PREFACE
In November 1950, an armed insurrection took place in Nepal. The revolt was very short-lived and it remained limited to certain border districts in the Terai region. But its results were far-reaching. It forced the autocratic Rana Government to admit defeat, restored the King of Nepal to his former legitimate position as the real head of the State, and in the wake of the Rana fall, it ushered in a new phase of political experiments in the land. At the same time, the policy of isolation which the Rana rulers had followed in regard to other countries came to an end; new channels were opened to bring Nepal in closer contact with the outside world. Thus, the break-up of the Rana rule synchronized with the emergence of Nepal as an independent sovereign State eager to fulfil her role in the comity of nations.

Obviously these were momentous changes and, for the average Nepalese, the revolt of 1950-1 signifies nothing less than a revolution. But the new phase brought new complexities and tensions in the kingdom's political life. On the one hand, the small groups of political reformers who had drawn inspiration from the movements of other Asian nations to achieve independence and representative rule, demanded immediate and radical changes in the country's economic and political set-up. They wanted to build a new democratic society out of a backward and static agricultural population on whom the force of feudalistic traditions remained as
strong as ever. These politicians, with the help of their dependants, formed parties, issued attractive manifestos and utopian programmes and competed with each other to gain political power.

The Ranas, on the other hand, as a landowning class still held control on the country's basic economy. They refused to give up their traditional privileges even though they lost the monopoly of political power. In a bid to thwart the schemes of Nepal's new leaders, they organized disturbances, created misunderstandings in the minds of the people and corrupted ambitious politicians by liberal use of their coffers.

Between these two groups of contenders, the Monarch, who had once been reduced to a puppet by the Rana Prime Ministers, slowly consolidated the new position he had gained after the revolution. In the midst of clamorous political factions, administrative breakdown and the din of conflicting interests and aspirations, he gradually came to take the central place in politics. In the eyes of his people he symbolized the best elements of tradition and the only hope for a better and happier future. Hence, even though the fall of the Ranas marked the entry of popular elements in the governing processes, the dominant trend in the post-Rana politics was towards the replacement of the old family oligarchy by the personal despotism of the Monarch.

Along with this trend, a host of other factors became active in politics. The inability of Nepal's new political leaders to bring speedy relief to a hard-pressed peasantry who, notwithstanding the changes at the Central Secretariat at Kathmandu,
still lived under extreme economic hardships and bore the exactions of an oppressive and antiquated feudal system, resulted in widespread popular frustration. The foremost thing that the peasant demanded was land and immediate economic relief. Similarly, with the introduction of modernized forms of social and educational activities and the flow of new ideas from abroad, a new educated elite grew up at Kathmandu. This group got impatient with the tardiness of the politicians and their inability to provide it with suitable employment. Hence, at the nation's capital, which still signified the kingdom of Nepal for the illiterate peasant, a sort of public opinion grew up which indirectly influenced the rise and fall of various parties and political leaders. At the same time, growing contact with the outside world gave incentive to the rise of Nepalese nationalism. But the tradition of long isolation and Nepal's helpless position between the two important powers of Asia - India and China - fostered a peculiar psychology of fear in the minds of the people. This fear was often expressed, rather in an unnatural manner, through slogans of 'foreign intrigues and interference.' Though, the full impact of this kind of Nepalese nationalism on the growth of society and culture has yet to be seen, it determined, in a large measure, the course of governmental and political developments of Nepal during the period 1950-60.

All these aspects and trends of Nepalese politics have found place, in one way or the other, in the present study. In taking up this subject, this writer faced the problem of choosing a method which could best enable him to investigate the features of