part of its tactics, lay its fear emerging out of its class basis for it said,

We should have a clear understanding that the danger of making wrong policies & programmes in the Party is inherent in the vacillating character of the petty-bourgeois class in Nepal. This class has the tendency of getting over excited and jumping into adventurism after a minor victory, and the tendency of getting disheartened [sic] and moving towards capitulation after minor defeat ... In the present

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This is the Nepali version which gives the exact date and the place of the politburo meeting.

<sup>16</sup> See, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "One Year of People's War" 9 By this the Party meant that the initiation of People's War had forced political forces to take a position vis-a-vis the new politics of revolt.

<sup>17</sup> See, CPN (Maoist), "Janayuddhako ... Purak Prastao [1996/97]" 35 During this phase when the Party was under military attack from the Government side, it had made political campaign the main and military the auxiliary component of its tactics noting that when the political campaign becomes successful and when the Government turns defensive under the burden of political campaign then the main should be the military and political campaign the auxiliary component of the tactics. In fact, this in brief, as will be seen later, illustrated the entire tactical line of the Party throughout the period of struggle.

situation of the enemy in the offensive the capitulationist [sic] tendency is more dangerous for the Party (18).

The statement implied that even as a revolutionary Party, the Maoists were not free from petty-bourgeois deviations within their organisation. Finally, its document pointed out that the Party was now on its way to “concentrate on the development of guerrilla war in a planned way” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Review of Historic Initiation” 18). This was the essence of the second plan and according to the Party’s document it was “earnestly” implemented<sup>18</sup> only from “October” 1996 (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “One Year of People’s War” 12). Under this plan the Party intended to “mobilise people for creating guerrilla zones<sup>19</sup>” (CPN (Maoist), “Janayuddhako ... Tesro ... Prastao [1997/98]” 51), “capture arms by attacking police posts” and “concentrate Party activities in the Western, Central and Eastern Zones to create guerrilla zones” (CPN (Maoist), “Janayuddhako ... Tesro ... Prastao [1997/98]” 52)

In the midst of these developments, from 26 August 1996, the Government began thinking in a different line: Home Minister, Khum Bahadur Khadka informed the Parliament of the day that efforts were on to establish contacts with the Maoists through Padma Ratna Tuladhar (a Communist), Jaya Prakash Anand and Rishikesh Shaha, a Human Right activist, to find solution to the problem through dialogue (Rising Nepal, “Govt Ready for Dialogue” 1996 Aug. 27). In such an “exercise” the Maoists perceived “conspiracy” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “One Year of People’s War” 12). When Government changed, the Lokendra Bahadur Chand

<sup>18</sup> See, Sharma 51 The writer, after consulting the Nepali version says that it began in June. This maybe true since the English version says that it started implementing the plan in earnest only in October. However, he again commits the mistake of dating the beginning of the Third Plan in June 1997 whereas the Maoist official version dates the beginning in mid-August. See below. Hence, it is better not to follow his dates.

<sup>19</sup> Guerrilla Zones were areas where the guerrilla forces operated and where there was no scope for the exercise of People’s power. Places where such exercise of power was possible was called Guerrilla Base Areas.

Ministry, where the UML was one of its partners, formed a Commission in 27 April 1997—the Dhimi Commission to suggest ways to solve the Maoist problem. On 15 August, the Commission submitted its report (Rising Nepal, “Dhimi Panel” 1997 Aug. 15). According to Krishna Hachhethu, its suggestions, which he presents in a tabular form, were a mixture of non-coercive and coercive measures. The non-coercive measures suggested the path of “dialogue ... as the first initiative”, formation of “an all-Party negotiation team” to “prolong negotiations”, building of “national consensus”, launching of “political campaign” to brand “Maoists as terrorist”, bringing “ethnic groups into the mainstream” and of speeding development activities in “Maoist affected areas” while implementing “economic reforms” and increasing employment opportunities. The suggested coercive measures were, to “capture Maoist arsenals [and] to disarm them”, “arrest leaders and workers”, bring more areas “under military jurisdiction” while specially targeting “jungles occupied by Maoists” (Hachhethu 64). However, as seen in Chapter IV none of the Communist factions were in support of the coercive measures.<sup>20</sup> All of them favoured dialogue as the right

<sup>20</sup> See, Hachhethu 67 To explain why the Communist factions were pleading for peaceful means to resolve the issue, the author says, that in Nepal’s context to be left means one should advocate radical and revolutionary change. Such revolutionary change means to speak in favour of food, clothing and shelter, to be anti-India and to ask for absolute economic equality even at the cost of political liberty. Thus, a person could be a voter for the UML at election time as well as a worker for the CPN (Maoist) in the insurgency period. This explains why the UML and other communist parties are constantly pleading for the Maoist conflict to be resolved through non-violent means. Such explanation implies that in his perception cadres of all Communist factions were the same in posing themselves as revolutionaries and since they were supporting the Maoists in revolutionary phase their parent parties wished to protect them by advocating peaceful resolution of the problem. However, this explanation is deficient because it does not take into account two facts. First, the Maoists position, which till then was against the state structure. And second the failure of the Government in carrying out operations with precision. The former must have been construed by the factions as an end to the multi-party system and in that case it implied the end of their existence. They were, perhaps, seeking in the peaceful resolution the continuation of the system and thus their continued existence (this fact is revealed in M.K Nepal’s statement during Govt-Maoist talk. See, p. 195). The failure of the Government in carrying out operations with precision was another reason. The cry for peaceful resolution of the problem gave them the shield to hide their

course for the solution to the problem. Besides, this approach remained the avowed course of the Government throughout the period of Maoist insurgency possibly owing to the pressures from Human Rights groups and political parties. And for generating such pressure, if the claims of the Maoists is taken at face value, then the credit goes to their tactics, which had, after the declaration of the second plan, invited “Human Rights groups ... in the affected areas”, used “women, students and other groups” (CPN (Maoist), “Janayuddhako ... Purak Prastao [1996/97]” 32) and roped in “different political parties, organisations and individuals to pressurise the Government in eschewing the path of state terrorism” (CPN (Maoist), “Janayuddhako ... Purak Prastao [1996/97]” 33). In this stage, they were, according to their document, implementing the tactics of political attack against the Government when the Government was trying to suppress them militarily (See, footnote 17). This tactics of theirs became more pronounced when its new front organisation—the earlier being the UPFN under Baburam—the *Samyukta Rastriya Janandolan Samyojak Samiti* (United National People’s Coordination Committee), became active in the Nine Left parties’ movement from April 1998 (See, p.490). However, this front organisation had another intention. It was created in tune with the decisions of the Party which complemented its second plan. In the complementary document of the Party there were three more decisions to be implemented in the second plan period. These were: 1) “to work intensely for the mobilisation of poor peasants, workers, women and *janajatis*” 2) To “create a united front” and 3) “to create an army” (CPN (Maoist), “Janayuddhako ... Purak Prastao [1996/97]” 41, 42 and 44). Thus, the creation of the United National People’s Coordination Committee was a move towards the formation of a United Front at the Centre. Explaining why it was necessary, the Party document said:

There is a close relation between the development of protracted People’s War and the United Front. In our context, the function of the United Front should proceed along our tactics of creating local

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actual intent.

Government until the capture of central power ... it has different functions at different tactical stages ... At present stage of developing guerrilla zones the Front has to function as an embryo of New Democratic Government and as an instrument to mobilise masses against imperialism and feudalism (CPN (Maoist), “Janayuddhako ... Purak Prastao [1996/97]” 42–3)

If it was its broad function its specific functions were, “to reflect the Party policy of autonomy for the nationalities”<sup>21</sup> and “to carry out propaganda against the state” (CPN (Maoist), “Janayuddhako ... Purak Prastao [1996/97]” 43). And according to one of their leader’s note, written after the complementary decision, the United Front was formed “to isolate the principal enemy and unite the largest possible section of the people in every open and secret, military and non-military ... activities of the Party” (Biswas 45). The leader’s statement explained why the Coordination Committee/Front had to reflect the policy of autonomy for the nationalities (since the nationalities formed the bulk of the society) besides explaining its sudden appearance in the political scene of the kingdom. At that moment, there was, besides the different Communist factions, the NCP (ML) with its 46 MPs, which perhaps, besides the *Janajatis*, qualified as the representative of a large section of the people for the Maoists. Moreover, during that period the Government was under Girija Prasad Koirala under whom the revolt is said to have claimed 596 lives, the highest until 2000 (Maharjan 171). Hence, the situation was right not only for getting support from parties like NCP (ML), but also for taking steps towards the creation of a Front to carry on protest activities against the Government. Hence, the Maoist created the Coordination Committee to bring together the different Communist factions, but its plan to create a United Front, at the Centre, as an embryo of future Government did not materialise. The Coordination Committee simply vanished when the NCP (ML) joined the Girija Government in August 1998 (See p. 491). However, when its boycott

<sup>21</sup> See, CPN (Maoist), “Janayuddhako ... Tesro ... Prastao [1997/98]” 96 During this period the Party was opening United Fronts even at the local level where one of the major intention was to publicise that without the coming of the Maoist to power autonomous structures for the nationalities would not be possible.

policy affected the local elections of May/June 1997 (See, Ch. II, footnote 114) its document, besides other, perceived in the phenomenon a crisis in the State structure; an opportunity to implement its tactics and its popularity among the people for it said:

According to the necessity of *Janyuddha*, the Party policy of boycott in the local elections has achieved unprecedented success. The success has brought into open the crisis in the reactionary ruling class and has intensified the contradictions among them creating many opportunities. First, it has opened up the opportunity for creating local People's Government. Second, it has reflected the popularity gained by the People's War among the people within a brief period of one and a half year challenging the propaganda against the War unleashed by the reactionaries. Third, the UML, in its bid to prove itself as a pro-people Party and to by-pass the crisis of the reactionary State, has to a large extent exposed the suppressive stance of the reactionary group against the People's War ... Fourth, this boycott has strengthened our Party organisation. Fifth, the boycott movement has more widely established the great People's War in the national and international level (CPN (Maoist), "Janayuddhako ... Tesro ... Prastao [1997/98]" 60)

By, "mid-August 1997" the Party launched its Third Plan. The plan was still a sub-plan of "Strategic Defence" (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Develop Guerrilla Warfare" 1), where the political component of the tactics was the main and the military, the auxiliary. Hence, the kingdom had not as yet witnessed the full force of their violence. Its third plan, then set out two major objectives: political and military. Its political objectives had five tactical components among them the important ones were: "The establishment of United Front at the local level"<sup>22</sup>, "The political exposition of the UML faction ..." and "The organisation of political movements, based on the peasant class, both at the local and central level while advocating issues of day to day problems". Similarly, its military objective was centred around "creating

<sup>22</sup> See, Prachanda 13 At the local level these Fronts were composed of oppressed classes (workers, peasants and women), nationalities, oppressed people (*dalits*) and the people of oppressed regions (people of Far-West and the Terai). According to the leader, this Front was necessary to smash a state which was based on unity imposed by the Hindu state power which in turn was based on class, national and regional inequality and oppression. He said the Front would ultimately build a new unity based on democratic values. The revolution was to give maximum importance to the question of national and regional oppression as an integral part of class struggle.

guerrilla zones in specific Western, Central and Eastern zones”, “Encouraging entire hill areas for armed struggle”, “Capturing of weapons to enhance the fighting capability of the Party” and “Readying itself to fight against the regular Army of the State” (CPN (Maoist), “Janayuddhako ... Tesro ... Prastao [1997/98]” 70). A press communiqué issued on 13 February 1998 by the Central Military Commission of the Party pointed out that the process of creating People’s Army was proceeding along three directions, namely “arming of the general masses, preparing a broad and extensive network of the people’s militia and principally, building a regular people’s army” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Press Communique ... C. P. N (Maoist)” 3). And the reason for creating such a violent society was expressed in high-sounding Marxist/Maoist cant as follows:

In a class-divided society, everything is an illusion except state power. The principal organ of the class-related state is the army. The people without an army have nothing of their own. The proletarian revolutionaries fight for the state power ... so that an environment may be created for weathering away of the class, state, army and all forms of wars from the society (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Press Communique ... C. P. N (Maoist)” 3).

Their violence intensified and the State reacted with another operation, code named Kilo Sera Two from May 1998. If Communist factions like NCP (Unity Centre) saw in it the role of India (See, Chapter II p.181 ), the Maoist found in it the opportunity to intensify its violence for it said, “As the reactionary state, as expected, unleashed a genocidal suppression campaign under the garb of the so-called operation kilo-sera-two ... the glorious Party of the proletariat ... gave a tit-for-tat response” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Editorial ... Base Areas” 1). Then the Fourth Extended Central Committee of the Party held in August 1998 decided to implement its tactics of creating Base Areas (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Editorial ... Base Areas” 1). It was its fourth plan which was implemented only in October 17, 1998 (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Third Turbulent Year ... Review” 23). According to its document, it was necessary for waging “protracted People’s War of surrounding the city by the countryside” and for exercising “people’s political power”

(Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Document ... Fourth Expanded Meeting” 8, 9). For establishing such bases in Western region, the Party claimed that “situation [had] developed because of strong mass base, strong Party, favourable terrain ... elimination of social class enemies ... and to certain extent defeat of local military strength of the reactionary states” (9). However, it contended that for maintaining them the “guerrilla activities must be pursued uninterrupted throughout the country” complemented with “various forms of mass movements” (10). The kingdom was in for more violence. Then the Party held the full meeting of the Central Committee in July 1999. What transpired in the meeting is not clear, but it appears that it decided to launch its fifth plan in the July meeting, because according to Sudheer Sharma the Party launched its fifth plan “in August 1999” (52). The Fifth Plan according to the Party document, which is undated, was also for consolidating the Base Areas (CPN (Maoist), “Aitihashik ... Pachau Yojana” 126) and in the Sixth Plan the Party was on its way to creating more base areas, for its organ states, “During the Fifth & the Sixth Plans, there have been qualitative leaps in both military and administrative formation in the prospective base areas” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Reports ... Political Power” 40). According to Sudheer Sharma, the Sixth Plan lasted until February 2001 (52).

“In VS 2057 Magh 26–Fagun 1 [8–12 February 2001]” (CPN (Maoist), “Mahan Agragami Chalang ... Awasykta” 204), the Party held its Second National Conference to advocate a new “set of ideas”, which its document claimed to have developed “in the form of centralised expression of collective leadership, as ‘Prachanda Path’” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “The Great Leap Forward ... History” 61). It was its new ideology prescribed for capturing State power in Nepal. To come to such ideological position the Party, claims, as was claimed by the RIM in the letter sent to NCP (Masal) while highlighting the contributions of Mao, that it has synthesised its “thoughts on the background of the experience of 5 stormy years of great People’s War” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “The Great Leap Forward ... History” 43). And the areas where it claims to have brought changes as a result of

such synthesis is itemised as 1. On Party building 2. On the formation of Army and military line 3. On the New Democratic State and development of the United Front, and 4. On Party mass-line. On Party building process, following the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, it claims that it gave up Stalin's concept that a Party is a "monolithic unity" and adopted, in line with Mao's prescription, the "dialectical method of developing the Party", meaning, it encouraged "unity of opposites and two-line struggle" (52). It says, without explaining, that its "Unity Congress set up a scientific method to contest two-line struggle on actual and genuine ideological and political ground instead of hypocritic tradition of addressing the individual and groupist dispute" (52–3). This, it says led to the birth of a united Party, CPN (Maoist) without the possibility of fragmentation in future [! the Party fragmented in June 2012, see, Postscript, footnote 3). The other change which it brought in the process of struggle was in the "structure and working style of the Party" (53) to recruit "New and young Party members from poor peasants, women, depressed communities, nations and indigenous nationality communities, and backward regions" (53). This was done to reduce old member, as prescribed by Lenin, and to infuse the Party with young blood as prescribed by Mao. Finally, it says, the Fourth Extended Meeting of the Central Committee added three more changes. These changes were: "to conduct rectification campaign, to centralise ... leadership at various levels, and nomination of youth to the Central Committee" (53). This was done to coordinate "the old, adult and young revolutionaries" and to ensure "continuous revolution under the leadership of the Proletariat" (53), but without recruiting activists from proletariat class. And the effect of all these it says, led to the creation of "a strong headquarter led by Com. Prachanda developed as a core of the Party unity", where "On the basis of struggle against and victory over right, 'left' and centrist trends, Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology was synthesised" (53). After that, the Party claims that it has developed a military line of People's War for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It says, that the military line of general insurrection, the Russian model, has certain characteristics, which the people of the third world, while leading their struggle, as per the Chinese model of protracted

war, should emulate. This meant the mixing of a “continuous intervention by the political Party of the proletariat at the centre of reactionary state”, “training the masses including the workers with continuous strikes and street struggles on the basis of revolutionary demands” etcetera with the “stages of the protracted People’s War” (56). On the New Democratic State and united Front it says, “in less than one year of People’s War, the Party started to proceed by adopting the proposal as presented by Com. Prachanda that the New Democratic state in Nepal shall take the form of a class ethnic and, regional United Front” (57). Finally, on the issue of Party mass-line it points out that its line emphasises “general mass insurgency” with a political purpose of seizing “state power by means of PW [People’s War]”. This it calls as “revolutionary massline” which had originated in “the revolutionary line led by Comrade Prachanda” and was “modified ... by the Unity Congress” (58). The synthesis of these thinking it says, “represents a great leap forward” in the “universal principles of MLM” (62). A cursory glance through these claims points out to the concentration of everything in one person, that is, Prachanda. Besides, it shows that the Party was not at all interested in the entry of proletariat into its organisational structure despite its claim that its structure was changed to ensure the continuous leadership of the proletariat. Moreover, in these synthesis one finds that it was more of a Party which was inclined towards the development of a structure which preferred the entry of members chosen on the basis of ethnic, nationalities and regional considerations. By advocating such a position, the Party had therefore revised Mao’s New Democratic strategy. One wonders how such thinking was being claimed by the Party as a new synthesis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. It was rather eclecticism, and in their own words Bernsteinism of the highest order.

After the meeting their violence continued amid news about possible dialogue between them and the Government. However, when the dialogue took place in October–November 2001 they backed out after attending the third round of talks (For reasons see p.194). Then, as per the decision of its First National Convention held in September 2001, the Party declared the formation of United Revolutionary People’s

Council, Nepal under Baburam Bhattarai. It was formed “to institutionalize the New Democratic/People’s Democratic<sup>23</sup> Republic in the country” (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Common ... Policy ... of ... URPC” 56). It was a long document with seventy five programmes outlining the Party’s policies on all conceivable areas. Coming from the CPN (Maoist), it was the first document of its kind, which underlined the future governmental structure of the State. However, during the revolutionary period the Body itself, the URPC, was to function as a Council to “unite and mobilize all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist/anti-expansionist forces and the general masses” to initiate the tactics of “armed insurrection” with “People’s War” (56). And though the Council was a Front and an embryo of future Government structure its dependence on the ‘general masses’ seemed to reflect the future trend of the Party. Besides, its declaration of the classes, which the State was going to serve bordered on the position of the UML in the 90s, except in indicating that the State was going to consider the interest of the nationalities for it said:

The fundamental character of New Democratic or People’s Democratic republican State shall be the people’s democratic dictatorship with the participation of all the progressive classes including the national bourgeoisie and oppressed nations/nationalities based on worker-peasant alliance under the dictatorship of the proletariat (56)

To create such a State, it prescribed first the destruction of the then “reactionary state” followed by the formation of “an interim Government consisting of all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist/anti-expansionist forces”. Such a Government was expected to hold elections based on adult suffrage to elect “people’s representatives” to frame a “new constitution” (56). In such a State, it was not claiming one-Party dictatorship of the Communist Party, at least, for a long time, and its statements carried a veiled threat against those who were against its struggle for it said:

Contrary to the propaganda of the reactionaries that there is one-Party dictatorship of the Communist Party in the New Democracy/People’s Democracy, full freedom will be guaranteed for various patriotic,

<sup>23</sup> Note, how they equate two different strategy while talking about revisionism.

democratic and leftist parties on the basis of mutual co-operation and supervision with the Communist Party for a long time. However, the people ... who would play reactionary role during the people's revolution and act against the cause of the country ... shall be deprived of all political rights for a definite period (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), "Common ... Policy ... of ... URPC" 56-7)

The threat and the license it gave for the continuity of multi-Party system were perhaps meant for gaining support of the parties in its the then struggle, because after the so-called synthesis of its thought it was also trying to initiate general insurrection. As such, its economic policy was also not averse to private property and in some way seemed to support a mixed economy with germs of socialist economy for it said:

Instead of imposing socialist relations in the economy from the very beginning, socialist-oriented capitalist relations shall be developed. Therefore, a proper balance of private ownership, joint-ownership and collective ownership shall be maintained in the New Democratic/People's Democratic system ... Except through legal means, nobody's private property shall be confiscated (57)

Its agrarian policy advocated the policy of "land to the tillers" after seizing land "owned by feudal, bureaucratic capitalist and *Guthis* ", but in case of "rich and medium level peasants" it declared that it would implement "ceiling ...keeping in mind the ratio of availability of land and population" (60). Here also it qualified its revolutionary land reform policies to propitiate the nationalities for it said, "While implementing revolutionary land reform programme in the autonomous areas of oppressed nationalities and regions, care shall be taken to prevent historical incursions into them" (61). On industrial development it prescribed "planned attempt ... for rapid development ... by nationalizing the capital being misused in the hand of the comprador and bureaucratic bourgeoisie ... and by liberating national industries from the grip of imperialism ... particularly Indian monopoly capital" (62). Such indecisive and pro-nationality policies coming from a Party which believed in destroying the State through armed struggle was in itself confusing. Rest of its policies indicated its stand over a collection of issues which were current in the political field of the kingdom. As usual, it declared its antipathy towards "All the semi-colonial and neo-colonial treaties ... including the Treaty of 1950"; it promised a "secular state" (57); "a People's Liberation Army" under the control of the Government, governance free

from “red-tapism, corruption and extravagance” (59), eradication and re-settlement of the *Kamaiya* (60), equal rights to women on paternal properties, and end to all forms of exploitation against oppressed castes (65). Finally, it devoted a complete section of the document to outline its policies about the nationalities. For ending *Aryan-Khas* exploitation of the nationalities it promised them “the right to self determination ... within the framework of national autonomy program of New Democratic/People’s Democratic system”. It ensured “more than one autonomous areas” for nationalities “scattered in more than one area”. In areas with mixed nationalities it declared “local state power on proportional basis”. Besides, it promised them entry into the “People’s Army”, “freedom to promote their languages” and in the same vein promised “separate national autonomous regions for ... nationalities speaking different languages (e.g., Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi etc.)” (64–5). Thus, in essence, its policies, besides exploiting the current issues of the kingdom—other Communist factions also did this—were different on only one count: its heightened appeal to the nationalities. Thus, the petty bourgeois led movement was using ethnic dissatisfaction to mobilise them against a State to fulfil its objective of smashing the State. Besides, it also indicated how ideologies could be manipulated in applying them in a differing context. Moreover, coming to this document one understands that they were not very clear about their strategy: they were treating both New Democratic and People’s Democratic strategies as synonyms. As regards their views on the Parliamentary system the movement of the UPFN before its fragmentation in 1994 makes it clear that they were not in favour of continuing its existence, because they wanted to destroy it. However, the extent to which they disliked the Parliament, is reflected only in this document where they state,

Unlike the bourgeois parliament, which is merely a toothless debating club, the House of People’s Representatives<sup>24</sup> shall be the most

<sup>24</sup> See, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Common ... Policy ... of ... URPC” 58 The House of People’s Representatives was to be there at all levels with representatives elected by the people on the basis of adult franchise.

powerful organs equipped with legislative and executive rights. They shall make the people experience not only formal democracy but also genuine democracy since they shall have representation of various classes, nationalities, regions, and also of patriotic and democratic eminent personalities (Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), “Common ... Policy ... of ... URPC” 58)

Thus, ended their last document before Gyanendra destroyed the parliamentary system of Nepal.

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## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

Parliamentary versus Revolutionary Politics-Fragmentation versus Unity within Parliamentary Phase-Communist Parties and National Sentiments-Ideological Shift/Ideological Dependence-Social Basis of Communist Movement: Economic Backwardness, Caste, Ethnicity and Communist Mobilisation

Considering the objectives of this study, the work has dealt, at length, the various strategies and the ideological positions of the different Communist factions operating within the Communist movement of Nepal. In its long course, the movement evinced certain characteristic trends answering, though partially, the various questions raised in the beginning of this study. These answers, presented below under different section headings, form the conclusion drawn out of the study.

#### 1. Parliamentary Versus Revolutionary Politics

The study indicates that one basic debate which has haunted Communist parties and its leadership in Nepal revolves around issues of participation in elections, parliamentary system and ultimately parliamentary government. In the early years of communist mobilisation, during the decade of 1950s, the basic debate was whether the party should participate in the election held under the Constitution framed by the King or whether it should follow a revolutionary line, that is, agitate for elections for the creation of the Constituent Assembly. In this debate if Rayamajhi and his group supported participation of the party in the election under the Constitutions framed by the King (the Interim Constitution and the February 1959 Constitution) Pushpalal and Hikmat Singh supported the line which was for election for the creation of the Constituent Assembly. From 1960 onwards, when the kingdom entered the Panchayat phase (1960–1990), and when the communist movement began splitting the debate within the communist party rotated around the question whether Communists should participate in the elections held under the system. In this debate, those who supported participation in the elections under the Panchayat system or the establishment of parliamentary democracy were considered as supporter of a non-revolutionary line and

those opposing such participation and parliamentary democracy were the followers of revolutionary line. During this period, the Rayamajhi faction supported participation in the elections held for the creation of National Panchayat whereas Pushpalal Shrestha and Tulsilal Amatya were against such participation. and were in favour of ‘destroying’ the Panchayat system. The difference led to the expulsion of the Rayamajhi faction from the NCP in VS 2021 (1964/65) causing the birth of NCP (Rayamajhi). Thereafter, the NCP split in May 15, 1968. The split resulted in two factions, NCP (Pushpalal) and NCP (Amatya) where NCP (Pushpalal) faction chose revolutionary line condemning Tulsilal Amatya’s line of National Democracy for advocating the establishment of constitutional democracy. Similarly, in the 70s two Communist factions came into existence: NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) in 1971 and NCP (ML) in 1975. At the time of their formation both the factions chose the New Democratic strategy advocating revolutionary politics which repudiated parliamentary democracy and electoral politics. The same was true of the factions born of the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus)—NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)), NCP (Mashal) and NCP (Masal). However, after 1971 NCP (Pushpalal) began advocating the establishment of parliamentary democracy and maintained the line even after its transformation into NCP (Marxist) in 1987. Similarly, NCP (ML) progressively tilted towards parliamentary line from 1980 and ultimately began advocating the establishment of multi-party democracy from 1989.

In the parliamentary phase (1990–2002), many of these factions united creating NCP (United), NCP (UML) and NCP (Unity Centre) in 1991. NCP (United) was born of the combination of NCP (Manandhar), NCP (Verma) and NCP (Amatya). NCP (UML) was the combination of NCP (Marxist) and NCP (ML) and NCP (Unity Centre) was a combination of NCP (Mashal), NCP (Fourth Congress) under Nirmal Lama, the UNPM under Baburam Bhattarai [which had evolved out of a minor faction of NCP (Masal)] and the Proletarian Labour Organisation. During this period all the Communist parties—barring NCP (Masal) which took part only after the second General Election—chose to take part in the elections. In this phase there were

three splits. The NCP (UML) split in 1992 and 1998 and the NCP (Unity Centre) in 1994. Since, the split in the NCP (UML) was not for formation of a new party, but for the re-formation of NCP (Marxist) and NCP (ML), both of whom had already chosen electoral politics/Parliamentary system, the issue of participation or non-participation in the electoral politics/Parliamentary system did not figure in the split. However, the split in the NCP (Unity Centre) in May 1994 led to the formation of a new party, CPN (Maoist). Hence, the CPN (Maoist) at the time of its formation repudiated electoral politics and parliamentary government for the sake of revolutionary New Democratic strategy. However, ultimately it also accepted the idea of constitutional government and multi-party democratic structure in 2006. Thus, on the whole the trend of the movement showed that the communist factions at the time of their formation always chose to follow a revolutionary line repudiating participation in elections, but at some point accepted and participated in electoral politics and Parliamentary system. Such a behaviour on their part led this study to raise a question: why did the different Communist factions join the electoral process despite repudiating such participation at the initial stage? Considered in the light of the study, it has been found that from the very beginning the trend of the Communist movement was liberal in its content. It was so in the 50s and even when Pushpalal adopted the strategy of New Democracy in 1968 he favoured the struggle for parliamentary democracy emphasising upon such ideals as freedom of individuals, equality etcetera as a stepping stone towards New Democratic governmental structure. Similarly, major factions like NCP (ML), NCP (Marxist) in the eighties had begun advocating individual liberty, freedom of speech, freedom of occupation etcetera. And in the Parliamentary phase, as indicated by the study, their choices were essentially for liberal values. And if the article of Baburam Bhattarai after Gyanendra's coup is taken as a pointer of the intents of the CPN (Maoist) then it is clear that even the Maoists were not averse to liberal ideals. Besides, if one considers the social basis of the communist leaders of Nepal then it is clear that they all represent the educated middle class of the society without any proletarian background save in the case of Man Mohan Adhikari. And a large majority

of them hail from a brahmanical background which also share some of the values of educated middle class. These factors perhaps explain their liberal outlook as well as their ultimate participation in the electoral process after repudiating such participation at the initial phase. Their initial repudiation of the Parliamentary system seems to suggest that they were doing so simply to project themselves as revolutionaries to gain support for their cause.

## 2. Fragmentation Versus Unity within Parliamentary Phase

Fragmentation in the party/movement or party splits or existence of factions in the movement is one of the significant issues which attract scholars working on Communist movements in different parts of the world, though fragmentation or splits are not historically/empirically alien to Communist movements. The Marxist in Russia before 1917 and also after and the Communist movement in China also suffered due to fragmentation and factionalism, and the problem of fragmentation of Indian Communist movement has been well attended by Marcus Franda. Actually the image of a Communist movement or party is that of a highly centralised, well disciplined monolith and thereby any contradiction within is taken or viewed as an aberration. In case of Nepal; however, the problem of fragmentation is more acute in the sense that there were as many as nine Communist parties in 1991 when parliamentary system was first introduced. The electoral compulsions of parliamentary system brought the parties together but the unity move was soon succeeded by further fragmentation in 1992, 1994 and 1998. Besides, there were numerous splits in the Communist movement of Nepal from the 60s producing a number of factions. The process of fragmentation in the movement set in from the Panchayat period which began from 1960. The first split in Nepal Communist Party (NCP) occurred in VS 2021 (1964/65) when the party expelled Rayamajhi for his pro-King/pro-Panchayat stand. This led to the birth of NCP (Rayamajhi). However, the NCP (Rayamajhi) faction also fragmented twice. The first split occurred in VS 2038 (1981/82) leading to the birth of NCP (Manandhar) and the second, in VS 2040 (September 1982). The latter split gave birth to NCP (Verma) faction. Meanwhile, NCP , after its Third Congress in April

1962, was operating under the General-Secretaryship of Tulsilal Amatya under whom the party had chosen the strategy of National Democracy. The choice of the strategy led to a bitter struggle between Tulsilal Amatya and Pushpalal. The struggle weakened the party centre and many regional committees broke their ties with the party. Besides, the struggle between the two leaders ultimately led to the fragmentation of the party in May 15, 1968. This split led to rise of NCP (Pushpalal) and NCP (Amatya) in which the former advocated New Democratic strategy and the latter, the strategy of National Democracy. After its formation, NCP (Pushpalal) functioned as a single party for sometime only to witness two splits. One in 1974 and the other in 1975. The latter split led to the birth of an enduring party the NCP (NWPP). Running parallel to these events, by the end of the 60s when jailed Communist leaders became free they decided to form a party with a strong centre and this led to the rise of NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) in 1971. In the same period, copying Naxalite movement and combining numerous committees, one of the committees of the NCP, the Purva Kosi Prantiya Committee, functioning in the eastern part of the kingdom evolved into NCP (ML) in January 1979. Both these parties subscribed to the New Democratic strategy. However, the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) suffered from multiple splits during its march through time. The first split occurred in 1974 when leaders like Man Mohan Adhikari went out of the party. His faction eventually emerged as NCP (Man Mohan) in 1979. After, the exit of Man Mohan group from the party, the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) functioning under Mohan Vikram Singh/Gharti was named as NCP (Chautho Mahadhiwayshun (Fourth Congress)) only to suffer from more splits. First split occurred in January, 1984 as a result there came into existence two factions: NCP (Fourth Congress) under Nirmal Lama and NCP (Mashal) under Mohan Vikram Singh/Gharti. The latter faction split again in 1985 leading to the rise of NCP (Mashal) under Mohan Bikram Baidhya and NCP (Masal) under Mohan Vikram Singh/Gharti. Besides, in existence there were many other minor factions as well. In this phase, the NCP (Pushpalal) combined with NCP (Man Mohan) in March 1987 to create NCP (Marxist). With the coming of the 90s, as noted earlier, many of these

factions united in 1991 to form NCP (UML), NCP (United) and (Unity Centre) in 1991. However, even in this phase there were splits. NCP (UML) split in February 1992 to re-form NCP (Marxist), and in April 1998 to re-form NCP (ML). The NCP (Unity Centre) also fragmented in 1994 leading to the rise of NCP (Maoist). Such fragmentation in the movement was the product of multiple factors. It was due to the lack of class analysis, differences in the perceptions of the leadership on the role of the King, the differences in the choice of strategy and tactics, differences on the identification of the enemy, struggle for leadership and, at times, owing to the idea of nationalism and perceptions about India. The following paragraphs seek to present the factors identified above as the causes behind the fragmentation of the Communist movement in Nepal.

The study reveals that throughout the movement the various Communist factions failed in carrying out a thorough class analysis of the Nepalese society. In the name of class analysis they always presented the social analysis of the society. As a result, they failed to identify the Party which represented the bourgeoisie or national bourgeoisie of Nepal. They sometimes identified Nepali Congress as the representative of the bourgeoisie with dual character and sometimes as the representative of national bourgeoisie of Nepal. As a bourgeois force with dual character, they viewed Nepali Congress aligned both with the interests of the feudal forces of Nepal and the bourgeoisie of India. Hence, they viewed them as a force, which carried on bourgeois revolt to the extent that the revolt served the interest of India and ended the revolt in a compromise with the feudal force to serve the interest of Nepalese King. However, some considered them as the national bourgeoisie of Nepal despite the fact that the kingdom was not industrialised. This difference in opinion about the class character of Nepali Congress was one of the important factors contributing to the birth of NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) in the seventies. The Party did not consider Nepali Congress as the representative of national bourgeoisie hence it criticised NCP (Pushpalal) faction for taking up such a position and for considering Nepali Congress as an ally of the New Democratic strategy. This difference was

further carried over by all other factions emerging out of the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) lessening the chances of unity between them and the Pushpalal faction.

Similarly, there were differences among the Party leaders regarding the role of the King in the politico-economic context of Nepal. Though leaders like Rayamajhi considered him as a feudal force, yet he believed that the institution of monarchy was not to be attacked since people had faith upon the institution as a uniting force of the kingdom. On the other hand, the whole lot of Communist leaders considered the King as a force aligned to Indian bourgeoisie and as a force working in their interest to serve his own interest rather than the interest of the masses. This difference in the perception about the role of the King in Nepal had its toll. In the beginning of the 60s, Nepal Communist Party expelled Rayamajhi for his pro-King/pro-Panchayat stance leading to the birth of NCP (Rayamajhi) faction. The same was the cause behind the fragmentation of Rayamajhi faction leading to the birth of NCP (Verma) in 1987.

The other factor behind the fragmentation of the Communist movement of Nepal was the difference in the choice of the strategy and the tactics. Fragmentation in the movement began surfacing in Nepal Communist movement after Tulsilal Amatya began advocating the strategy of National Democracy in 1962. In 1967, NCP (Pushpalal) faction emerged when it opted for New Democratic strategy condemning National Democratic strategy as revisionist and as a strategy, which believed in peaceful transition towards socialism. Similarly, the 1992 split in NCP (UML), occurred when a group of earlier NCP (Marxist) leadership, besides being disenchanted by the UML's support for the market economy, rebelled against its new strategy—the strategy of *Janatako Bahudaliya Janabad*. Besides, splits within parties following the same strategy was caused by the differences among the leaders on the issue of tactics. The NCP (Rohit) faction had two tactical differences with NCP (Pushpalal). First it favoured the use of election and parliamentary processes available within the Panchayat system for revolutionary purposes that is for educating the masses. Second, it pointed out that a Communist party should not, in the name of main contradiction, focus on the destruction of only one enemy that is the Panchayat

system. By saying so it was pointing out that in the then situation even the Soviet Union, which had degenerated into a Socialist imperialist after invading Czechoslovakia in 1968 should be the object of struggle of NCP (Pushpalal). When the faction found NCP (Pushpalal) not in agreement with its tactical position then it dissociated from the party. Similarly, though both NCP (Pushpalal) and NCP (ML) subscribed to the same strategy of New Democracy yet their tactics differed. The tactics of NCP (Pushpalal) in the beginning of the 70s was to give directions to all spontaneous movements emerging in the nation to direct them to form a united front of all classes opposed to the Panchayat system and to ready them for the destruction of the system. But, the tactics of the NCP (ML) from its very inception was to implement armed struggle as the only means of leading the revolution. Similarly, the split in Kendriya Nucleus after its transformation into NCP (Fourth Congress) was also due to tactical differences, which existed between Mohan Bikram Singh/Gharti led group and Nirmal Lama led group over the question of uniting with Pushpalal faction and Man Mohan faction in the electoral process of the Panchayat period. If Gharti group rejected such alliances Lama group considered such alliances as revolutionary practices. Similarly, in the 1990s the split in the NCP (Unity Centre) in 1994 was caused by tactical differences that the leadership held on the question of initiating the armed peasant revolt. Those who felt that the opportune moment for such revolt had come in Nepal—possibly under the influence of the RIM—turned into the CPN (Maoist) in 1994.

The next factor which perpetuated differences and caused fragmentation in the movement was the differences which the parties had on the identification of the enemy. To the NCP (ML) and the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) the main enemies were Indian expansionist, American imperialist, Soviet-Socialist imperialist, feudal forces and comprador bourgeoisie that is the Nepali Congress, but for NCP (Pushpalal) the main enemy was the feudal force and contrary to the stand of NCP (ML) and NCP (Kendriya Nucleus) it considered Nepali Congress as its ally and maintained silence even in categorising Soviet Union as Soviet-Socialist imperialist. The differences,

therefore, encouraged the existence of factions in the movement besides promoting further fragmentation. Condemning NCP (Pushpalal)'s failure in identifying Soviet Union as a Soviet-Socialist imperialist, as already noted, Narayanman Bijukche went out of NCP (Pushpalal) to form his faction in 1975. Further, fragmentation in the Communist parties were also caused by leadership struggle. Though, the documents of the NCP (Fourth Congress) under Nirmal Lama and of the NCP (Mashal) under Mohan Bikram Singh/Gharti give the impression that the split was caused by differences in tactics, yet closer reading of the documents and comparison of the split with the later split in NCP (Mashal) which created NCP (Masal) under Mohan Bikram Singh/Gharti and NCP (Mashal) under Mohan Bikram Baidhya reveals that both the splits were engineered by the Mohan Bikram Baidhya group to capture the party leadership. Finally, the Communist idea of nationalism that is their perception about India was the primary cause behind the split of the NCP (UML) in April 1998 which led to the re-formation of the NCP (ML). In this split, 46 NCP (UML) legislators went out of the party to re-form the NCP (ML) criticising NCP (UML)'s soft stand towards American imperialism and, in particular, Indian expansionism which, it argued, was increasingly penetrating Nepal to exploit her natural resources while interfering in her internal affairs. To point Indian interference the faction, at that point of time, was objecting against Indian claim over Kalapani, an area located in Western Nepal, where India had stationed her soldiers. But, the movement was not always assailed with fragmentation. There were unity moves as well. Of these unity moves, the significant ones, which occurred before 1990 were those which created the NCP (Kendriya Nucleus), the NCP (ML), and the NCP (Marxist). In creating the Kendriya Nucleus the objective was to establish a Party with a centralised structure and to struggle against the strategies of both NCP (Pushpalal) and NCP (Rayamajhi). The NCP (ML) was born out of the union of several factions believing in the tactics of armed peasant revolt. But, the unity move between NCP (Pushpalal) faction and a minor faction, NCP (Man Mohan Adhikari) faction was not due to any similarities. This unity which led to the birth of NCP (Marxist) was meant for serving the personal

interest of the leadership, in this case the interest of Man Mohan Adhikari and in enhancing the prestige of the Party—the NCP (Pushpalal) after the death of Pushpalal. Under Man Mohan Adhikari, a venerated Communist leader with a proletariat background, the NCP (Pushpalal) faction felt that its prestige will be enhanced.

In the Parliamentary phase, the trend was just the opposite. Propelled by one single desire of Communist factions to share power, the phase began with a definite trend towards unity leading to the birth of Communist factions like NCP (UML), NCP (Unity Centre), and NCP (United). And throughout the period, minor Communist factions as well as NCP (United) were advocating the need for unity among the Communist factions. However, this is not to say that there were no fragmentation in the movement. As already noted, the NCP (UML)'s fragmentation in 1992 and in 1998 were caused by issues related with strategy and nationalism respectively. The 1992 split led to the re-formation of NCP (Marxist), and the 1998 split, the re-formation of NCP (ML). However, the latter group ultimately joined the NCP (UML). Similarly, as already noted, in 1994, there was split in NCP (Unity Centre) because of tactical reasons. However, the split exhibited two notable characteristics. First, it was a split between those controlling the party organisation, the majority group under Prachanda and majority of those elected in the election because seven out of the nine elected representatives had sided with the minority in the party organisation. Second, in this split, the Maoist unlike other Communist factions tried to project themselves as a faction without its link with the pre-1994 Communist movement of Nepal. This was subtly reflected in their choice of identifying themselves as CPN (Maoist) and not as NCP (Maoist). However, such nature of split cannot be generalised since the trend was not visible in other splits. Barring these peculiarities, the Parliamentary phase, on the whole proved favourable for the unity of Communist factions with fewer incidents of fragmentation in the movement.

### 3. Communist Parties and National Sentiments

The nationalistic outlook of entire Communist factions of Nepal is conditioned by their views about Indian state/ government as a partner of imperialist

forces. Drawing upon the provisions of the existing treaty relations between the two nations, Communists of Nepal see India as an exploiter of Nepal's natural resources and, therefore, as an imperialist. In such construction, India is seen as a perpetuator of the feudal regime or as the supporter of a political Party which helps her continue the exploitation of Nepal. In the process, India is viewed as a nation which seeks to extend her control over Nepal on the pretext of supporting her security concerns by defining the treaty based relation as an special relation. This makes India an expansionist. Such perceptions of Nepalese Communists are bolstered when there are border related problems and when India enters into treaty relations to develop the vast potential of Nepal's hydro-resources. In Communist perception, the trade and transit relation between the two countries are also influenced by Indian economic and political interests. Indian practice of limiting entry of Nepalese goods into India by imposing the condition of stipulated Nepalese content of labour and raw materials in the Nepalese product is also viewed in the same vein. In their eyes, this gamut of relation prevents Nepal from achieving democracy and in developing an independent economy. The logic is extended forward to argue that in Nepal's inability to create an independent economy lies its inability to solve the problem of poverty and of social inequality. So, all the documents of factions practising both Parliamentary and non-Parliamentary politics try to project the movement as a national struggle—a struggle against a more powerful neighbour, the expansionist, imperialist India. Besides, this outlook also projects the movement as a struggle against neo-colonialism, where India is the centre and Nepal a peripheral economy. Such nationalistic outlook or nationalism as the Communist factions call it, describes the neo-colonial configuration as an explanation about all the problems facing the nation and exhorts Nepalese to struggle against it. Considering the many occasions (for example, the Tanakpur issue, the issue of Indian policemen in Baneshwor etcetera) where their documents make use of such outlook, it is evident that the Communist factions of Nepal use nationalism as a weapon to mobilise the masses. In this context, it would be opportune here to focus on the re-formation of NCP (ML) in April 1998. The 46 UML legislators who

went out of NCP (UML) then espoused the cause of nationalism. And since the third General election was only a year away, that is in May 1999, they were using nationalism to justify the split to mobilise their supporters for the election. But, since the NCP (UML) was also using the nationalism card the NCP (ML) could not fare well. However, it did gross 6.38% of the votes damaging the score of the UML substantially. Had the NCP (ML)'s share of votes gone to the NCP (UML) then the latter could have won a comfortable majority in the Parliament. Empirical findings (as used by Whelpton in explaining the 1991 election) which have not probed how Communist faction use nationalism to explain Nepal's problem can comfortably disregard its role in the movement, but the present study reveals that nationalism, because of its power to explain the woes of Nepal, has turned into a core value of the Communist movement of Nepal. It has, therefore, been utilised throughout, whether in the past or in the Parliamentary phase, to mobilise forces. Hence, Communists' use of nationalism in Nepal is not without reason. In contrast to such use of nationalism class does not seem to be the basis of mobilisation because while identifying the classes whom the Communist parties sought to serve, the documents of factions like the NCP (UML) and NCP (United) often use terms like "people of all classes" which when analysed means the general masses. Besides, though the documents of the non-Parliamentary factions, like those of NCP (NWPP) and NCP (Maoist), do mention the four classes (the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, the numerically insignificant proletariat and the national bourgeoisie), yet one finds in them a definite tilt towards wooing the *janajatis* (the nationalities) implying the importance of ethnic category in the mobilisation of their forces.

#### 4. Ideological Shifts/Ideological Dependence

The study reveals that the Communist parties had to resort to shifts in their ideological positions to adjust themselves to the changed conditions of electoral politics. However, if one were to find the effects of such shifts then in the context of Nepal Communist movement one has to take the activities of NCP (UML) and NCP (United) in the Parliamentary phase, because shifts in ideology was particularly

traceable in the positions of these two parties. In case of the UML, the ideological shift led to the dilution of its strategy. From New Democratic strategy it shifted to *Janatako Bahudaliya Janabad*, which was aimed at gaining maximum support from the people to win elections and to come to power. The consequences of this change in the UML were many. First, the change in its strategy changed its Ideological position: from a Party which was wedded to the interest of four classes it turned into a Party seeking solutions to the problem of the masses and then it came to support a market driven economy. As a result of such change, it passed out as any other non-Communist parties, but with a Communist tag. This placed it in a queer situation: it had to maintain its image of being a Communist Party while following tactics unlike that of a Communist Party. As a progressive Communist Party, it opposed what it claimed as Koirala's autocratic rule when he dealt with the participants of Employees Organisation severely, but unlike a Communist Party it sought his resignation without asking for the resignation of the Government. The same was true of NCP (United), whose strategy was tailored along the lines of the UML. Second, the changes, it seems—considering the characterisation of the UML by other Communist factions—brought changes in the class composition of the Party. It welcomed even earlier Panchayat activists, the revivalist, into its fold. Third, it influenced its method of protests. Since, winning elections and coming to power was its primary goal its method of protests were also geared towards that end. In its bid to appeal the widest sections of the people, its protest movements lost focus in furthering the interest of the classes whom it claimed to represent. Lastly, when it sought to power its protest movements it sought the support of other Communist factions who were opposed to the system. This helped radical Communist forces to keep their presence felt under the system by exploiting the protest movements led by the UML.

As for the electoral performance of the Party itself, the change in its ideological position appears to have worked in favour of the UML, because throughout the Parliamentary phase it could reasonably maintain its winning trend in the elections. But, in the case of NCP (United) the change was not favourable. With

the passage of time, its performance in the elections reflected that it had lost its support base, but there exist no documentary evidences to understand why it happened. Perhaps, its claim that the loss of its support base was due to the expansion of the UML at its cost explains the situation. Similarly, there are no documentary evidence to assess whether these factions changed their organisational structure to adapt to the changed environment. The answer to this question can perhaps be sought in the inner party directives, which are not in the public domain. As for the question, whether problem arises in combining revolutionary ideology with the compulsions of electoral system the functioning of the UML and other Communist factions, especially the NCP (United)—others were in favour of exposing the system—in the Parliamentary phase provides the answer. Though the UML and the NCP (United) changed their strategies to suit the needs of parliamentary system, yet they kept intact their revolutionary views on democracy, which were not in tune with the power and class equation prevalent in the then Nepal. And since such views conformed to the views of communist factions working against the system, their activities—the activities of NCP (United) and NCP (UML)—which sought to achieve their variety of democracy undermined the system. Hence, it appears that the combining of revolutionary ideology with the Parliamentary system erodes the parliamentary system and works against it.

Further the study reveals that the Communist leadership of Nepal was not very clear in choosing the strategies. They did not pay attention to the objective condition of the kingdom while fixing their goals though their documents emphasised the need for such consideration. The choice for National Democracy as a strategy in was influenced by their consideration of nationalism. And such considerations can be detected even when Pushpalal was choosing the strategy of New Democracy in 1968. Besides, they often confuse the two strategies: they equate the strategy of National Democracy with the strategy of Peoples Democracy though there is a subtle difference between the two. Such attitude on their part gives the feel that they were not very keen on the question of strategy and given their dependence on nationalism and ethnicity

for mobilising their forces with their ultimate choice for liberal democracy, it appears that they were dependent more on factors which were exogenous to their chosen strategies.

#### 5. Social Basis of Communist Movement: Economic Backwardness, Caste, Ethnicity and Communist Mobilisation

On the issue of the relation between areas of economic backwardness and Communist mobilisation in Nepal one cannot come out with a definitive answer. Had there been a positive relation between areas of economic backwardness with Communist mobilisation then the UML should have succeeded in capturing maximum seats from Nepal's western part, which was the most economically backward development region of the kingdom. But, this was not the case. However, when one goes by the tenor of the Maoist movement then it appears that there was some relation between backward regions and Communist mobilisation, because the movement was first localised in Rolpa and Rukum, which were the worst areas in the scale of the HDI of the period. Similarly, other areas where the movement flared up were Jajarkot, Kalikot and Salyan which exhibited worst HDI performance. Besides, all these areas were located in the far-flung regions of Nepal. However, there was an exception. The movement did not flare up in Sindhupalanchok which was equally worse in terms of HDI. Hence, the finding partially suggests a strong link between backward/far flung regions and Communist mobilisation especially for a radical movement. However, this is not to say that such mobilisation and radical movements are possible only in far-flung, underdeveloped regions of Nepal, because similar type of movement, the Jhapa movement, was there in Nepal in the beginning of the 70s in the eastern part. It died down because of administrative pressure. This proves, that any area in Nepal provides the environment necessary for armed movement. Therefore, what seems to answer the puzzle of Communist mobilisation is not the localised characteristics of the regions, but the overall economic nature of Nepal, which was essentially mired in poverty.

As regards, the role of caste factor in Communist mobilisation the leadership of the Communist factions apparently suggests that the higher castes namely the Brahmin-Chettri from the *Khas* and higher castes of the Newar community have a definite predilection towards the Party. But, considering the fact that the stronghold of the UML is not the western region, the region where the *Khas* are in the majority, and that the leadership of the Nepali Congress is also in the hands of the *Khas* group, one cannot, based on such findings, conclude that caste affiliation has a role in Communist mobilisation. Finally, similar confusion assails the question about the relation between ethnic identity and Communist mobilisation in Nepal. Before 1990, their documents do not consider the issue of ethnic identity as a problem. As a result, only a few of them occasionally seek to project the problems of the ethnics. But, even then they consider ethnic problems not as a problem of identity, but as a problem related with the issue of equality, that is, economic equality. Hence, they argue the solution to their problems in the destruction of the feudal system which they thought would bring about economic equality. Thus, in the pre-1990 situation the Communist factions were not using issues of ethnic identity as an instrument of mobilisation. However, in the post-1990 situation when issues of ethnic identity came to the fore they used them in their election manifestos. But, there is no study to reflect whether such tactics paid them. Besides, their manifestos mix issues of ethnic identity with issues of resource appropriation making it more difficult to understand which out of the two helped them in mobilising forces. If the trend of the Maoist movement seems to suggest the role of ethnic identity and issues of division of resources in their mobilisation pattern, the fact that ethnic parties supporting the cause of identity could never win even one seat in the entire Parliamentary phase of the kingdom casts doubt on the role of ethnic identity in the mobilisation of forces. Hence, it was probably the issue of division of resources which played its role in Communist mobilisation. Therefore, the factor behind Communist mobilisation seems to lie in the general nature of Nepalese economy, that is poverty, and in the expectation of the educated lot for a change in the condition of the nation.



## Chapter 7

### Postscript

#### Developments after 2002

##### 1. End of Monarchy: Election for Constituent Assembly

After 4 October 2002, Gyanendra appointed three Prime Ministers, the last was Sher Bahadur Deuba. However, on the 1st of February 2005 he discontinued the practice of administering the kingdom through his nominated Prime Ministers. Dismissing Deuba Ministry, he brought the kingdom under his direct control. From then onwards, Mahat writes, “The country ... [was] entrapped in a triangular political struggle—between the Maoist waging a violent war, an executive monarchy, and the political parties fighting to restore the constitutional process” (343). Responding to the King’s action, if the Maoists blockaded “major highways linking the country’s 75 districts, as well as international links to India and China” (Pant 5), the seven parties alliance which consisted of the Jana Morcha Nepal, Nepal Sadbhavana Party, the Nepali Congress, the UML, Nepali Congress (Democratic), NCP (NWPP) and the United Left Front<sup>1</sup> organised joint rallies. However, the King did not yield. So, in November 2005 the Seven Party Alliance entered into a “12-point memorandum of understanding” with the Maoist. The understanding, which was reached in New Delhi, “proposed a peaceful transition through an elected constituent assembly” and a “formula for a united movement for democracy” (Pant 9). In it, the Maoist affirmed their commitment to multiparty democracy (E-Kantipur 2006 Nov. 19). It proposed the formation of a new Government acceptable to all sections of the society, the holding of negotiations between the Government and the Maoist and the creation of a Constituent Assembly (Rising Nepal, “Yechuri ... Maoist” 2006 Apr. 28). To end the King’s direct rule the eight parties decided on a tactics which included peaceful movement of the Seven Party Alliance complemented with the Maoists’ violent

<sup>1</sup> See, p.499 for causes behind its formation.

movement (K. C 341). Hence, from the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2006, the Seven Party Alliance in collusion with the Maoist launched their movement. Within weeks, the movement turned violent compounded with the Maoist's blockade of the major road links that led to Kathmandu (Rising Nepal, "Seven Parties' Agitation Turns ... Violent" 2006 Apr. 11). With the passage of time, Pant says, "All political forces including the civil society and professional organisations ... galvanized the people", which "resulted in massive ... demonstrations ... throughout Nepal" (9). On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, King Gyanendra, in his new year message to the nation, extended his invitation to the agitating parties to come to the table to activate multi-party democracy as envisaged by the 1990 Constitution (Rising Nepal, "Political Parties Called ... in Dialogue" 2006 Apr. 15). The following days witnessed the arrival of Special Envoy of Indian Prime Minister, Shyam Saran, and of Karan Singh in Kathmandu. After their departure on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, King Gyanendra's proclamation to the nation asked the Seven Party Alliance to recommend a name for the post of the Prime Minister for the formation of a Council of Ministers. He made it clear that he was transferring the Executive powers, which was in his safekeeping, to the people as per Art. 35 of the 1990 Constitution (Rising Nepal, "His Majesty Asks ... Parties to Form Government" 2006 Apr. 22). On the 24<sup>th</sup>, he reinstated the House of Representative which had been dissolved on May 22, 2002. The session of the reinstated House was slated on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2006. Following the announcement, the Seven Party Alliance recommended the name of Girija Prasad Koirala to head the all-Party Government (Rising Nepal, "Koirala ... to Head ... Govt." 2006 Apr. 26). When the House met on the 28<sup>th</sup>, Koirala tabled the proposal to hold election for the Constituent Assembly. The proposal was readily approved (Rising Nepal, "Koirala ... Proposal for Constituent Assembly" 2006 Apr. 29). The 16 June, Eight-point agreement between the SPA and the Maoist reiterated the resolve of the parties to honestly implement the 12-point agreement. It resolved to restructure the State "to resolve the class based, racial, regional and gender-based problems" of the nation through the "Constituent Assembly Elections" (Kantipuronline June 16). However, for such election the Maoist

insisted on the creation of an Interim Constitution. Hence, an Interim Constitution Drafting Committee was formed in the same month (UNDP 8). The Committee amended the 1990 Constitution to create the Interim Constitution of Nepal. The process began on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2007 and by December 2007 the Constitution had already undergone three amendments. At the end of December 2007, the Constitution provided for a single House—the House of Representatives and the process for creating a Constituent Assembly. Meanwhile, the Government of Nepal and the CPN (Maoist) had signed a “Comprehensive Peace Accord” in November 22, 2006. The Accord provided the process for managing the Armies, both the Nepali and the Maoist. It declared the commitment of the two parties to respect the provisions of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 while reiterating their desire to create “an inclusive, democratic and progressive ... state” (Nepaltimes.com 4). According to the Accord, the Interim Constitution was expected to form the “interim legislature-parliament”, which in turn was expected to hold the election for the Constituent Assembly by May-June 2007 (Nepaltimes.com 3). The Constituent Assembly so formed was to have three sets of representatives. The first set, 240 of them was to be elected from the administrative districts considered as constituencies (Art. 63:a). The second set of 335 were to be elected “on the basis of ... proportional electoral system”, where the voters were to vote for the parties and where the whole country was considered a single constituency (Nepal Rajpatra 52). The third set of 26 members were to be nominated by the Council of Ministers from among the prominent members of the society. However, the Constitution made it clear that while selecting the 240 representatives the parties were to ensure the representation of the various sections of the society on the basis of their proportion in the society. Besides, they were enjoined to nominate at least one-third of such members from the fairer sex (Art.63:5). Conforming to these provisions of the Interim Constitution, the first election for the formation of the Constituent Assembly was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2008. There were 54 parties in the fray. In it, the NCP (Maoist)’s manifesto promised to implement a twenty-point programme. These programmes promised the nation that

they would protect her “independence and geographical integrity”, institutionalise a “federal structure”, a “republic” and a “pro-people democratic arrangement” (NCP (Maoist), Sambidhansabha Nirvachankalagi Ne. Ka. Pa (Maobadi) Ko Pratibadhatta-Patra 7). The other programmes were just a repetition of their often stated stand on fundamental rights, secular State, the problem of citizenship etcetera. However, they maintained that out of the many programmes “the most important condition for the creation of new Nepal was the implementation of federalism” (11). It was to be created on the basis of people settled in a “common geographical area” having a “common economic structure” and using a “common language” who could be considered as “a nationality” (12). As a complement to this political structure the Maoist proposed an “economic structure free from feudal and tout bureaucratic control”. They promised to work for the establishment of “a self reliant economy geared towards socialism” (15). These two programmes constituted the core of their recipe for ending the age-old regional and ethnic discrimination prevalent in the country. When the results of the election was declared, the position of the three major parties under the first past the post election system were as follows: NCP (Maoist), 120; Nepali Congress, 37 and NCP (UML), 33 (Nirvachan Ayog 16). Their corresponding win in the proportional system<sup>2</sup> were as follows: NCP (Maoist), 100; Nepali Congress, 73 and NCP (UML), 70 (265–71). Besides, the House of Representatives was composed of a host of regional parties and other Communist factions. It was expected to draft the Constitution of Nepal within a period of four years and if need be its life could be extended by another six months (Art. 64).

<sup>2</sup> This system allows each party to send as many candidates which correspond to its share of percentage votes that it polls in the First past the post election. For example, the total candidates to be sent to the Parliament as per the proportional system was 335, see,.. Nirvachan Ayog 2 Since, the NCP (Maoist) polled “30.52%” (Nirvachan Ayog 16) of the total votes cast in the first past the post system, they sent  $(335 \times 30) \div 100 = 100$  candidates. Besides, the rules for sending the closed list (after sending names the parties cannot change them after 7days) of names are as follows: the list must have 50% women, 31.2% Madhesis, 13% Dalit, 37.8% Janajati, 30.2% others and 4% representatives from underdeveloped areas.

However, even after functioning for the stipulated period and for the extended six months the Constituent Assembly could not come out with the New Constitution of Nepal. Explaining the most important factor, which hindered the process of framing the Constitution, the NCP (UML) manifesto of 2013 said,

The CPN (UML) stood for the model of federalism that would honour all identities, transfer power to local communities and institutionalize democracy from below. The Maoist party advocated for a single-ethnic model and provoked every caste and ethnic community. Nepali Congress followed the view of federalism with provinces based on geography, excluding the question of identity. The Madhes-based parties were in favour of ‘One Madhes, one Province’. Thus, there was an inscrutable difference in understanding and expectation of federalism ... [which] became the main cause for the failure of the CA (NCP (UML) 16).

As a result of the failure, the nation went to polls in November 2013. There were 121 parties in the fray and when the result under the first past the post system became public Nepali Congress secured 105; NCP (UML), 91; UCPN (Maoist), 26 seats<sup>3</sup>. Their corresponding scores in the proportional system were 91, 84 and 54 respectively. The present Constituent Assembly cum Legislative Assembly is

<sup>3</sup> Their debacle in the poll was perhaps due to the fragmentation of the party in June 2012. See, NCP (Maoist), Press Bigyapti 1 A major section, which claimed to represent ‘revolutionary trend’ within the Party, came out to hold their inaugural session in June 16–18, 2012. Under the leadership of Mohan Bikram Baidhya, C. P Gajurel and Ram Bahadur Thapa (Badal), the session brought together the leaders of Akhil Nepal Rastriya Dalit Mukti Morcha, Madhesi Mukti Morcha, Akhil Nepal Mahila Sangh (revolutionary) and Akhil Nepal Adhivasi Janajati Mahasangh to announce the formation of NCP (Maoist). Describing the essence of the Political Proposal passed on the occasion, the Press release blamed the inability of the Party leadership of the UCPN and the machination of foreign reactionaries for the failure of the Constituent Assembly. It observed that the enemy of Nepalese people were still “the feudal forces, tout bureaucratic capitalists and the Indian expansionist” and appealed the people “to raise their voices against the forces for preserving the independence of the nation”. Besides, it criticised “Prachandapath for having destroyed collegiate leadership while opening the door to opportunism” (NCP (Maoist), Press Bigyapti 3). In sum, the faction blamed the imperialist—mainly India—and the role of Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Baburam for the instability that prevailed in the nation. It held its Congress in VS 2069 Falgun 1[12 February 2013] to formally announce the formation of NCP (Maoist).

expected to frame the much-awaited Constitution of Nepal within four years. However, till date, the Constituent Assembly is trying to thrash out differences over three major issues, viz., the federal structure, whether ten states or eight; election system, where the contention is over the appropriate mix between first past the post system and the proportional system and the form of governance, whether directly elected President or Parliament-elected Prime Minister with various proposal for sharing powers between them (Himalayan Times 2014 Sept. 29). The bone of contention is, therefore, over issues, which are concerned with the founding of a constitutional arrangement best suited in a deeply divided Nepalese society. The trend suggests a move towards a consociational democratic arrangement for ensuring stability, which has so far eluded the nation in its quest for fast-paced economic development.

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