

RESEARCH NOTE

MASS MOVEMENT 1990

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The late 1980s and the early 1990 will long be remembered as "the time of great upheavals" in the history of democracy and human rights. Mikhail Gorbachev's "New Thinking" *Perestroika* (restructuring) and *Glasnost* (openness) has changed Soviet life and has also worked as a catalyst in transforming the communist world. In Eastern Europe i.e. Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, decades-old orthodox communist regimes were replaced by multi-party system (MPS) after the "Velvet Revolution"- a remarkably gentle overthrow of communism. Similarly, the Soviet Union, the fatherland of communism and Mongolia, the first Asian communist country, have changed their political system from the totalitarian rule of the communist party to multi-party democracy. Only Ceausescu in Romania was toppled by a bloody revolution.

In the broad sweep of the revolution for democracy all over the world, not only the so-called dictatorships of the proletariat were defeated, many dictators, the high profile generals or civilians or monarchs were also eliminated from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Latin America- the erstwhile paradise of dictators- has been greatly affected by the global wave of democratic movement. But for Noriega of Panama who was toppled by the US army, the rule of the generals in Colombia, Chile, Brazil and Nicaragua was peacefully replaced by civilian governments. The fall of "Green" dictators from Latin America and "Red" from Eastern Europe encouraged the struggle for democracy in Black Africa. Consequently, multi-party democracy made inroads into Algeria, Benin, Gabon, Ivory-Coast, Zaire etc. In the mid-80s, movements for the restoration of democracy in Asia picked strong momentum. Through popular movements, two civilians dictators, Marcos of the Philippines and Chun Doe Hwan of South Korea were ousted from power in 1986 and 1988 respectively. Though the military holds democracy in Burma bottled up a popular uprising in mid-1988 led to the end of the 26 year old absolute rule of Ne Win. And the death of Zia-ul-Haq in a mysterious air crash on 17 August, 1988 resulted in the revival of the multi-

party system in Pakistan. The "winds of change" sweeping the world also touched the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal where the politicized section of society, at large, had been long discontented with the authoritarian partyless panchayat system (PS).

With two explicit demands: establishment of the MPS and formation of an interim government, the banned Nepali Congress (NC) and the United Left Front (ULF)¹ launched a joint mass movement from February 18, 1990. Within days the popular agitation gathered pace turning the Kingdom into "the land of turbulence". The panchas were obviously determined to face this challenge to the system. But there was a lack of coherent approach among them in tackling the problem. One section favoured the government's stand that the movement should be forcibly suppressed while others urged the search for a "political solution". The palace was in a dilemma over which approach to adopt but it avoided the latter option as long as possible. In its effort to diffuse the crisis, the panchayat regime came up with a three-pronged strategy that at times seemed self-contradictory. First, it tried to delegitimize the movement by invoking nationalism in the usual way of India bashing. Second, officially HMG tried its best to give the impression of an increasing rapprochement with Delhi, and at the same time, it was equally careful to seek ways of reducing external support for the movement. Third, coercive measures were taken to counter the opposition campaign.

Since the NC had sounded the call battle at its January conference, the panchas also mounted a counter-propaganda war, organizing pancha rallies in different parts of the country. They reiterated the viability of the "active leadership" of the King and "Partyless" character of the system equating them with the notions of nation and nationalism. The MPS was defamed as an "alien idea". The call for the restoration of democracy and the subsequent popular demonstrations were labelled as anti-social, anti-national, anti-constitutional and destructive/subversive/ hooliganism. The propoganda machinery largely succeeded in gathering paid yokels to demonstrate public support for the PS. But observers regarded such frantic and loud posturings of the panchas as ridiculous.

Another dimension of panchayat nationalism was buttressed by anti-Indianism. Though the panchas were conspicuously divided on the means to be adopted to resolve the country's political crisis, all of them suspected India's hand, seen or unseen, in the internal developments in Nepalese politics. As it was said by Ganesh Raj Sharma, a member of the PS think-tank, "This movement is inspired and encouraged by India with the aim of creating a chaotic and anarchic situation in Nepal to make it soften its stand."² In the hope of diverting the people's attention or alienating the masses from the opposition movement the establishment sought to weaken

and defuse crisis by playing on anti-Indian sentiments arising from the prevailing prolonged deadlock in trade relations with India. The PS propaganda described the opposition movement as the handiwork of a handful of ill-advised elements with foreign backing that harmed independence, sovereignty, nationalism and national unity.³ But the earlier exposure of the secret 1965 agreement between the then panchayat government and India was adequate enough to show the hollowness of the panchayat nationalism.

examining the maneuvers of the panchayat government, it should be pointed out that till the first few days of the movement, the panchas openly charged that the movement was launched by a handful of illegal NC "riding on the back of foreigners". The intention behind this ploy was obvious. The panchayat regime still hoped to manipulate the line of convergence between the panchas and communists in regard to India with the aim of disrupting the remarkable unity between the NC and the ULF. There was, in the background, a common tendency between the PS and the left parties to regard anti-Indianism as a part of Nepalese nationalism. The regime, therefore, forcefully tried to make a major issue of the address by Indian leaders at the NC conference, deploring their participation as "a naked intervention in Nepalese affairs." But contrary to the expectations of the panchas, all the left leaders were highly appreciative of the articulated support of Indian leaders to the aims and objectives of the opposition movement being launched in Nepal. The panchayat regime once again changed the way it tried to portray the opposition movement. From a week after the agitation was formally launched, HMG began alleging that it was the work of communist extremists. This line was taken in order to discourage external support to the democratic movement in Nepal but the opposition regarded it as a new trick to sabotage the movement. Opposition leaders, - though under house arrest or having gone underground- remained in close contact with the national and international media. They, therefore, individually and jointly, warned the people to be aware of this new move of the regime that it was a "conspiracy and mischievous device directed to disrupt unity between the NC and the ULF and also to spread false notions."⁴ Ultimately the tactics applied to weaken the unity between the Congress and the Communists proved futile.

As has already been noted, the panchayat regime pursued a policy along two mutually contradictory lines in regard to India's role in the anti-panchayat struggle in Nepal. To alienate the people from the movement and to divide the NC and the ULF, it tried to depict the opposition movement as backed by India. At the same time, in order to discourage the movement, it gave high coverage and exaggerated emphasis to the non-interference approach of the Delhi government. Additionally family relationships between certain section of the elites in Nepal and India, together with the religious leverage

which Nepal's status as a Hindu Kingdom commanded in India were manipulated behind the scenes lobbying in the south of the border. Moreover, HMG developed an understanding with the V.P. Singh government in regard to the impasse in Nepal-India relations with a commitment that Nepal would wholeheartedly respect India's sensitivities in the future. Two-round of talks were held in Delhi and Kathmandu between the government of India and Nepal at the time when the Nepalese people were coming out on the streets against the PS. But the rapprochement at the governmental level between Nepal and India did not have much effect on the democratic movement in Nepal.

The ruling elites were equally sensitive to the western support for the opposition movement. In addition to lobbying and maneuvering behind the scenes, they attempted to diffuse external pressure in various ways. First, the PS was claimed to be a democratic system. The verdict of the referendum held on 1980 and two general elections were specifically mentioned in the reply letter by 13 members of the National Panchayat (NP) to the US senators who had written in protest against the government's actions. Next, they played the 'communist card' alleging that the movement was fully controlled by communist extremists, in the hope of exploiting the anti-communist sentiments in the west. Perhaps this was one of the major reasons why the US pressured the King and the Congress to resolve the problem through a compromise by enlarging the scope for democratization within the system. Accordingly King Birendra, in his address at a pancha rally in Pokhara on march 16, 1990, publicly announced a proposal to introduce reforms in the existing panchayat system. This announcement however should not be viewed exclusively as a response to external pressure. However, in the absence of any follow-up action after the announcement it was believed that the proposition of reformation had mostly been put up to satisfy the western world.

"We'll eliminate them", said Kamal Thapa, Minister of Communication, in reference to the opposition. This statement not only manifested individual dogmatism, but was also indicative of the government's strategy to counter the movement. Within the first three days of the movement, a dozen freedom fighters lost their lives in Bharatpur, Bhaktapur and Janakpur. Thousands of people both party activists and commoners were put in detention under very inhuman conditions. The opposition demonstrations augmented especially by unemployed youths and campus students against the government's suppression had given a real spark to the popular agitation. A foreign observer after watching the first few days of the movement concluded, "Nepal, one of the world's truly beautiful places, is fast becoming a land of the midnight knock."⁵ As the movement gained

momentum and spread far and wide, the panchayat regime's repressive measures also became harsher and more brutal. Consequently, many people were shot and thousands were put behind bars. But from the very beginning, there was every likelihood of a backlash against the government's suppressive policy. The brutal suppression by the government aroused indignation among the people and also aroused concern in the international community.

The loss of lives of unarmed demonstrators provided an additional reason for the early involvement of different professional groups in the movement. The people from different walks of life especially doctors and lawyers took to the streets to fight against the PS. A small section of teachers and lecturers, engineers and overseers, and artists and writers also got actively involved in the movement later. However, in consideration of the slackening of the momentum after its first stage, the opposition followed another way to bring the people to the streets. Rumours, like the offices of the provision Fund and Banks were going bankrupt due to massive drawing out the funds by the government succeeded in raising the ire of the employees of public enterprises. Moreover, superb examples of courage were demonstrated by school-going boys and girls against the PS in interval between the second and third stages of the movement. The movement, then onwards, rapidly gained a revolutionary character that never flagged. In the third phase that began from March 24, the movement assumed a new shape: a true people's movement. Day after day, the crowds of the people chanting "democracy and human rights" multiplied within and outside Kathmandu valley. In reaction to the firing in Patan and Kirtipur where six persons were shot on the spot, the people from each household in these cities including even housewives and children took to regular marching on the streets brandishing various kitchen utensils and agriculture tools. In the final phase corporation staffs and civil servants also took part in the struggle against the PS.

Since the movement was moving towards revolutionary resolution in terms of popular participation and the style of the agitation, King Birendra was compelled to realize the limitations of his options and the possible repercussions for the institution of monarchy if the policy of suppression was further intensified. Even weeks before the movement began, G.M. Singh, had rebuked the palace for its role as protector of the PS. The king's active patronage of the PS had become a focal point of public criticism throughout the movement. In every corner of the city, there were cartoons and wall-paintings showing popular resentment against the palace. A foreign newspaper reporter also commented, "There are ... striking similarities in the lead up to the recent eruption against the authoritarian rule of the King of Nepal and the revolution in Iran in which the Shah became the prime

target.”⁶ In fact the anger against the palace grew spontaneously in proportion to the repression employed by the government. But for the NC, hitting the palace was only a strategy to pressurize the King for early resolution of the problem in favour of the objectives of the movement for the restoration of democracy. In its conference on January 18-20, where the date for the movement was announced, NC's supreme leader Ganesh Man Singh had clearly stated, “Abolition of the monarchy is tantamount to the end of democracy in Nepal.”⁷ While forming the ULF on the eve of the movement, the involved left parties also had tacitly accepted the retention of the King.⁸ But ideologically they are virtually pro-republican. Therefore, the institution of monarchy might have been jeopardised had the movement intensified to such an extent that the NC could no longer command the movement.

Perhaps, realizing the imminent danger, suddenly the palace changed its hard line into a conciliatory overture to stall the movement. In the early morning of April 6, King Birendra unexpectedly announced his decision to form a Constitution Reform Committee and an Inquiry Committee. By the same proclamation, he made the Marich Man cabinet the scapegoat for the turmoil in the country and replaced him by a former loyal PM Lokendra Bahadur Chand as the new PM. The king also added that the new ministry would consult people holding different political views.

In fact most of the former PMs and chairmen of the National Panchayat and many rank-and-file panchas had been repeatedly urging an early resolution of the political crisis in the country. A statement in the name of 40 members of the NP, three of whom disowned it later, demanded a political solution for the political crisis. There was a constant flow of statements, individual or collective, and all requested king Birendra to pursue a dialogue with the opposition to resolve the problem. Even earlier former PM Surya Bahadur Thapa had declared some months before the opposition movement was formally launched, that “the day could prove very bad for the rulers if the system failed to acknowledge the existence of the opposition and to encompass their aspirations.”⁹ But the reshuffle of the cabinet on April 1, a council of ministers comprising hardliners, manifested the usual mood of the palace even at eleventh hour of the movement. When all the cards played to suppress the popular struggle failed and were as a matter of fact backfiring, the palace was compelled to initiate an alternative strategy, the reconciliatory approach, which was indeed the last straw for the PS.

However, it came too late. The hard repressive measures followed by HMG to deal with the movement had already brought home irrelevance of reformation to the people. Consequently, the orchestration of events reached a climax on April 6, the day of final confrontation for both the pro and the anti-PS groups. This was the day the King announced possible reformation in the

panchayat framework, but hundreds of thousands of people in different parts of the Kingdom spontaneously poured out into the streets to express their indignation over the inadequacy of the king's step. The regime in a last of desperation ordered the army units, which had been ordered to fire on the unarmed crowd and consequently eleven people in Butwal lost their lives. On the "Black Friday" the king's regime bared its fangs in Kathmandu resulting in a street massacre on the Durbar Marg around the statue of the late King Mahendra, the architect of the PS. The loss of scores of lives of people on this day proved too costly in the sense that it marked a turning point in the struggle; from this point onwards the people's expectations overtook the limited objectives of the movement, jointly set forth by the NC and the ULF.

The political parties and their leaders also rejected the palace's proposals. G.M. Singh angrily denounced it stating that it was a mischievous attempt to dent the democratic aspirations of the people sweeping over the country. The ULF also issued a statement appealing to the people to continue the movement peacefully. Repeatedly throughout the movement, party leaders individually or jointly had forthrightly made clear that the struggle against the PS would continue till the objectives of the movement would be fulfilled. On the night of April 8 after talks between the king and party leaders, the four leaders K.P. Bhattarai and G.P. Koirala of the NC and Mrs. Sahana Pradhan and Radha Krishna Mainali of the ULF called off the movement following compromise with the palace that 'partylessness' would be deleted from the constitution and the lifting of the ban on political parties.

Forces of the Movement

When the ban on political parties was lifted and partylessness was promised to delete from the constitution on April 8, 1990 by a notification of the press secretariat of the King, the *desire of the Nepalese people* and *international environment* were explicit in the notification. The opposition leaders had already expressed optimism regarding the changing internal and external scenario and their impact on the democratic movement in Nepal. G.M. Singh during his nationwide campaign for the preparation of the movement had stated that, "the national and international situations have never been as favorable to the cause of democracy as now"¹⁰

Political Conflicts

The conflict between the palace and the parties had begun soon after the success of 1950-51 revolution. The revolution had ended the century long autocratic Rana rule and achieved a political system based assuredly on constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy. But the achievement of the revolution had gradually become diluted because of the King's refusal to confine his role to that of a formal head of state. The weakened and fragmented political parties gave their consent to King Mahendra's decision not to go for Constituent Assembly election promised earlier by his father King Tribhuvan. Instead, King Mahendra himself granted a constitution in 1959. However, under the NC government, which had secured a two thirds majority in the elections to the parliament in 1959, the King's role had once again been reduced perhaps not in substance but in form to that of a nominal head of state. It was but unpalatable to the assertive and ambitious King Mahendra. Ultimately even before the expiry of two years he abruptly ended the experiment with parliamentary democracy by a royal coup on December 16, 1960.

The hijacking of democracy had led the NC to launch a mild violent movement. But King Mahendra successfully tackled the challenge. He devised the PS as the infrastructure to perpetrate his absolute rule. At the time of initiation of the PS, it was said that the arrangement was "experimental". But later, by the first amendment to the Constitution of Nepal, the PS was declared "partyless" and a system to which there was no alternative. King Birendra moved a step further to make the PS more rigid. By the second amendment to constitution, the Back to Village National Campaign was made extremely powerful in all respects: from recruitment to retirement of the rank and file of panchas. The PS, then onwards began to function as a totalitarian one party system gradually eliminating the room for systemic opposition. The role of the banned political parties became very unpredictable. The NC, which had launched an arm insurgency against the PS in the early 1960's, had offered 'cooperation' to the King and declared its faith in the leadership of the King by a statement of Subarna Shamsher in 1968. But B.P. Koirala after his release renewed the line of confrontation with the unequivocal statement that "an armed revolution is only the way to topple the PS and thereby restore democracy."¹¹ A section of young communists who were inspired by the cultural revolution in China and the Naxlite movement in India also followed the path of violence in the name of liquidation of the class enemy. The violent movements, whether launched by the NC or the communists, had been suppressed. Ultimately B.P. Koirala and his colleagues returned to Nepal from exile in India in 1975 with a "national reconciliation" policy, arguing that the NC had a twofold responsibility of

safeguarding democracy and nationalism. The oppositions however were divided. The communists had equated the panchas and the Congress as two parts of a coin. While the NC also frequently used the communist card as a bargaining chip with the King, Subarna's "cooperation" and B.P.'s reconciliation policies had this stance in the background. The PS placidly continued with the divide and rule policy. But when the students, with democratic and left affiliations had jointly launched an agitation against the PS, King Birendra was compelled to announce a referendum on May 24, 1979, the choice being between two alternatives: reformed panchayat or the multi-party system. The verdict of the referendum went in favour of the PS by a margin of 10 percent, securing 54.7 percent against the MPS' 45.3 percent.

The verdict of the referendum gave the stamp of popular legitimacy to the PS. While appealing to all sections of the Nepali people to join the "single national main-stream", King Birendra promised to give due respect to the minority. Indeed, the third amendment to the constitution incorporated some features of the parliamentary system i.e. direct elections to the national legislature, election of the PM by the legislature and responsibility of the cabinet to the legislature. But paradoxically the referendum had sharpened and intensified political conflict in the country. B.P. Koirala had visualised:

"The Panchayat System is breathing its last. It will come to the end of its life because of the following three contradictions. The first contradiction will manifest itself in National Panchayat in the form of personal differences which will come to the fore given the lack of party discipline or because of the lack of concrete principle and a strong centre The second contradiction will rise from the conflict between the palace and the National Panchayat. Prior to the referendum, if nothing else, there was a strict command of leadership. This is no longer possible. The third contradiction will rise from two-decade long conflict between the admirers of the Panchayat system and the democrats, outside the system. This conflict will intensify further."¹²

Though there was ideological division between hardliner and liberal panchas, factionalism among them, from top to bottom, was merely based on the politics of one-upmanship and the politics of aggrandizement. There was a tendency of polarization among panchas as between "official" candidates and "non-official" candidates. The frustrations and anger generated by the elections would seemingly come to the fore from the very beginning of the NP session. Many members of the NP frequently shifted their loyalty from one group to another, apparently motivated by the aspirations for post, power, privilege and easy money. By the time of the dramatic removal of the

first ever elected panchayat government headed by S.B. Thapa, the house had become permanently divided between pro- and anti-government factions. Moreover, no-confidence motion became a major obsession of the legislators.

From another perspective, the conflict and conspiracy among the ruling elites was a by-product of a bundle of controversies and contradictions within the system. The third amendment had produced an odd mix of authoritarian tendencies and democratic procedures. Adult franchise and cabinet responsible to the legislator could, with good faith, be used to produce popular leadership, to foster competitive politics and to the evolution of an organized opposition. But all these contravened the active leadership of the King and partyless character of the system. The palace was well aware of the cost it would have to bear if the potential for democratization was permitted to develop fully. The palace was, therefore, sometimes overtly and generally covertly involved in efforts to sabotage the spirit of adult franchise and responsible government. The unopposed election to the posts of PM and Chairman of NP, the unprecedented removal of the government of S.B. Thapa and the rejection of a no-confidence motion against Lokendra Bahadur Chand even after it had been officially tabled at the house, were all examples of the behind-the-scene manipulations of the palace. In such circumstances an invisible centre of power, popularly known as the "underground gang" (patronised by the palace) emerged as a critical political factor. It was obvious that this gang monopolised court politics, amassed commissions and tenders, ran big business houses, indulged in large-scale smuggling etc. The more the gang's grip tightened, the more certain their final destruction became. B.P. Koirala rightly observed that the referendum had made the panchas like cannibals. Prof. Baral also advanced a general argument that, "In traditional régimes, intra-elite conflict plays a significant role in destroying the system."¹³ The internal discord among the ruling elites contributed a lot to weakening the PS.

The conflict between the admirers of the partyless PS and its opponents had been intensified by post-referendum politics. Except B.P. Koirala who accepted the result of the referendum however *unexpected* and *inexplicable*¹⁴, many of his party followers and most of the communist leaders rejected the verdict as "manipulated and rigged". Consequently all political parties, except Rohit and Rayamajhi groups of the left and the 'Group of 38' of democrats, boycotted the first general elections under the PS held after the referendum. But none of them could provide an effective way out of the political impasse. The Satyagraha launched by the NC in 1985 drove home a lesson that prospects of extra systemic opposition was not bright at that time. In fact the incorporation of the idea of popular participation and responsible government by the PS after the third amendment widened the

scope for systemic opposition. By the time of the second general elections, many communist factions including the ML and the Fourth Convention had made changes in their policies deciding to abandon the non-effective strategy of boycott with the view that "the struggle against the PS could be intensified within the system".¹⁵ However there were many restrictive provisions¹⁶ in the constitution that obstructed the participation of political parties with dignity. In consideration of such constitutional bars, the NC laid down some preconditions¹⁷ for their participation in the elections. But the palace discouraged all possibilities of systemic opposition. That was why the NC had to face a humiliating defeat when it took part in local elections without fulfilment of its preconditions. After the result of local elections, G.M. Singh declared, "The NC will not participate in any panchayat elections so long as NC remains under my influence."¹⁸ The confrontation between the NC and the PS culminated on December 16, 1987 when the NC followers who had been elected in local panchayat elections, boycotted the King Mahendra Memorial and Constitution Day and subsequently HMG suspended them. On the whole, the party secretary G.P. Koirala in his address to the historic conference of the party on January 18-20, made it clear:

"In the hope of achieving a national consensus for democracy the late B.P. Koirala, till the end of his life, favoured solving the problem through dialogue with the King. Hence, the endeavour was continued by myself and finally by Ganesh Man Singh. But time showed that such meetings alone would not solve the problems of the country... (This, however, does not mean) the NC has abandoned the idea of talks and mutual understanding. But we feel that talks or dialogue is worthless unless and until substantial change comes into the politics of the country."¹⁹

Unity between the Congress and the Communist

The most important factor behind the success of the recent mass movement was unity between the NC and the U.L.F. In the early 1960s. Pushpa Lal Shrestha, the leader of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) initiated the idea of bringing the Congress and the communists together on a single platform against the PS. The idea was revived during the referendum and thereafter by some left leaders, especially Man Mohan Adhikari worked hard for unity among the anti-establishment forces. But both the leaders mentioned were then branded as 'traitors' and the 'tail of the Congress' by the extremists and radical communists. The proposal set forth by the moderate communist leaders for unity between the Congress and the Communists was sceptically refused by the NC under the leadership of B.P. Koirala. The NC's anti-communist phobia was further aggravated because of the boycott of the

referendum by the ML and the Mashal (emerging influential leftist groups) and its consequences. On the other side, the NC's national reconciliation policy limited its options for working in harmony with the left. Because the gist of this policy as defined by B.P. Koirala and his followers, was a mix of cooperation and confrontation with the King: cooperation for nationalism but confrontation for democracy. The orientation of this policy was, by and large, towards the palace. The leftists also strongly suspected that the NC's two-track reconciliation policy amounted to virtually aligning with the King against the communists. Even Bala Ram Upadhaya a leader from the Man Mohan Group, which had better relations with the NC than any others, made this clear:

"It is our policy to seek unity with the B.P. group. At the same time, it is our policy to oppose the Nepali Congress if it pursues a line of seeking compromise with the panchayat system. This explains why we have been consistently opposing its line of national reconciliation... We want them to abandon this line and forge unity with all anti-panchayat forces for the restoration of democratic rights."²⁰

The NC's reconciliation policy remained unchanged. But, though there was some inconsistency, it moved towards confrontation rather than cooperation after the death of B.P. Koirala. G.M. Singh in his capacity as supreme leader and K.P. Bhattarai as the acting president of the party argued that B.P.'s acceptance of the result of the referendum was done in his individual capacity and was not binding to the party.²¹ Still there was divergence of perception among the top leaders of the party: G.P. Koirala was strongly in favour of 'reconciliation' with the King and participation in the panchayat elections while Ganesh Man Singh clearly saw the inevitability of the struggle with the help of the communists. During the time of interval between the death of B.P. Koirala and the recent mass movement, the party tested both options. In 1985, it had launched a Satyagraha on the basis of unity in action with five left groups.²² Later in the general elections of 1986, the NC offered its participation with certain preconditions. Ultimately it was compelled to boycott the elections since the regime did not fulfill the demands of the NC. However, the party took part in local elections in which its candidates suffered a humiliating defeat. On the whole, though the importance of the NC's reconciliation policy to liberalize the politics of the country to a certain extent could not be overlooked, the policy of national reconciliation as a medium for seeking systemic opposition was not well responded by the panchayat regime. Consequently the NC was compelled to move towards the struggle against the PS in cooperation and unity with the communist.

Besides, it was the change in strategy and perceptions among many communist splinter groups in Nepal that led to parallel efforts towards forming a joint front among themselves and also to seek unity between the NC and the left front. On account of the constant improvement in relations between the two communist giants, the USSR and China, the relevance of division along Soviet and Chinese lines narrowed down. Again, internal changes in the politics of the Soviet Union and China reduced the importance of the international communist movement which helped in shifting the orientation of the Nepalese communists towards a more nationalistic and less internationalist outlook. On the internal issues, the Nepali communists had different approaches mainly on the questions of acceptance of the Maoist ideology, participation in panchayat elections, alliance with the NC; and so forth. Still there was consensus among them of the need to struggle for multi-party system in the country. Even those who strongly advocated "new people's revolution" supported the MPS as a bourgeoisie pre-requisite for moving ahead on the path of socialism and communism.

The consensus among the leftists on the MPS helped to gloss over other differences. The most important issue was unity among themselves and with the NC which wished the communists to accept the MPS as a commitment not just as a strategy.²³ Man Mohan, Tulsi Lal, Manandhar and Verma groups were initiators for unity between the congress and the communists. The NCP, led by Sahana Pradhan came later, but readily into the fold. However, the Maoists, especially Mashal and ML, seemed intransigent. In course of time, Nirmal Lama of the Mashal group urged cooperation with the NC and consequently his group split with the Mashal, an extremist communist party of Nepal led by Mohan Bikram Singh. Previously, at the time of Satyagraha in 1985 two Maoist factions, led by Rohit and Nirmal Lama had showed eagerness for unity among anti-panchayat forces for an effective mass movement. The ML was also of this opinion but it was cautious and reluctant to work with the NC. This party also stayed outside the left front formed by the five communist groups at the time of Satyagraha in 1985. Still, there was an influential moderate group within the party which constantly and forcefully pleaded for alliance with the NC at least for identical interest against the PS. Besides, the multiplication of ML's activities in the post-referendum period through electoral participation in the PS, joining human rights organizations, and similar front bodies made its leaders more pragmatic and ready for democratization and liberalization in the party's outlook. By its fourth conference in August 1989, the trend towards liberalization propelled the party into dropping Maoism, abandoning the old concept of "dictatorship of the proletariat" and totalitarian one-party rule.²⁴ All these developments made it possible to

achieve a broader unity among opposition forces, notwithstanding the rhetoric of the Mashal and similar other marginal groups which opposed this step. In conformity with the pre-conceived plan to launch a joint mass movement by Congress and Communists, the ULF was formed on January 15, 1990 consisting of seven splinter groups.

The constant forward looking changes in the attitudes and behaviour of Nepali leftists has been tremendously influenced by the massive erosion of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Gorbachev's policy of openness and reform changed the old face of communism. Adopting the slogan of "socialism with human face and democracy", many communist parties in Eastern Europe renamed themselves as "Social Democrats". This new wave largely affected the way of thinking of the Nepali communists despite their strong rejection of the possibility of mechanical duplication of such international developments in the Nepalese context. Very significantly and boldly, the ML in its central committee meeting in October 1989 decided to accept the MPS as an indispensable part of the principles of the party.

The changing strategy and perspectives of the Nepali communists was widely appreciated by the NC as the leftists whole heartedly welcomed the wish of the Congress to launch a joint mass movement. G.M. Singh on the eve of the movement stated optimistically, "The present is not the age of Stalin. The World's situation has changed. There have been changes among the communists accordingly. They have understood well that socialism or communism follows democracy".²⁵ Similarly, Bal Krishna Khand, the president of the Nepal Student Union expressed the view that it would be unfair to regard Nepali communists as still within the framework of 1979-80, because they have reformed towards democratic socialism in line with the modification in communist philosophy all over the world.²⁶ The unity between the Congress and the Communists, in totality, had been formed on the ground of their identical interest against the PS and their mutual appreciation of increasing pragmatism on both sides. This augured well for the movement for democracy restoration (MRD) in the country.

Role of Middle Class

The success of the MRD in Nepal once again proved that the middle class is a change agent. Though the struggle against the PS affected rural dwellers also, it was largely a middle class urban movement. It was perhaps the first movement in Nepal in which different professionals i.e. students, lawyers, doctors, nurses, para-medicals, lecturers, teachers, corporation staffs and civil servants became openly involved. These middle class people played a prominent role in the movement making three principal contributions: giving continuity to the movement, paralysing the machinery of the regime

and motivating the rest of the population. The involvement of the middle class in recent MRD was generated mainly because of stagnation in economic development, imbalance in economic development between one sector and others, the gap between expectations and attainment, and hopelessness in regard to the future under the PS.

Nepal's economy had suffered from a prolonged state of stagnation. During 1960-85 the per capita growth rate was only 0.1 percent. The basic structure of the economy remained unchanged. Agriculture continued to contribute 60 percent of the population; the contribution of manufacturing to GDP hovered around 4 percent.²⁷ Industrial development was held back because the pattern of investment was highly concentrated in the trade sector. Worst of all, a parallel economy grew massively in the post referendum period. The trade deficit increased rapidly. Dependency on foreign aid also increased. The state of Nepal's economy, on the whole, was miserable, as the then US ambassador pointed out:

"A hard reality is that Nepal has been living beyond its means, that without major increases in external assistance, Nepal cannot even afford to operate and maintain the existing level of government-provided goods and services."²⁸

However, relatively speaking, the fields of education and communication achieved some progress during the PS, which helped the growth of the middle class. This class is highly ambitious in both political and economic areas, and also widely exposed to national and international developments. They are/were quickly affected and inspired by international trends and also equally frustrated when they compared the situation of their own country with others. "This frustrated middle class has emerged as a stronger and more dominant force than the traditional forces, and this led to bring an invisible change in the previous balance of power of Nepalese politics."²⁹ The increasing middle class naturally required enlargement in the scope of political dissent to accommodate changing aspirations. But the PS granted only licensed dissent. "This gap between the desire for change and accomplished change would create frustrated expectations about political life, which in turn could lead to riot, rebellion and revolution."³⁰

As already noted, the MRD was an urban class movement. Two grievances stand out as the main factors behind revolutionary urban tumults: the cost of food and the availability of employment.³¹ The gap between population growth and the dismal economic growth rate posed a chronic employment problem. The problem of educated employment had also steadily worsened in proportion to the growth of educated people. "The number of school leavers increasing at least four times faster than new jobs are being created."³² Besides, the living standard of the Nepalese people had declined

partly because of steep price rises and inflation. The average price rise was 10.4 percent in the five years from 1983/84. Viewing objectively, the index of price rise, in between 1986 to 1990, in food grains, the increase ranged 22 to 32 percent in rice, 33 to 84 in pulses (*mas*), 65 in milk and 31 to 35 in cooking oil.³³ In addition, the Nepali rupee was devalued twice in the aftermath of the referendum, which also caused a decline in the per capita income and purchasing power of the people. All These created hardships in the day-to-day life of the people, the most affected group being urban dwellers and the middle class. The already bad situation further deteriorated because of the prolonged deadlock in Indo-Nepal relations. The consequence of India's trade embargo on Nepal as admitted by the then Finance Minister was "The Indian economic blockade would cause of loss of goods and services worth Rs. 2000 million | during 1988-89. Revenue is likely to go down to Rs. 1000 m. and inflation which was expected to come down from 11 percent in 1987/88 to 8 percent in 1988/89 is likely to remain in two digits. The GDP which had been expected to grow by 5.3 percent is likely to grow by 1.6 percent."³⁴ Besides, HMG could not adequately supply the shortages of essential commodities and sky-rocketing prices were out of the reach of the poor Nepalese. In such troubled times, thousands of unorganized workers who were previously engaged in construction and other industries lost their jobs as these sectors immediately began feeling the consequences of the trade embargo. Prolonged hardships generated anger and frustration among the people that suddenly exploded when the NC and the ULF jointly called for a mass movement against the PS.

Favourable International Environment

The international environment was also favourable for the democratic movement in Nepal. The global relaxation in east-west tensions reduced the room for manoeuvre by the authoritarian PS. At the time of cold war in 1960s, the panchayat regime had exploited the situation of the "decline of ideology" in international relations. Both the East and the West had also granted protective support to the PS at least as a part of their global strategy to contain the influence of one against other. Gorbachev's commitment to the spirit of *glasnost* and *perestroika* and also the US's global concern for human rights and democracy encouraged the opposition in Nepal to struggle for multi-party democracy. Besides, given the increasing rapprochement between the two super powers, there was no logic for both countries to give active protective support to the panchayat rulers against the popular aspirations of the people as they had done during the period of hostility when each sought to counter the other.

Moreover, the detente in Sino-Indian relations had substantially weakened the PS's elbow room. The PS was established at the time when the relations between China and India were tense. King Mahendra had played off once against the other to sustain his regime. The statement of Chen Yi, in response to the reaction of Nehru on the royal coup of 1960 as "a set back for democracy" may be recalled here: "If any foreign force attacks Nepal, we Chinese people stand on your side." Similarly India seemed happy after the 1965 secret agreement with Nepal obviously entered into for its support to the PS. The role of China and India vis-a-vis Nepal to counter one against the other was anticipated to continue on the issue of MRD in Nepal. Hemanta Rana, one of the members of think-tank of the PS who perceived India's hand in the recent anti-panchayat struggle, expected Chinese support to the regime against the movement.³⁵ But China was surprisingly silent on the movement in Nepal. As India had adopted non-interference policy at the time of the movement, China had no basis to interfere. The indifference of neighbours even at the time of crisis to the PS manifested the decline of the manoeuvring capability of the regime.

The external strength of the PS was severely affected by its strained relation with the southern neighbour. Tensions were aroused by a number of issues i.e. the work permit system, bilateral trade and tariff, the engagement of Chinese technicians in Terai, imports of arms from China by Nepal etc. The crisis reached its culminating point on March 23, 1989 following the expiry of the trade and transit treaties, India's abrupt decision to close 13 out of 15 entry points into Nepal and its consequences led both sides to talk about the need to review the whole gamut of their bilateral relations. Nepal insisted on two different treaties on trade and transit and also asserted independent views on other issues. The prime focus of India was on the acquisition of Chinese arms by Nepal. Because it is viewed in India as the completion of the chain of China's arms transfer relationship in South Asia in addition to the arms deployed in Tibet along the Sino-India border.³⁶ But political developments both in Nepal and India brightened the hope of sorting out the problems. The government of Nepal seemed eager for early resolution of the problem as the date of the movement came nearer. The National Front government in Delhi also showed signs of change from the past coercive attitude of the Rajiv government to a conciliatory approach towards Nepal. The way of dealing had changed from irrecounciliables to friendly overtures between the governments of Nepal and India. But by then the prolonged stalemate in trade relations with India had considerably helped in preparing the Nepalese people psychologically for the MRD in Nepal.

Besides, Nepal could not remain isolated from the tidal wave of democracy and human rights sweeping all over the world. In this regard an

Indian MP, M.J. Akabar rightly observed, "The struggle for liberalization knows no boundary; the idea of democracy, the soul of freedom romps in impunity across the borders."³⁷ The sudden collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe largely inspired and encouraged Nepal to take similar action against the authoritarian PS. It was indeed the tragic end of 24 years "iron rule" of Ceausescu in Romania that boosted morale of the Nepalese people as an example of peoples power. Surya Bahadur Shakya, in his speech of welcome at the NC's conference, which decided to launch the movement, remarked:

"The wave of democracy is sweeping through the world. In many neighbouring countries, dictatorships are falling one by one, whether they be Marcos of the Philippines or Ceausescu of Romania. If the iron wall of Berlin has fallen into the dust of liberation, how long will partylessness based on corruption stand."³⁸

International Support

The MRD in Nepal got widespread humanitarian and political support from the international community, mostly from non-governmental sectors. Almost all papers and magazines that have world-wide circulations gave coverage to the events in Nepal. Similarly the electronic media, especially the BBC and the VOA helped to internationalize the domestic riots in Nepal by highlighting day-to-day developments. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations also forcefully reiterated their concern over the violation of human rights in Nepal. The MRD was further buttressed by the Socialist International, political parties in different countries associated with the Socialist International and by the Association of Asian Students, all of whom declared their impassioned solidarity with the struggle of the Nepalese people.

In regard to government level support, some of the major countries of the world, especially the western countries, voiced their concern for human rights and democracy in Nepal. It was believed that they warned HMG, through diplomatic channels, the possible consequences of the excessive use of force. Besides, in response to the appeal of party leaders and intellectuals to stop economic aid for the PS, Switzerland and West Germany decided to suspend their assistance to Nepal. Except Japan, none of the donor countries and agencies provided any aid to Nepal during the days of the movement. However, as best they as could, some of the western countries made an attempt to compromise between the establishment and the opposition. In the Nepalese media, it was reported that the British and Danish Ambassadors specifically worked for this purpose. Interestingly there was a marked similarity between the Soviet Union's approach with that of the West. On

one occasion Radio Moscow suggested that both the panchas and opposition parties should resolve the problem through mutual accommodation and mutual understanding.

The US and MRD in Nepal

The US was the first country that explicitly called for a compromise between the panchayat regime and opposition, and at the same time it granted a constant humanitarian support to the MRD in Nepal. Within four days of the agitation, the US government, a group of Congress members and Asia Watch, a human rights organization, put pressure on HMG to avoid the excessive use of force. Above all, six influential members of the US Congress in a joint letter to King Birendra voiced their political support to the democratic movement in Nepal stating, "While we understand there are strong differences of opinion in Nepal on the issue of a multi-party system, we believe that all persons should have the right to express their opinion on this and other political issues."³⁹ The US's stand was however ambiguous. On the one hand, from the beginning to the end of the movement, John Kelly, the assistant Secretary of the State Department, forthrightly reiterated the US support to "freedom of expression" and "respect for human rights". But after the unprovoked massacre of more than a dozen freedom fighters, the same official shockingly remarked that his government appreciated the patience shown by the Nepali police to control the opposition's demonstrations. Besides he used the phrases such as "the verdict of the referendum", "traditional Nepalese way of ruling", "internal affairs of Nepal", when Stephen Solarz asked him to clarify the reluctance of the Bush administration to support the MPS in Nepal. Mr. Kelly further stated, "We certainly support parliamentary democracy, but as to the organization of a party system certainly there has to be room around the world for flexibility and countries have to decide their own path... We are not the judge of the world."⁴⁰ The US government again changed its stand when the movement reached its climax. In contradiction to the earlier approach, the spokesman of the US government insisted, "The US never supported one-party or a partyless system. It was in favour of establishing human rights and freedom of political organization and political freedom."⁴¹ Whether it was because of the US's good relations with both sides, the King and the Congress, or because of its scepticism regarding the success of the movement, or because of its apprehension of being caught on the wrong foot. The flip flop in US stand could hardly be said to be behaving a forthright champion of democracy in the world.

India and MRD in Nepal

India role vis-a-vis the democratic movement in Nepal was distinctly divided and ambiguous. At popular and party levels, it provided active support, but the Indian government steadfastly followed a "non-interference" approach. The V.P. Singh government did not support the movement. It was partly because of increasing rapprochement between the government of both countries and Nepal government's willingness to respect Indian sensitivities and also partly because of India's doubt of the success of the MRD in Nepal. A Nepali scholar who was in Delhi in the first half of the movement and also the NC activists who stayed in India to mobilize public support found that journalists, bureaucrats and intellectuals of India were skeptical of the success of the struggle of Nepalese people against the PS.⁴² Moreover, the government of India was really in a dilemma owing to the polarization between two wings of the government: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) versus the rest. The BJP, one of the dominant political forces in India, was a naturally of the Hindu Kingdom and its Hindu sovereign. On the issue of sending an Indian government delegation to Nepal, when the MRD had already been launched, 60 MPs, mostly from BJP, issued a joint statement urging the early conclusion of a treaty with Nepal. To counter this line, 207 MPs issued their own statement supporting the struggle of the Nepalese people against the PS. Moreover Chandra Shaker warned, "If you can sign the agreement (with Nepal) by-passing the people then this sovereign parliament has every right to reject that as well."⁴³ Despite the opposition from a majority in the house, an Indian delegation visited Nepal on April 2, to advance the negotiation between the two countries. This delegation handed over a 80 page document which identified India's security sensitivities under five headings: joint Indo-Nepal surveillance of the border between Nepal and Tibet; training of Nepalese military personnel by India alone; no foreign aid project along the open 500 mile Nepal-India border without Indian concurrence; binding respect to property right of Indians in Nepal; and Nepali laws, not in conformity with the 1950 treaty to be terminated.⁴⁴ From this document one could easily assume that the sole objective of Delhi's non-interference approach was directed to extract maximum concessions from the government of Nepal at the time of instability in the country. However looking at things from another perspective, it can be said that the government of India deliberately confined the process of negotiation with Nepal to the bureaucratic level and also consciously delayed the resolution of the bilateral problems despite both countries's agreement to respect each other's sensitivities on the Delhi visit of the then foreign minister of Nepal in January 1990. India's approach of non-interference in the battle between the panchayat regime and the people of Nepal was cast in favour of the regime, and it did help the regime to deal with the opposition. However,

India's stance disappointed the political parties of Nepal and India. G.M. Singh, reacted angrily, "We agree that it is not possible for India to distance itself totally from the government of Nepal. The problem is India has done nothing for us."⁴⁵ More vocally, Chandra Shekhar alleged, "India was helping a "Shahenshah" in Nepal like the US once had in Iran."⁴⁶

There was, however, consensus among the people and parties of India in support of MRD in Nepal. An Indian MP, M.J. Akbar was of the view that "It was terrible mistake to compromise on fundamentals no matter what they excuse; Indians and even Indian national interest could better be served by a commitment to democracy rather than a commitment to mere set of rulers perceived to be friendly."⁴⁷ Even the BJP could not deviate formally from this broader consensus supporting the MRD in Nepal, though many of its leaders, directly or indirectly, revealed their sympathy to the King's regime. The party Secretary of BJP, J.P. Mathur, issued a statement that, "In full sympathy with the democratic aspirations of the people of Nepal, we in India wish that a multi-party democracy would come to prevail within constitutional monarchy in Nepal."⁴⁸ Other political parties, Janata Party, Janata Dal, congress (I), CPI and CPM, independently or collectively, exerted pressure on their government to assist the movement in Nepal and condemned HMG for state repression of a peaceful movement. To uplift the morale and spirit of the movement, they displayed solidarity through demonstrations on the streets of Delhi, picketing at the Nepalese embassy, blocking the border on one occasion, opening refugee camps, etc.

In fact, the MRD in Nepal did not receive direct government level support from abroad. But concern showed by many countries on the issue of human rights in Nepal and also their condemnation of the use of the force by HMG on the peaceful movement contributed to the fall of the 30 year-old PS. However impassioned solidarity with the MRD in Nepal given by various non-government organizations of the world helped a lot in mobilizing international opinion in favour of the anti-panchayat struggle. The overall sympathy and support received by the movement in Nepal from the international community was highly significant in achieving the target of the movement: the fall of the PS and restoration of multi-party democracy.

Epilogue

The MPS was restored and the leaders also called off the movement. Yet there followed a week of significant and fast developments before the future course of Nepali politics became clear. The seating of the 4 leaders of the movement and all 4 members of the Chand cabinet on either side of the King during the meeting at the palace was in contrast to the hooting which greeted G.P. Koirala the next day at the open-theatre when he remarked

conciliatorily that what the people had achieved was a "victory of the people as well as the panchas and the King." The two events symbolised the divergent attitudes between the palace and the people and also between the party leadership and the general people regarding the final result of the movement. The high expectations of the people uncompromisingly voiced worked as a driving force to quickly transfer the power from the palace to the people. On victory day, April 9, party leaders read the sign of jubilation as well as dissatisfaction on the people's faces. Speaking at the open-theatre, all Congress and Communist leaders, including those who called off the movement the previous night, spoke in the same vein and spirit stressing that the movement had completed one phase gaining partial success, and that it would continue further but by different methods. G.M. Singh argued that the removal of the ban on parties was a "step forward in opening the door to democracy." J.N. Khanal, representative of the ML sought the continuation of the struggle for safeguarding the freedom of party politics. It was, in fact, the living revolutionary spirit of the people that prompt the parties to go beyond the stated objectives of the movement. The NC and the ULF, therefore, called for the immediate fulfillment of 8 demands. They included dissolution of the NP and the Council of Ministers, formation of an interim government, dissolution of all panchayat units, proper representation of the NC and the ULF in the proposed constitutional reform commission, etc. Aiming for complete abolition of the PS, the people encircled the Academy Hall, where the last round of talks was going on between the panchas and the opposition on April 15. These developments dashed the hopes of the palace which thought that it could accommodate the panchas as a living political force within the framework of the minimal objectives of the movement. The King was seeking to protect the panchas and had wanted to use the Chand government as the interim government for this purpose. The haste shown in the withdrawal of suspension of Hari Bol Bhattarai and Tirtha Ram and others who were suspended from their posts because of their boycott of Constitution Day in 1987, together with the convening of meetings of different NP's committees on April 15 indicated the intentions of the palace regarding the survival of the panchas in a new guise.

Lokendra Bahadur Chand, the then PM, in his first meeting with the press after the removal of the ban on parties, claimed that his cabinet was the interim government and declared that people from the multi-party side would be accommodated in his cabinet and also in the forthcoming constitutional reform committee.⁴⁹ Furthermore, he stated that the proposed reforms in the constitution would be directed towards the building of "pluralistic democracy" and avoided to use the term of the multi-party system. But all these efforts proved in vain against the people's determination to abolish the PS

altogether. After the Academy Hall incident L.B. Chand resigned from his post on April 18 and the King accepted the proposal of G.M. Singh to appoint K.P. Bhattarai as the PM of the interim government.

The formation of a coalition government including the representatives of the King, the NC and ULF marked culminating as well as a turning point in the politics of Nepal. At the oath taking ceremony of new council of Ministers, Ganesh Man Singh, The commander of mass movement, emphasised the continuation of unity between the Congress and the Communists to preserve and promote newly achieved democracy in Nepal. In the way of consolidating the achievement of mass movement, Prime Minister K.P. Bhattari gave priority to frame a democratic constitution and to hold impartial election.

Notes

1. The ULF, formed on January 15, 1990 consists of seven communist parties: Marxist, ML, Fourth Convention, Verma, Manandhar, Amatya, and Rohit groups.
2. *Samikshya Weekly*, March 9, 1990.
3. *Be Deplore and Condemn to Anti-National* (Published in Nepali) January 28, 1990.
4. *Pamphlets* (in Nepali) jointly signed by Marshal J. Shakya (NC) and Radha K. Mainali (ULF) and Jag Nath Acharya (NC) and R.K. Mainali, March 5, 1990.
5. Derek Brown, "Nepal Land of the Mid-night Knock" *Guardian*, March 24, 1990.
6. *South China Morning Post*, March 12, 1990.
7. *Tape-Records of the addresses of National and Indian Leaders in the Conferance of the NC, January 18, 1990.*
8. *Interview with Shyam Kaju*, a member of the central committee of the ULF (Who represented the Rohit group), July 18, 1990.
9. *Nepal Press Digest*, Vol 33, No. 52, December 25, 1989.
10. Ganesh Man Singh, *Why People Movement* (Booklet in Nepali).
11. B.P. Koirala, "Revolution in the Context of Nation Building", (Nepali), *Tarun*, reprint in, *Nation, Nationalism and Democracy*, (Booklet in Nepali) 1990, P. 15.
12. *Sort of Reconciliation: Nationalism and Democracy* (Booklet in Nepali), 1981, p. 12.
13. Lok Raj Baral, "Political Dissent and Political Development", Paper presented at the Seminar on *Political Development and Social Change in Nepal*, Kathmandu, December 1986, p. 5.

14. Lok Raj Baral, *Nepal's Politics of Referendum*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, p. 104.
15. Lok Raj Baral, "Nepal in 1986: Problem of Political Management" *Asian Survey*, February 1987, P. 174.
16. There were a number of restrictive provisions in the constitution such as the arrangement of a co-ordination council as a super cabinet, the revival of the BVNC in the modified guise of the Panchayat Policy and Investigation Committee, 25 percent royal nominees out of the total members of the NP, requirement for membership of any class organization to qualify as a candidate, the wording of the prescribed oath etc.
17. Some of the major demands put forward by the NC as precondition for its participation in elections were: interim government, a single manifesto and the same symbol to pro-party candidates, campaign in name of the party, removal of the compulsion of the membership of a class organization etc.
18. *Nepal Press Digest*, Vol 31, No. 46, November 16, 1987.
19. *Text of the Situational Paper (Nepali) presented by G.P. Koirala at the conferance of the NC on January 18, 1990.*
20. *Nepal Press Digest*, Vol 26, No. 22, May 31, 1982.
21. *Nepal Press Digest*, Vol. 28, No. 8, February 27, 1984; Vol. 29, No. 10, March 12, 1985.
22. Five left groups consisting of Man Mohan, Tulsi Lal, Verma, Rohit and Nirmal Lama factions unitedly launched a "political movement" in complement to the NC's Satyagraha, on the basis of unity in action.
23. Part of the national reconciliation policy of B.P. Koirala was perceived as anti-communist strategy, but once he stated "I am ready to live together with them (communists) if they accept the multi-party system and put their faith in it," *Punarjagran*, Push, 2038 (1981).
24. *Informal talks with Ghana Shyam Bhusal (April 20, 1990) the present Secretary of the Central Commitee of the ANNSU (Student Wing of the ML) and the former president of the ANNSU, February 25, 1990.*
25. *Nepal Press Digest*, Vol 33, No. 23, October 23, 1989.
26. *Interview with Bal Krishna Khand, the president of the Central Committee of the NSU, Student Wing of the NC, March 15, 1990.*
27. Devendra Raj Panday, "The State of Political Economy", Kamal P. Malla, ed, *Nepal: Perspectives on Continuity and Change*, CNAS, TU, Kathmandu, 1989, p. 321.
28. *Nepal Press Digest*, Vol. 31, No. 36, September 7, 1987.

29. *Interview with a member of the NP, D.P. Adhikari after his resignation from the NP, March 20, 1990.*
30. "Introduction", J.A. Goldstone, ed, *Revolution: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies*, Harcourt B.J. Publishers, US, 1986, p. 6
31. *Ibid*, p. 12.
32. Sukh Dev Shah, "Nepal's Economic Development: Problems and Prospects", *Asian Survey*, September 1988, p. 945.
33. *The State of the Present Economy*, Ministry of Finance, May 1990.
34. *Nepal Press Digest*, Vol 33, No. 19, May 8, 1989.
35. *Interview with Hemanta Rana*, The then Secretary of the Association of Lecturers, March 25, 1990.
36. Dhruva Kumar, "Beyond Blockade: Some Long Term Policy Consideration for Nepal", *CNAS forum 10*, October 1989, p. 17.
37. *Op. Cit 7.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Text of the Letter jointly sent by Six members of the US Congress to King Birendra*, February 22, 1990.
40. *Text of the Statement of John Kelly in Regard to the US stand on the MRD in Nepal*, March 16, 1990.
41. *Nawaras Weekly*, April 4, 1990.
42. *Informal talk with Dhruva Kumar, Hari Sharma, Kishore Nepal, Kausal Raj Regmi*, April 1990.
43. *Telegraph*, March 31, 1990.
44. Bhabani Sen Gupta. *The Hindustan Times*, May 14, 1990.
45. *India Today*, March 15, 1990.
46. *Op. Cit 43.*
47. *Op. Cit 7.*
48. *Text of the Statement of the Secretary of the BJP, n.a.*
49. *The Rising Nepal*, April 10, 1990.