Chapter Four

KING, POLITICS AND PARTIES (1955-58)
By the end of February 1955 the course of Nepalese politics fell into a well defined pattern. The inexhaustible processes of grouping and re-grouping among the political parties and their factional squabbles, splits and dissolution brought in their wake an atmosphere of unreality in politics. The achievements of political leaders, who had at one time commanded respect, had been too insignificant to instil confidence in the masses. On the other hand, the new image of the Monarch as saviour of the nation and symbol of political unity enhanced and enriched the traditional position of the Crown in the minds of the people. As general distrust of the politicians grew, the Crown came to play a more active part in politics and, in the process, became the strongest political force in the country.

Another trend which became marked by this time was the tendency among the parties to confine their sphere of activity in the capital. This was partly a legacy of the pre-revolution politics and partly due to the practice of the parties to use moral or political pressure on the King to get a place in the government. This led to two unfortunate results - firstly, excepting a few, no political party thought it necessary to build a nation-wide organization and, secondly, in the absence of political guidance and articulate goals and objectives, the hard-pressed
masses resorted to frequent acts of violence and lawlessness. The absence of efficient administrative machinery and the inability of the Central Government to suppress these lawless elements led to a general state of anarchy in the country. The old group of feudal and landowning classes who found such instability in the Government conducive to the preservation of their interests also gave encouragement to these disturbing developments. Thus, violence became endemic in Nepalese politics.

Finally, as ministry-making became the principal motive force in politics, parties lost sight of the wider perspective of reconstructing the nation on definite political and economic lines. They became small groups led by opportunistic individuals who felt no hesitation to change sides whenever it suited their purpose. Thus, as later developments showed, the hasty decision of three political leaders - Tanka Prasad Acharya, Bhadra Kali Misra and Bal Chandra Sharma to merge their groups and form the new Praja Parishad in 1955 was taken because they found it opportune to pull their weight jointly against M. P. Koirala and thus impress on the mind of the ruler the need to form an alternative government with themselves as ministers. Their policy isolated M. P. Koirala who found it increasingly difficult to maintain his position as an independent leader. Hence he disowned his own party and returned to the fold of the Nepali Congress in the same year.

Among the important parties, however, the Nepali Congress still remained the largest despite the numerous desertions and splits it had suffered during the preceding years. Two factors
helped the Nepali Congress, at this time, to break the inertia which had overtaken it. First, the success of the Satyagraha of January 1955 boosted the morale of its rank and file and, second, the formulation of a definite political and economic programme, which the Congress adopted at its Sixth Conference held at Birganj in January 1956, provided its workers with a definite platform to work upon. (1) Further, the Nepali Congress came to take note of the change in royal policy which became more marked with the accession of King Mahendra to the throne on 13 March 1955. Henceforth, the task of opposing the ascendant tendencies of royal absolutism fell on the shoulders of the Nepali Congress and the history of the next three years represents the story of a bitter struggle between the Crown and the Nepali Congress.

I

King Mahendra's Direct Rule

For the new Monarch, Sri 5 Maharajadhiraja Mahendra Bikram Shah, the reign had an inauspicious start. In the middle of March, the country faced a serious economic crisis in the form of famine and drought. As a result of food scarcity, a long procession of starving men, women and children numbering over 2,000 trekked into the capital from far and wide. (2) For sometime, the King's Government maintained a mysterious silence over the situation, but a month afterwards it admitted the prevalence of

(1) See origin of the Nepali Congress, Chapter Six.
(2) The Statesman (Calcutta), 1 April 1955.
acute scarcity conditions and economic distress in certain parts of Eastern Terai and the hill districts. (3) Again, in July, similar conditions were reported from other districts affecting nearly 31 lakh people. The district of East No. 2 was the worst hit where official mismanagement of the relief work added to the sufferings of the people.

Further, the first wave of generous goodwill which Mahendra had received from different quarters began to recede as he took determined measures to assert his full control over the state machinery. To the politicians this changed attitude posed a threat to their political ambition. They resented the cavalier manner in which Mahendra treated them in general. The selection of the royal Advisers, as announced on 13 May 1955, created further misunderstanding. (4) It was pointed out that with the appointment of these Advisers corruption and nepotism in the administration had actually increased. Some political quarters feared that Mahendra's increasing dependence on the advice of the Rana civil servants would encourage the return of the reactionary elements. As these fears began to stir the minds of the politicians, opposition to the royal regime began to take a more concrete shape.

---

(3) The Statesman, 22 April 1955. The communique also said that to meet the situation, the Nepali Government had accepted the Indian Government's offer of 10,000 tons of rice valued at Rupees 40 lakhs. Mention was also made of the contribution of the Indian Prime Minister to the extent of Rupees 50,000 for relief work.

(4) The Advisers were Sardar Gunjaman Singh (Principal Royal Adviser), Lt. General Ananda Shamsher (Dy. Principal Royal Adviser), Gurujiu Bhogendra Raj, Purendra Bikram Shah, and Anirudha Prasad Singh. Sardar Gunjaman Singh was previously the Secretary of the Home Ministry from where he was removed on grounds of indiscipline.

See also Appendix I.
Political Conference of 1955

It was at this stage that Mahendra decided to hold a conference of all political, social and other organizations to get himself acquainted with their views on matters relating to the administration. On 8 May 1955 the Conference of about 129 clubs and associations of various categories, ranging from an undertakers' society to purely political bodies, was inaugurated by the King at the Narayan Hitti Darbar. But the presence of such diverse organizations in the Conference was bitterly resented by the Nepali Congress, the Rashtriva Congress and the Praja Party who jointly took the decision to boycott the Conference. (5) In retaliation, the King unleashed a scathing attack on these parties whom he charged with harbouring a feeling of hatred and spite towards other organizations. (6) He asserted that four years of democracy in Nepal had brought only ruin and frustration to the country and declared that at no cost he was prepared to allow the country to face ruin and disintegration in the name of democracy. (7) In a forthright attack on those who demanded the formation of single or multi-party government, he said that so far experience had shown that in such cabinets, the ministers had taken two or three months to get familiar with their new situation, had spent two months in digging up feuds among themselves and had remained busy for the next few months in trying to subvert their own government. (8)

(5) Nepal Pukar (Kathmandu), 8 (10 May 1955) 1.
(6) Gorkhapatra (Kathmandu), 55 (9 May 1955) 1-4.
(7) Ibid., 4.
(8) Ibid.
These utterances, perhaps, reflected genuine concern of the Monarch to keep the administration free from party-politics. But the parties which had refused to participate in the Conference felt that the King's speech was "an unfortunate and unconcealed attempt to run down political parties and belittle their achievements." (9) They declared that the royal address was without precedence in the country's four year old history of democracy.

But despite the heterogeneous character of the groups which assembled at the royal palace, the Conference made it clear that it was against the continuation of King's direct rule. The King himself admitted, while summing up the results of the Conference, that the four-points which emerged from it 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 and 4) that the Advisory Assembly should be dissolved. (10)

In view of these conclusions, Mahendra declared that within three months he would fix the date for the general election.

The holding of the Conference, therefore, did not prove totally futile. It made the King aware of the dangers of direct rule and impressed upon him that a sudden departure from the path of democracy as laid down by King Tribhuvan would not be easy.

---


Hence, following his pledge to the nation, Mahendra dissolved the Advisory Assembly on 10 June 1955. (11) On 8 August he also announced that Nepal's general election would be held on the full moon day of October 1957. (12)

Other Issues in Politics

Two other steps of the royal regime also came under fire at this time. The first was the institution of a royal Commission which was instructed to visit the districts and investigate on the spot the grievances of the local people and suggest means of redress. (13) In principle the idea of such a circuit court was perhaps both sound and praiseworthy, but in the absence of a clear definition of the Commission's powers and competence, nearly all political parties and groups condemned the move. As a result the Commission was greeted everywhere with black flags and protest demonstrations. (14) The second step was an ordinance which the


(14) The Commission returned to Kathmandu after 15 days. It submitted a secret report on the basis of which, it was reported, the King reorganized the Central Secretariat by a wholesale replacement of top secretaries and Bada Hakims by new recruits. As the Public Service Commission was not consulted in these appointments, the reorganization was loudly condemned by political circles. In October an Administrative Reorganization Ain was also promulgated by the King. See Gorkhapatra, 55 (14 October 1955) 1, 4.
Government passed conferring on Bada Hakims, magistrates and commissioners wide emergency powers to arrest, detain, extern or intern any person on grounds of internal security. (15) This was a repressive measure which evoked widespread criticism.

Finally, the King's Government shifted its policy to meet the rising tide of criticism. As a first step, Mahendra started negotiations with the Gurkha Parishad and those parties which had boycotted the Conference. He placed before the leaders of these parties a seven-point questionnaire to elicit their opinions and suggestions. As these questions reflected the working of the mind of the Monarch it would not be out of place to reproduce them here:

1) Without repeating past mistakes, what democratic procedure should be followed to form an Interim Government?

2) What proportion of representation is to be given to the parties in such a cabinet?

3) Whether the Government should be formed by one party or more, or on a non-party basis?

4) What criteria should be followed to select the Prime Minister?

5) What should be the programme of the Interim Government?

6) What are the obstacles in the way of an efficient and smooth administration?

7) What duties and responsibilities should be shared by all parties concerned to work for the well-being of the country through democratic means? (16)

In reply to this questionnaire, the Nepali Congress expressed the view that direct rule should be ended and replaced by a composite

(15) The Hindustan Times (Delhi), 18 August 1955.
The Praja Parishad suggested that, under the prevailing circumstances, only a multi-party government with some persons nominated by the King could prove successful. Regmi's Rashtriya Congress agreed to join any government on the basis of a minimum programme. The Gurkha Parishad, which had nothing in common with the above parties, suggested that a caretaker government should be constituted on the basis of one representative from each party and a few independents until the time of the general election. (17)

On 31 August, the Nepali Congress, the Rashtriya Congress and the Praja Parishad submitted a joint memorandum to the King to the effect that his Majesty should allow them to form a government either singly or collectively. (18) As the Gurkha Parishad was not a party to this memorandum it withdrew from the parleys by saying that there was no meeting-point between it and the other parties. (19)

Resumption of Negotiations

This agreement among Nepal's three important parties was in itself a big achievement. It showed that they were still willing to give a helping hand to the King to find a way out of the prevailing political impasse. On 23 October, Mahendra resumed negotiations with the Congress, the Praja Parishad and the Rashtriya Congress. After two days of protracted discussions,

(17) Ibid., 26-8.
(18) Ibid., 30.
the parties agreed to accept the royal formula to form a ministry consisting of 2 representatives from each of the parties and two to four Independents. It was also agreed that there would be no Prime Minister and that the King would himself preside over the cabinet meetings. (20) Judging from the attitude of the parties, it appears that they were not themselves satisfied with the formula but they accepted it because it provided them with a chance to enter the Government. But when the King himself prepared a panel of names from which the respective parties were asked to select their nominees for inclusion in the ministry, he overstepped his limits. (21) It was felt that the King was aiming to undermine the organizational freedom of the parties. Hence, the negotiations broke off on 6 November 1955.

Thus the general conduct of the Monarch at this time shows that, though he had become aware of the mounting opposition to direct rule, he was, nevertheless, extremely averse to the idea of parting with powers which had come to be concentrated in his hand. In a way, like George III of England, Mahendra was trying to become his own Prime Minister. He was seeking for such men in politics as could unquestionably place their loyalty in him. It was for this reason, perhaps, that he granted amnesty to the rebel-leader K. I. Singh who returned to Nepal in September 1955. (22) Mahendra's faith in the old guard of Nepalese politicians, especially

(21) Ibid.
(22) For details see Chapter Six, 244.
those belonging to the Nepali Congress, had been completely shaken. The latter, on the other hand, had begun to suspect the ultimate designs of their new Sovereign whose direct rule had been described by the Nepali Congress Chief, B. P. Koirala, as "the twin brother of reaction." (23)

The King once more made attempts in January 1956 to revive the old formula. When this failed, he suddenly announced on 27 January 1956, the formation of a new Cabinet with Tanka Prasad Acharya of the Praja Parishad as the Prime Minister. (24) By doing so the King prevented the formation of a united front of the political parties which the Nepali Congress was trying to build. The desertion of the Praja Parishad not only weakened the democratic camp, it showed to what extent opportunism and the race for power had corroded Nepalese party-politics.

II

The Acharya Cabinet

The new Cabinet headed by Tanka Prasad Acharya was by no means an improvement over the direct regime of the Crown. In the first place, it was not a homogeneous cabinet. Of the seven seats

(23) B. P. Koirala's appeal to other parties for the formation of a united front issued on 8 November 1955. Nepal Pukar, 8 (13 November 1955) 1, 8.

(24) The Praja Parishad Ministers in the Cabinet were: Tanka Prasad Acharya (Prime Minister), Balchandra Sharma, Chuda Prasad Sharma and Pasupatinath Ghose. The Independent Ministers were Sirdar Gunjaman Singh, Purendra Bikram Shah and Anirudha Prasad Singh. See also Appendix I.
in the Ministry, three were occupied by the royal Advisers who held
the portfolios of Finance, Defence and Parliamentary Affairs. (25)
The remaining four seats were distributed in such a way as to
satisfy the heterogeneous groups which had hastily formed the
Nepal Praja Parishad. Obviously, with such a loosely knit team,
Tanka Prasad was hardly in a position to infuse zeal or drive into
the administration. Secondly, notwithstanding his long record of
suffering and imprisonment, Tanka Prasad's political ideas remained
vague and nebulous. At one time he was known to have been in
sympathy with the Communists. (26) Later like most other politicians
he indulged in political opportunism and alternately joined the
Government or the Opposition according to his convenience. As a
result, Tanka Prasad failed to present a realistic programme to the
country. Indeed, he propounded, in his first statement as Prime
Minister, a highly utopian programme which had no relevance to the
concrete problems facing the country. He declared that it should
be his Government's policy "to join those forces which work for
the promotion of world peace and Asian solidarity against
colonialism." (27) He described Nehru's foreign policy as "praise-
worthy and supported the demand for taking aid from Russia and
China "without string." (28) In home affairs he hoped to build
"a new social order" by ending the feudalistic institutions and

(26) See Chapter Six, 264.
(28) Ibid.
bringing into use modern methods like industrialization "to promote the unity of the nation." (29)

But the new Premier failed to take into account the limited scope of his Government and the various restrictions imposed on him. The King who had undertaken at this time a long and arduous journey through various parts of the country, made it more than clear to his subjects that real authority rested solely and exclusively in his hand. The position of the Cabinet became so anomalous that the Samaj, a daily said to have been closely related to the Praja Parishad, commented that the royal tour had not been undertaken to strengthen democracy - "it has made a laughing-stock of the present Government." (30) Finding his position hopeless, Tanka Prasad himself became a willing tool in the service of the Monarch. He declared at a public meeting at Birganj that he would not tolerate any move which was aimed at lowering the status of the monarchy in Nepal. (31) As part of this policy he also claimed that his Government was not sure about the objectives of the general election. (32) This was an unfortunate remark which contradicted King Tribhuvan's categorical promise that he wanted the election to be held for the formation of a constituent assembly. Even the revised version of the Interim Government of Nepal Act of 1954 had laid down that

---

(30) *Samaj* (Kathmandu), 10 November 1956.
(32) *Gorkhapatra*, 56 (8 June 1956) 1. For its repercussion see also Chapter Six, 219-20.
The aims of the Interim Government shall be to create conditions, as early as possible, for holding elections for the Constituent Assembly which will frame a Constitution for Nepal / Section 68/. (33)

In violation of these commitments, Tanka Prasad made this remark which touched off a stormy political controversy. The Nepali Congress declared that the Prime Minister had gone over to the side of reaction by questioning the fundamental gain of the revolution of 1950-l. (34) Tanka Prasad's party countered this charge by saying that a Constituent Assembly would divide royal authority and that there would be two sovereigns in the country. (35) As the parties became divided among themselves over this subject the landed aristocracy and feudal forces also rallied their strength to hurl further blows on the tender sapling of democracy in Nepal.

The Achievements

Nevertheless, the Acharya Government took certain measures which had direct implications on the administrative, political and economic structure of the country. On 26 April 1956, a new Act was passed dealing with the authority and the jurisdiction of the Nepal Supreme Court. (36) It provided that the judges of the

(33) Emphasis added.


(35) Lok Varta (Kathmandu), 13 September 1956.

(36) Sarbochha Adalat Ain (Gorkhapatra Office, Kathmandu, 1956). On the same day the King by a proclamation constituted the Supreme Court with Anirudh Prasad Singh as the Chief Justice.
Supreme Court could not be removed unless they reached the retiring age of sixty, or tendered resignation of their own accord, or a special commission appointed for the purpose recommended their removal on the grounds of "misconduct or mismanagement." (37) The Court was to work as a Court of Record and was empowered to take action on matters amounting to contempt against itself (38) and to issue writs of Habeas Corpus and Mandamus, prohibitory orders and to initiate Quo Warranto proceedings. (39) The Supreme Court was also empowered to frame rules and regulations for observation by the lower courts for efficient discharge of justice. (40) The Act, however, affirmed that the Supreme Court could not abrogate or limit or disregard the powers of the Crown. (41)

The second important step taken by the Government was to lift the four year old ban on the Nepal Communist Party. In doing so Tanka Prasad perhaps entertained the hope that the Communists, with whom he had worked at one time, would give him support to meet the challenge of his opponents, especially that of the Nepali Congress. It is also possible that the changed tactics of the Communists, at this time, had made it possible for Tanka Prasad's Government to feel easier about them. (42)

(37) Section 3 (3), *ibid*.
(38) Section 9, *ibid*.
(39) Section 11, *ibid*.
(40) Sections 12 and 14, *ibid*.
(42) See also Chapter Six, 255.
Among other measures of the Government was the formation of an Administrative Reorganization Commission which submitted a report of its findings to the Government in September 1956. It drew up appropriate rules and by-rules for transaction of business of the Cabinet. (43) Also, in September, the Draft Five Year Plan with an outlay of Rupees 33 crores was published by the Government. The Plan visualized a pattern of investment which gave top priority to the development of the means of transport and communication which still remained extremely inadequate and in a stage of medieval backwardness. It aimed at developing a prosperous agricultural community which could prove both self-sufficient and produce surplus for export in order to be able to import consumer and capital goods. The Plan took in view the work of utilizing Nepal's natural resources to develop a solid industrial core for the national economy. (44)

New Orientation in Foreign Policy

The most significant development which Nepal made at this time and which had far-reaching influence on the development of her internal politics was in the sphere of foreign policy. In December 1955 Nepal was admitted to the United Nations - an event which was cheered and celebrated by all the Nepalese. But the

(43) See Nizamati Seva Ain 2013, Nepal Gazette, 6 (26 Bhadra 2013 B.S.) 6-16.

nationalist elements demanded for more concrete expressions of Nepal's status as a sovereign and independent nation. Goaded by these elements Tanka Prasad announced the substance of his foreign policy in the following words:

We must develop a neutrality under which Nepal will be able to serve the cause of peace and afford sympathy for the oppressed. We do not like the block system in human relations. We want open and frank relations between neighbours and nations based on mutual cooperative co-existence. (45)

In a sense, this policy indicated Nepal's new desire to break from the policy of isolationism which her rulers had followed previously. But a section of the Nepalese nationalists interpreted this change as a sign of Nepal's determination to fight Indian influence which they had come to regard as interference. This section supported Tanka Prasad's foreign policy because it helped their policy of anti-Indianism. King Mahendra, on the other hand, favoured this policy because he thought that Nepal's interests could be best served by linking her with the rest of the world and not with India alone. (46) Another factor which helped Tanka Prasad's foreign policy was the signing of the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954. (47) With the signing of this Agreement, India also favoured the idea that Nepal should have closer relations with China. As a result, Tanka Prasad's Government concluded on 20 September 1956 a treaty of friendship between China and Nepal.

(45) The Statesman, 3 September 1956.
(46) See his Coronation address, Gorkhanatra, 56 (7 May 1956) 1-2.
(47) For text of the Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet dated 29 April 1954 see Foreign Policy of India: Text of Documents 1947-59 (Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, 1959) 103-9.
which provided for the regularization of Nepal's relations with China on the basis of de jure recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. (48) By another agreement China assured to give Nepal economic assistance to the extent of Rupees six crores over the next three years. (49)

Tanka Prasad's successful negotiations with Communist China marked an advance in Nepal's foreign policy and it was not without justifiable pride that his Party's official organ, Lokvarta, boasted:

The Praja Parishad Government has broken the old isolation of Nepal which had prevented her from playing her own independent role in international affairs. The greatest achievement of Tanka Prasad's Government has been the establishment of friendly relations with China and strengthening Nepal's ties with India.

The fear created by the previous governments about Nepal's relative weakness before India has been dispelled by Tanka Prasad's successful tour of India. (50)

But this change in foreign policy brought the strain and evils of cold war in Nepal's internal politics. Rumours about foreign agents and their mysterious dealings grew rife in the uncertain political climate of Kathmandu. The fear of Nepal becoming too much involved with either China or India divided the parties and factions into rival camps. Politicians accused each other of being foreign agents or directly in the pay of

(48) For text of the Treaty see New Developments in Friendly Relations Between China and Nepal (Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1960) 1-6.

(49) The Statesman, 8 October 1956.

unidentified alien powers. Among Tanka Prasad's enemies, K. I. Singh became the most virulent and intemperate critic of his foreign policy. The Communists, on the other hand, offered unflinching support to the Prime Minister. But a section of the Praja Parishad Party itself grew anxious about the indirect results of Tanka Prasad's foreign policy and tried to restrain his too ebullient pro-China policy. (51)

Failure of Acharya's Ministry

By the end of 1956 rifts in the Praja Parishad assumed such proportions that the continuation of the Ministry became impossible. The same factors which had caused the dissolution of M. P. Koirala's Rashtriya Praja Party now began to work against the Praja Parishad. Tanka Prasad's controversial stand on the general election alienated a large section of his own partymen. The Opposition, on the other hand, exerted their joint pressure against the Government and demanded its dissolution. Even the Communists who supported Tanka Prasad's foreign policy did not spare him for the manner in which he conducted the home affairs. Inside the Cabinet, Ministers pulled in different directions and their constant frictions with top officials in the Central Secretariat virtually brought the administration to a stand-still. (52) In November 1956, two Praja Parishad Ministers, Balchandra Sharma and Pasupatinath Ghose, condemned the Prime Minister for relying more and more on

(51) Bhadra Kali Misra who was then the President of the Praja Parishad informed this writer that Tanka Prasad's policies, particularly in regard to China, came to be increasingly opposed by the ranks. He also asserted that Tanka Prasad's pro-China policy greatly damaged Nepal's relations with India.

(52) Samaj (Kathmandu), 8 May 1957.
the nominated members in the Cabinet than on his own party colleagues. (53) As these developments overwhelmed Tanka Prasad, the different constituents in the Praja Parishad began to drift from one another. In June 1957, the future of the Government was clearly foreseen at the Annual Conference of the Party where delegate after delegate condemned the Government in no uncertain terms. The situation went so out of control that a Nepalese paper noted with biting sarcasm:

It is surprising that the Nepal Praja Parishad has been entrusted with the reins of the Government, when its leaders are not in a position to put their own house in order. (54)

Another paper, the Commoner observed that "corruption, favouritism and all such other things have become" the Government's "watchwords and it has drifted away more and more from the objectives of the party." (55)

These developments in the Praja Parishad made it evident that a majority of its rank and file had lost confidence in the leadership of Tanka Prasad. In view of this serious situation the Mahasamiti (Central Committee) of the Party directed the Prime Minister to drop the Independent Ministers and compose a homogeneous cabinet. This tied Tanka Prasad's hands. He realized

(53) During his visit to India, it was reported that Tanka Prasad Acharya handed over his portfolios to a nominated member in the Cabinet. This was deeply resented by his party colleagues. See The Hindustan Times, 23 November 1956.

(54) Halkhabar (Kathmandu), 5 June 1957.

(55) The Commoner (Kathmandu), 3 June 1957.
that if he insisted on the resignation of the nominated ministers
the King would not listen to him. On the other hand, if he
disobeyed the party directive he would meet with the same fate
which had overtaken M. P. Koirala. As a result, he had no option
but to submit his resignation to the King in the first week of
July 1957.

In his letter of resignation, Tanka Prasad Acharya claimed
that the achievements of his Government had been more concrete than
those of any previous ones, "yet the pent up feelings and desires
of the people, which remained blockaded under Ranadom want
even more." (56) He informed the King of the decision of his Party
regarding the formation of a homogeneous cabinet because "these
demands of the people can be fulfilled only if more homogeneity
and efficiency is introduced in the Government." (57) This change
in the Cabinet, he stated, was more imperative because he intended
to levy a tax on "feudal income," to introduce land reforms and to
make necessary preparations for the election. (58)

Return of Dr. K. I. Singh

All along, during the first week of July, Mahendra held
separate talks with the leaders of different parties and groups.
At the end he held a private conference with Dr. K. I. Singh on
the night of 13 July and, shortly afterwards, he issued a

---

(57) Ibid.
(58) Ibid.
proclamation accepting the resignation of Tanka Prasad Acharya's Ministry. (59) The proclamation was phrased in such a manner as to give the impression that the Praja Parishad was responsible for all the failures of the Government. It stated that, as Tanka Prasad Acharya had himself expressed his inability to hold the general election, His Majesty had no alternative but to restore direct rule until he could find an alternative arrangement. (60) At the same time the King called upon Dr. K. I. Singh to conduct negotiations with other parties to form a composite Cabinet. Despite his efforts Singh failed to enlist the support of the major political parties (61) and, for sometime, it appeared as if this general boycott of Singh would prevent the King from putting too much faith in him. Yet, on 26 July 1957, a proclamation was issued from the royal palace inviting K. I. Singh to form a Ministry and at the same time announcing the formation of a National Council, a Work Expediting Committee and a Commission for supervising the progress of the First Five Year Plan. (62)


(60) Ibid.

(61) It was reported that Singh wrote a letter to B. P. Koirala inviting his suggestions for the new ministry, but the latter wrote back that there was nothing in common between the Congress and Singh's Party to warrant such talks. See Nepal Pukar, 10 (28 July 1957) 1.

(62) Royal Proclamation of 26 July 1957, Gorkhapatra, 57 (26 July 1957) 1. For members of the Cabinet see Appendix I.
In asking Dr. K. I. Singh to become Prime Minister, King Mahendra perhaps committed an error of judgement. He did not take into account the deep antipathy which the other political parties had against K. I. Singh who, since his return from exile, had become the most controversial figure in politics. Singh's vendetta on other political leaders, some of whom had been his old-time colleagues, had earned him more enmity than esteem. His unqualified support to the King and his vain remark that the Interim Constitution which promised to give the people an elected constituent assembly was fit to be thrown into "a waste-paper basket," (63) had stamped him as a reactionary politician. The party which Singh had formed was too insignificant to be considered fit, anyway, to run a government. Hence the King's preference for him aroused deep misapprehensions in other political quarters. It was generally believed that the King was planning to postpone the general election with the help of Dr. K. I. Singh. This fear was substantiated when the King made no reference to the election or to its objectives in his proclamation of 26 July. Hence, almost all the leading political parties condemned the step taken by the King. In a surprisingly bold article entitled "Raja je Galti Gardeinau" (The King can do no wrong), the Nepal Pukar of the Nepali Congress observed, "A king who does no wrong and at the same time does not

---

(63) Nepal Press Digest (Kathmandu), 6 (17 June - 1 July 1957) 5. See also Chapter Six.
care for the sufferings of the people, will find no sympathy from
the future historians." (64) The Politburo of the Nepal Communist
Party called for the holding of an all-party conference to devise
ways and means to defeat the reactionary conspiracy. (65) The
Praja Parishad, which smarted under the insult of being pushed
out of power so unceremoniously, declared that it was prepared to
join other parties to defend democracy. (66)

Polarization in Politics

Thus, at this time, a definite polarization began to take
place in politics. With K. I. Singh and a number of smaller
parties and groups a camp grew up which pledged full support to
the King irrespective of the political views which they held.
On the other hand, some of the major parties drew nearer to each
other and sank their minor differences in order to put up joint
resistance to the increasing power of the Monarch. For the first
time they boldly questioned the authority of the Crown and demanded
a clear definition of his powers. In the struggle that ensued
between these two groups, the Crown was dragged into the centre
of political controversy in Nepal.

Further, the vindictive attitude of K. I. Singh's Government
alienated other influential sections of the society. Early in
September K. I. Singh declared that he would put all ex-ministers

(64) Nepal Pukar, 10 (21 July 1957) 2.
(66) Ibid., 19 July 1957.
and ex-prime ministers on trial for defrauding the nation to the
tune of Rupees 5 crores or even more. (67) But when he was asked
to substantiate his charge, he failed to do so. In similar manner,
the business community of Kathmandu got dead set against him when
he threatened to take penal action against them for profiteering
and to break their monopoly of trade by setting up distribution
agencies on a regional basis. The Government got more discredited
when it resorted to repressive measures in order to throttle the
Opposition. Within less than two weeks after his Government was
sworn in, three important newspapers of Kathmandu, the Divalo,
the Bhugol Park and the Samaj, were put out of circulation because
of the heavy securities demanded of them. (68) The bellicose
attitude of the Government was further evinced when a special police
unit under a police superintendent was set up at Kathmandu. (69)
It was also reported that the Prime Minister was contemplating to
form a special intelligence service to be kept directly under
himself. (70) These developments gave rise to the suspicion that
K. I. Singh was set on capturing power through "Fascist" methods.
It was even alleged that Singh was investing money into private
business and that in order to cover this fact he had invented the
charge of embezzlement against the preceding governments. (71)

(67) Halkhabar, 3 September 1957.
(68) Ibid., 7 August 1957.
(69) Gorkhanatra, 57 (12 August 1957) 1.
(70) Ibid.
(71) Samaj, 19 October 1957.
As usual, the opposition parties found it very convenient to declare that Singh's Government was out to sell Nepal because it had agreed to let India use surplus irrigation water of Nepal! (72)

Formation of the Democratic Front

The over-all effect of these charges and counter-charges, and fears and suspicions was that the anti-monarchical elements became dominant in politics. Even the parties which had liberally conceded that the Crown's extensive powers were necessary at a particular stage of political development now became critical of those powers. Early in August, the Nepali Congress, the Rashtriya Congress and the Nepal Praja Parishad joined together to form a democratic front for the second time. In a joint communique issued on 9 August, the three parties declared

We, the signatory parties who believe in the principle that sovereignty resides with the people, having felt the need of forging unity;

And, though we concerned parties believe in different things regarding the objective of the elections; i.e. the Nepal Praja Parishad advocating elections for a sovereign parliament, and the rest, the Nepali Congress and the Nepal Rashtriya Congress believing in having the elections held for a sovereign constituent assembly;

And, further keeping in view the crisis that ensued from the royal palace, we have come to the conclusion that in absence of a strong organization of the democrats, neither a sovereign parliament according to the demands of the Nepal Praja Parishad nor a sovereign constituent assembly as demanded by the Nepali Congress and the Nepali Rashtriya Congress can be fulfilled;

And, as there is a possibility that the very fundamental rights which the people have won after the revolution of 2007 will be ended, we have decided to join in a democratic front;

(72) See Nepal Samachar (Kathmandu), 21 October 1957; Desh Seva (Kathmandu), 21 October 1957 and Halkhabar, 22 October 1957.
Whereas the name of the Front will be Democratic Front, the objective will be 1) to strengthen democratic forces and to meet the impending threat to democracy; and 2) to safeguard the fundamental civic rights of the people. (73)

The changing tone in the attitude of these parties was evident from this declaration. It did not hesitate to admit that the constituents of the Front did not see eye to eye so far as the objective of the general election was concerned, but this did not prevent them from joining hands to meet a bigger threat to civil liberties. Another remarkable development was that the Front was welcomed by the Nepal Communist Party, the Terai Congress and a number of smaller parties. (74)

The formation of the Democratic Front made a significant contribution in another direction. Instead of confining its activities to the demand for the formation of an alternative government as in the past, the Front focussed public attention on those fundamental questions which had been present underneath the uncertain and tumultuous events of Nepal's political life. These questions were: With whom did sovereignty lie - the people or the King? What was the chief aim of the armed insurrection of 1950-1? Was it merely to submit to another form of despotism or to establish a popular democratic system for the general welfare and well-being

(73) The Commoner, 10 August 1957.

(74) The Communist Party at first criticized the Front as it thought it could serve no useful purpose. See The Commoner, 14 August 1957. Later, in November, the Party's Central Committee welcomed the Front's decision to launch a civil disobedience movement and even offered to participate in the movement. Ibid., 23 November 1957.
of the nation? If the goals of the Nepalese revolution remained still unattained what were the immediate tasks before the people? These were the questions which the Democratic Front posed and, in the process of answering them, it subjected the institution of monarchy to a close scrutiny.

Thus, in the very first statement after its formation, the Front challenged the theory of divine right of monarchy and declared

We deny the validity of the divine rights of the monarch and affirm the democratic right of criticism of the acts of the King.

We affirm that individual acts of the King can never be above democratic criticism, particularly when the King acts without reference to democratic and constitutional practices. (75)

Thus the personal role of the King in politics came under heavy fire of criticism. At a public meeting at Janakpur, held under the auspices of the Front, B. P. Koirala stated that the King had no right to rule the country through dictatorial methods. He asserted that the people were not willing to accept him as their God. (76) The Praja Parishad leader, B. K. Misra, alleged that it was mainly due to the policies pursued by the King that Nepal had lost her political stability. (77) In the heat of political debates even questions regarding income and expenditure of the Crown were raised. Criticizing the Privy Purse of the King,

(75) The Commoner, 16 August 1957.

(76) Naya Samaj (Kathmandu), 21 September 1957.

For B. P. Koirala's ideas on kingship see Chapter Six, 220.

(77) Ibid.
Ganeshman Singh, an ex-Minister and a prominent leader of the Nepali Congress, alleged that it had increased to the extent of about 50 to 60 lakhs of rupees which was a tremendous drain on the public exchequer. (78)

In September, King Mahendra constituted, in accordance with his previous proclamation, the four-man National Council with his brother, Prince Basundhara Bikram Shah, as the Chairman. (79) This gave a fresh opportunity to the political parties to criticize the King. The Democratic Front regarded that the Council was a highly undemocratic institution as it would work as a super-cabinet over the Cabinet of K. I. Singh. (80) This criticism was partly justified because the Act which defined the powers and functions of the National Council specifically laid down that it would advise the King on such matters as were referred to it by the latter, give its suggestions on any matter related to the well-being of the country and frame rules for regulating its functions with the approval of the King. (81) Strictly speaking these functions could have been easily rendered by the Cabinet itself and there were no compelling circumstances to form the new Council.

Postponement of the General Election

But the worst crisis came in October when the King announced that owing to various practical difficulties it would not be

(78) Nepal Pukar, 10 (23 September 1957) 7.

(79) Other members of the Council were Arun Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana, Gaya Prasad Shah and Khadga Nara Singh Rana.

(80) Naya Samaj, 11 September 1957.

possible for the Government to hold the general election in time. (82) The storm raised over the announcement overshadowed, for a while, all other matters in politics. Strikes and protest demonstrations were held in different parts of the country, and 8 October was observed as a "black day" by the Democratic Front. At the same time about 350 delegates and active workers of the Front met at Birganj to confer on the changed situation in politics. The Conference passed a resolution deploiring the postponement of the election. It stated that a struggle had become imminent in view of "the threats to democracy" (83) and demanded that a new date for the election should be announced within a period of two months. If His Majesty failed in this, the Front declared that it would start a civil disobedience movement from 8 December 1957. (84)

**Dismissal of K. I. Singh**

Meanwhile a fresh crisis occurred in the Government when K. I. Singh's Ministry was dismissed on 14 November 1957. (85) The dismissal was so sudden and unexpected that everyone in Kathmandu, including the Cabinet Ministers, was taken by surprise. The Commoner reported that unaware of his downfall, K. I. Singh

(82) Royal Proclamation of 6 October 1957, The Commoner, 6 October 1957.

(83) Nepal Pukar, 10 (14 October 1957) 35.

(84) Ibid., 5. The Conference also elected an Action Committee consisting of B. P. Koirala, D. R. Regmi and B. K. Misra to enlist public support for the incoming struggle.

herself contacted the Radio Station to obtain the text of the royal proclamation. (86) The reasons for the dismissal were not, however, made clear in the announcement. It only referred to "compelling circumstances" (87) in vague terms and declared that, in the absence of an alternative arrangement, His Majesty would personally administer the country. Singh himself refused to explain the reasons for his dismissal though, later, he released several vague and improbable statements which made the confusion worse confounded. (88)

Yet, certain guesses about the circumstances which led to the fall of K. I. Singh can be made here. In the first place, Singh's impetuous character proved too difficult for him to hold on to a responsible position for a long time. His irresponsible statements and unsupported charges added to the number of his enemies and alienated the sympathy of army officials and an influential section of the civil servants. Even the King who had preferred him to other politicians found it inadvisable to keep him in power any longer. Perhaps, the too openly critical attitude of the Democratic Front persuaded him to part with Singh who had become more a liability than an asset to him. Finally, a majority of the ranks in Singh's own Party, the Samyukta Praja Tantra Party, were dissatisfied with the highhanded manner in which Singh conducted himself as Prime Minister. Thus, like M. P. Koirala

(87) Nepal Gazette, n. 85.
(88) For K. I. Singh's behaviour see also Chapter 246-7.
and Tanka Prasad Acharya, K. I. Singh too found to his dismay that his prime ministership had cost him the following of his own party-
men.

The dismissal of K. I. Singh was greeted with mixed feelings of joy and apprehension by the parties. Some of them congratulated the King for nipping in the bud the "dictatorship" which Singh was planning to impose upon the country. Others, mainly the Democratic Front, feared that the reimposition of King's direct rule would deal a further blow to democracy. For sometime though, the leaders of the Front conducted negotiations with the palace regarding the feasibility of forming a new ministry. (89) But when these overtures failed to elicit response the Front reaffirmed its earlier decision to wage a non-violent struggle against the "military regime" of the King. The prevailing mood of the Front was expressed by the Nepal Pukar in these words

Today the King of Nepal has become so autocratic that the people pale into insignificance before him. He sets up cabinets favourable to him according to his wishes and dissolves them. This has affected the administrative stability and the progress of the country. At a time when a Seven Year Plan could have been fulfilled in the country, we have become the laughing-stock of the world. The elections have not been held even once and the good name of democracy has been impaired. Disorder has been let loose in the country. (91)

---

(89) Naya Samaj, 7 December 1957. At one time it was also reported that the Front was willing to join the Government on conditions dictated by the King. See Halkhabar, 9 December 1957.

(90) Shahi Sandesh (Kathmandu), 20 November 1957.

On 7 December, in response to the call of the Front, Kathmandu observed hartal (strike) which forced the Government, a day later, to enforce the Essential Services Act which authorized commissioners, magistrates and Bada Hakims to "sentence anyone found guilty of spreading hatred against His Majesty the King or the Royalty or indulging in such attempts as to raise contempt against them, upto three years imprisonment and Rupees 3,000 fine." (92) On 9 December, picketing at Kathmandu took a serious turn when the police tear gassed and lathi-charged the students. In protest, the student community of Birganj and Biratnagar observed strikes and the movement began to spread in other districts. At this stage, recognizing the political temper of the country, King Mahendra decided to hold a political conference for the second time at the royal palace.

Second Political Conference at the Royal Palace

The Conference that opened at the royal palace on 6 December 1957 was attended by the leaders of eleven political parties and some independents. (93) Among the important parties only the Nepal Communist Party was not invited, while K. I. Singh's Samyukta Prajatantra Party preferred to keep out of the Conference on its own accord. The two main questions which came up for discussion at the Conference were - 1) when should the date of election be fixed, and 2) what should be the objectives of the election.


(93) The parties were the Nepali Congress, the Praja Parishad, the Rashtriya Congress, the Gurkha Parishad, the Nepal Terai Congress, the Janarajya Parishad, the Praja Parishad (Parallel), the Rashtriya Praja Party, the Nepali Congress (Parallel), the Rashtriya Congress (Parallel) and the Prajatantrik Mahasabha.
Though opinions differed on these questions, the King admitted that there was unanimity of opinion among all the concerned parties regarding the necessity of the general election. (94) At the same time, he deplored the agitation started by the Democratic Front which he feared would create more problems and chaos in the country. (95)

The tripartite Front, however, refused to call off the civil disobedience movement on the ground that the King had not conceded to its main demand i.e., the announcement of an early date for the election. The King countered this demand by saying that, while the Front had submitted a report to him stating that election should be held within a period of six or seven months, other parties which "had made a special study of the files" (96) of the Election Commission, held the view that the election should be held only from 12 February 1959. He stated further that the suggestion to hold the election in six months' time when the rainy season would commence and dislocate communication and means of transport, was impracticable. Hence, he issued a proclamation stating that the election would be held from 18 February 1959 which happened to be the National Day of Nepal. (97)

(94) See Rajnaik Sammelan (Publicity Department, HM Government, Kathmandu, 1957) 99.
(95) Ibid., 99-100.
(96) Gorkhapatra, 57 (16 December 1957) 1.
(97) Royal Proclamation of 15 December 1957, ibid., 1.
Dissolution of the Democratic Front

Welcoming the royal pronouncement as a "victory of the people," the Democratic Front tentatively suspended the movement. (98) But as the proclamation did not mention the objective of the election, considerable doubts prevailed as to whether the royal offer could be accepted or not. A large section of the Front workers demanded that unless the aims of the election were explained the movement should not be withdrawn. In the face of these different pulls within the Democratic Front, its former unity began to crack. As a matter of fact, the relation between the three constituents of the Front had never been very cordial inspite of the several gestures made by their leaders to convert the Front into a single political body by merger. These merger attempts failed because, in the first place, the parties were not united in their opinion regarding the formation of a constituent assembly. While the Congress and the Rashtriya Congress were in favour of such an assembly, the Praja Parishad wanted only a sovereign Parliament. Secondly, the superior resources of the Nepali Congress were resented by the other two parties. They feared that if a merger took place their independent status would be swept away by the Nepali Congress. The crisis was precipitated when the King announced, on 1 February 1958, that the election would be held for a bi-cameral legislature in accordance with a constitution to be drafted by a committee. The announcement also stated that the King had decided to form an Advisory Assembly, a new Election Commission

(98) Nepal Pukar, 10 (19 December 1957) 1.
and a Council of Ministers to work as caretaker government until the general election. (99)

The announcement came at a moment when the delegates of the three Front parties had assembled at Birganj to formulate a programme for future activities. It at once started off an acrimonious debate at the Conference. As the Nepali Congress had all along advocated the establishment of a constituent assembly, it hesitated to accept the royal offer. (100) On the other hand, the Praja Parishad welcomed the proclamation, while the Rashtriya Congress simply waited to see the next move of the Nepali Congress. As rifts appeared on surface, the Nepali Congress accused its partners of not taking an active part in the Satyagraha and declared that, as parties, they held little influence in the country. (101) This touched off an unseemly quarrel among the three constituents and, amidst scenes of charges and counter-charges, the Democratic Front died an ignoble death.

Its Contributions. But, though the Front proved shortlived and its dissolution showed that in Nepalese politics the influence of personalities and their personal bickerings was greater than ideologies, its contributions cannot be minimized. In the first place, the formation of the Front showed that the democratic forces in Nepal had still a chance to grow if parties agreed to submerge their differences and form broad united fronts. Secondly, as the

(99) Gorkhapatra, 57 (3 February 1958) 1, 3.

(100) See also Chapter Six.

Nepali Congress proved itself to be most active in the Front, it was able to reorganize its own house and recover most of its lost popularity. Finally, the Front was the first political organization in Nepal which put up, howsoever feeble, a challenge to royal autocracy and temporarily provided an answer to the dictatorial tendencies of the Monarch. This achievement was summed up by a Nepalese political commentator as follows:

The unification and a sense of cooperation in the political sphere proved that Nepal was getting politically mature inspite of some drawbacks. The behaviour of the Government had shown that it could put up with criticism and accept the constructive part of them. (102)

IV

New Phase in Politics

An assessment of the political situation at the beginning of 1958 shows that a new phase had begun in politics by this time. In concrete terms the gains on the side of democracy were not many. But the conflict during the past six months had brought out the salient features which had remained obscure underneath the chameleonic facade of Nepalese politics. It showed that the interim arrangement, which had come to be made some eight years ago, had given rise to some powerful vested interests who worked hard to perpetuate the unsettled state of politics in the country. Between these elements and the political parties, was the Monarch himself who emerged as the strongest political force in the country.

(102) *The Commoner*, 20 December 1957.
The extent of his powers was seen when he virtually silenced the demand for a constituent assembly - a right which the people had won after the revolution. By now, the object of King Mahendra's policy was made quite clear. He was not interested in becoming merely the constitutional head of the State; he wanted to become the Sovereign in every sense of the term.

The Caretaker Government, 1958-59

On 16 March, the King appointed a Draft Constitution Committee which included Bhagwati Prasad Singh as the Chairman, and Ram Raj Panth, S. P. Upadhyay, Randhir Subba and Hora Prasad Joshi as members. (103) On 15 May, the King also announced the formation of a Council of Ministers comprising the nominees of the Nepali Congress, the Gurkha Parishad, the Rashtriya Congress, the Praja Parishad and two Independents. (104) The Council was specifically asked to work for the election, to help the Draft Constitution Committee and to carry on the routine work of administration until the general election. (105)

With the formation of this caretaker Government a semblance of stability returned to politics. The powers and responsibilities of the ministers were clearly defined so as to give no cause for friction or misunderstanding among them. The post of the Prime

---

(103) S. P. Upadhyay and Hora Prasad Joshi belonged to the Nepali Congress though the latter was more or less independent in his views. Randhir Subba was the President of the Gurkha Parishad. Later, Sir Ivor Jennings, the noted British constitutional expert, was invited to Nepal to help and advise the Committee.

(104) For the names of the Ministers see Appendix I.

Minister was abolished. Subarna Shamsher, as Chairman of the Council, was asked to supervise various departments of the Government. The efficacy of the new arrangement was made evident within a fortnight when the Council published, with royal approval, Nepal's first **Peoples Representation Act**, which laid down the qualifications of voters, procedure of nomination of the candidates, and laws and by-laws regulating the exercise of adult franchise. (106)

On 29 May 1958, the King gave his assent to another Act defining the framework of the newly constituted Council of State consisting of his two brothers, Himalaya Bir Bikram Shah and Basundhara Bir Bikram Shah, and Subarna Shamsher, Khadag Singh Rana and Hansman Singh. The Council was to work partly as an intermediary between the King and the Council of Ministers and partly as a Regency Council. Its main functions were to examine the steps taken by ministers in regard to appointment or dismissal of government servants and report them to the King for approval, to pass ordinances during the absence of the Monarch and to enforce any proclamation issued by him from outside the country. The Act, however, laid down that the Council of State had no power to dismiss the Council of Ministers. (107)

As preparations for the election went ahead, the political parties intensified their agitational activities. By August 1958 it became evident that the three parties of the Democratic Front would not be in a position to conclude an electoral alliance. At the same time, personal differences between Tanka Prasad Acharya

---

(106) For detail see Chapter Five, 172-3.

and Bhadra Kali Misra led to a serious split in the Praja Parishad. (108) The Nepali Congress, however, began to reorganize its local units on a constituency basis and launched a mass contact drive. The Gurkha Parishad and the Communist Party concentrated their election campaign in those areas where they had a sure chance of winning.

The Third Advisory Assembly

As promised earlier, the King opened on 26 November Nepal's third Advisory Assembly which consisted of 91 members. The scope of the Assembly was as limited as those of the preceding ones. It was specifically stated that the Assembly had no power to vote, nor could its decisions affect the continuance of the Government in any manner. (109) The selection of the members was made on the basis of indirect nomination, though later, on the insistence of political parties, 13 new members were coopted to it. (110)

But the character of the Assembly was so heterogeneous that it soon became a platform of as many opinions and voices as there were members in it. The Independents and representatives of smaller political groups utilized the House as a convenient platform to hurl

(108) See also Chapter Six, 265-6.
(109) Gorkhapatra, 58 (3 February 1958) 1.
(110) The method of nomination was as follows - in each district a selection Board was constituted with the Bada Hakim, the Mal Hakim (Revenue Officer), Amini Adalat Hakim (civil court judge), and two prominent citizens of the district. This board sent a panel of five names which the people had voted for in their Garhis, Goudas, or Goswaras. It was from these names that the King prepared the final list of members. See Dhundri Raj Sharma, n. 11, 384.
abuses on the Council of Ministers. They began demanding the postponement of the general election on the ground that the voters' list was neither correct nor complete. On 16 December some Independents and members of D. R. Regmi's party managed to pass a resolution in the Assembly demanding that the election should be held only after the publication of the Constitution. (111) Some political leaders outside the Assembly repeated the same demand among whom Tanka Prasad and Ranga Nath Sharma, President of the Prajatantrik Mehasabha were most prominent. On 20 December, 37 social and political organizations submitted a memorandum to the King urging him to postpone the election. The King, however, reiterated that the election would be held on the scheduled date.

With final doubts about the election dispelled, the parties plunged into a full-scale election campaign and got busy in drafting their manifestos, pamphlets and door to door election canvassing. On 12 February 1959, King Mahendra announced the new Constitution abrogating the Interim Government of Nepal Act of 1951. With it ended the first phase of political developments in Nepal.