

A CENTURY OF FAMILY AUTOCRACY IN NEPAL

*(Being the account of the condition and history
of Nepal during the last hundred years
of Rana autocracy, 1846-1949)*

BY
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WITH A FOREWORD
BY
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Dedicated

**To the memory of the brave Nepalese
patriots who perished in the
fight against tyranny.**

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

BY THE AUTHOR

Nepal continues to be a mystery land hidden in the little mountain groove confined all to itself. The almost beastly conditions in this part of the world, primitive as well as gruesome, can better be imagined than described in words. Yet it is not an ordinary case of a primitive and backward environment deliberately maintained, nor of commonplace isolation and of naked tyranny and enslavement. A Century of Family Autocracy with all its cruelty and exploitation sits heavily tight on its breast arresting its growth in all directions. No where in this age is an example of a family ruling by virtue of proprietary rights so shamelessly evident in its entire phase of vile persistence and unpleasant manifestations just as we find in present day Nepal under the tyrannous regime. But the most painful aspect of the problem has been its relegation to the background far from the gaze of the outside world, a fact which has been utilised by the autocracy in power to perpetrate and perpetuate its heinous act of enslavement and exploitations. This book is intended to throw light on the various problems so far lying obscure and to draw the attention of the world towards the unhappy lot of the Nepalese people.

A major portion of the book covers the ground of a lengthy note which was prepared by the author in

the early months of 1942 for presenting the various aspects of the Nepalese problem to the Indian leaders on the eve of the great August revolution. That was the time when even in the distant corner of the Himalayas the message of freedom had resounded and everyone of us had felt its urge to advance on the road to a grim struggle against the rampant feudal tyranny. Unfortunately, however, the note fell into the hands of the Indian C. I. D. to be later on used as an incriminating evidence against the author in a fake conspiracy case which entailed so much of harassment and suffering to him personally and got lost in the tangle and tragic drama ensuing thereafter.

The present book is an enlarged edition of the same note reproduced from memory rewritten and reworked to contain the details as they unfolded in course of the fearless search for truth in the atmosphere of free India after 1946. I have also added a new chapter covering the incidents and facts since 1942 up till today to make the document as up-to-date as could be made possible in the changed situation, which was lacking in view of the earlier work to have been completed in 1942. The book emerging in its present size traces events as a historical survey to the day as late as October, 1949.

This book thus describes conditions of Nepal in all their nudity and horror as they developed during the last hundred years of the autocratic rule of the Rana family. The readers will note that these conditions are unique in the power of resistance they possess in showing themselves hideously perpetuated, to which

a great interest naturally attaches for those of us in India, whose mind has been trained in an atmosphere of change owing to the unexpected withdrawal of the British Rule in 1947.

The sources for the historical narratives are mostly eye-witnesses' account of them supplemented by a few available records which the author had to verify by data obtained in India. I have not brushed aside the flattering and biased versions of the events and accounts of personalities left by interested Europeans. But in trying to finalise the conclusions I have always erred on the side of logical probabilities and on deductions dictated by common sense to be based on the study of the present condition of the place, which also accurately reveals the grim story of the past in that context.

About the relevance of such a document as is produced here I hope no body will have the least doubt. Such a fact giving document presented without the least distortion does not exist so far in regard to Nepal and further as a country coming once again into the world picture the urgency of knowing things in its relation has been never so keenly felt as at present. The author will be gratified if this contribution to the knowledge of the subject goes to satisfy the curiosity of those seeking knowledge of that subject and if it also went to enliven and stimulate world interest in the unhappy tale of the Nepalese there will be a cause to be satisfied and optimistic about the future of the struggle which the Nepalese people are waging relentlessly at the moment.

‘Hundred years of tyranny’ was the title of the work originally proposed. But it was taken to be undermining the historical value of the material and also showing the author to be a mere propagandist with a blurred vision and unduly prejudiced in mind. This apprehension might be incorrect and too far-fetched, but the author had no doubt that this title was likely to create misunderstanding. The present title ‘A Century of Family Autocracy in Nepal’ has been, therefore, adopted to avoid any such impression, although the content has stuck unaltered even to a word.

In the end, I would like to express my gratitude to friends who have helped me in my task. I want to mention in particular the venerable name of Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the President of the Indian National Congress, whose foreword contributed to this book has definitely enhanced its value and prestige. It was very kind of him to spare a part of his busy time for the work, to go through the ordeal of reading the typed manuscript at great length and to write the foreword. It only speaks of his profound solicitude for the people of Nepal. I am really proud of being able to be favoured with the foreword and feel so much indebted to him that it is difficult for me to express in words. The patron without whose monetary assistance the book could not have seen the light of print is another person to whom I owe a debt of gratitude.

Banaras

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FOREWORD

BY DR. B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA,
PRESIDENT, INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

In the midst of a flowing river in its freshes with its undulatory waves and their ripples, with its whirling eddies and treacherous shoals, you find here and there a few islets and islands, which, in every way, present a glaring contrast to the rushing torrents of turbid waters charged with alluvium from the mountains and forests traversed by the full flooded streams. Even such was the contrast between Bharat and the sovereign States carved out by the British. These 562 States have now been effaced from the map of India and are no longer the citadels of autocracy that they had been for a century and a quarter. Not far removed from this category of islets in the vast ocean flood of Bharat lies to the North a tiny little island nestled on mountain heights 55,000 sq. miles in extent, with a population of eight millions and a revenue of four crores of rupees, largely derived from agricultural land. Except that the king of Nepal is considered His Majesty and that Ambassadors were accredited to the State, this tiny island had presented for long and presents today the same antocracy, the same limited number of Ranas who are of the favoured class and whose families not more than forty in number, are Heaven born dubbing every member a Colonel or General or Lt. General. These are the members of the Ruling Class, judges without legal knowledge, generals without military training and administrators without past experience. The Prime Minister's place is as much a hereditary fixture as that of the real king who is a figure-head

like the Mul Virat of the Hindu temples while the priests enjoying hereditary rights are the heirs to all the privileges of rulership.

Nepal is a police State where Law and Order are maintained by arbitrary rule and barbarous physical torture is extent as a form of punishment, where civil liberties are unknown, popular and public life is anathema, education is at a low ebb and punchayet organisation functions under sufferance. Nay, human intercourse between Nepal and the outside world is virtually cut off so far as ingress is concerned, and youngmen outside the pale of Royal patronage and family oligarchy can look forward to no careers worth mentioning. There is no ideology of freedom permitted to be propagated, and men and women grow virtually as a sub-human race. Nepal is really an incongruity and anachronism in the modern age. The wealth of the country—mineral and forest alike—is left unexplored. Outside Kathmandu the Law prohibits even the building of a pucca house with tiled roofing by a non-Rana without the permission of the authorities. Life and property are unsafe. The bulk of the revenues goes to the coffers of the Prime Minister and his relations. Slavery was only abolished in 1923, but it is really transformed and takes on the garb of a voluntary agreement to the loss of one's freedom by mortgaging oneself.

British diplomacy which had planted the Sultans of Malaya, the Shan States of Burma and the Indian Princes—the same diplomacy succeeded in reducing the king of Nepal to that of a nominal head (for he had signed away his powers to the Rana family) and converting him into a prisoner in the palace, who is kept

under the strictest surveillance and not allowed to exercise any power whatever. The heir-apparent's position is no better and one may live in Nepal for years without seeing or hearing of the king.

Even into such an isolated and antediluvian land the call of freedom penetrated and had its echoes and re-echoes in remote corners, its percussions and re-percussions on the people all over. It was the outbreak of the Second World War really that brought into being a Praja Parishad (composed of some Nepalese youth) which had started operations at Patna and later transferred them to Kathmandu. It was no small achievement for the Parishad to be able to bring the young king of the day to the organisation and secure his patronage for itself. Nevertheless its members later faced the usual music of life or long terms imprisonments, while shooting and underground activities later came into being. The shooting of two of Nepal's sons and the hanging of two others in the last week of January 1941 bathed the land in the blood of the martyrs which has since become the seed of the Church of Freedom. Although the Praja Parishad met with an untimely end it had achieved unique success in awakening the masses and creating in them a spirit of revolt against tyranny. Nepal has since taken to the pursuit of her task of self-emancipation both from within and without. Nepal too has had her reforms, but they perpetuate the absolute and personal rule in the State. Economic reforms, university education and agricultural improvement are still in the dreamland. As usual the popular organisation suffered internal division, but the task of the Nepal National Congress continued with the Praja

Panchayat as a sister body raising the banner of revolt inside Nepal.

Political speeches and police notifications went apace. Satyagraha and councils of action presently came into being. But divided counsels and internecine differences here as elsewhere spoiled the prospect. Although all was quiet on the Northern front towards the end of 1949, it was a quiet that supervened on a period of stress and strain, widespread awakening and deep-rooted self-consciousness. The seeming silence of the people marks their sullenness, not their satisfaction. Nepal cannot remain an autocracy while Bharat enjoys the honour of a sovereign republic. Bharat has no designs upon Nepal and casts no evil eye upon its navigable rivers, its abundant forest wealth or its rich mineral resources, its oranges or sugar-cane, its jute and hessian, its rice and millet, its rye and maize or its barley and potato. Nepal's pure Aryan race and glorious culture constitute an inseparable link between Nepal and Bharat. Bharat's interest in Nepal is no less and no more than her interest in other Asiatic countries. But Nepal's present state will not be allowed to continue without disturbing Bharat's feelings and mind.

The thanks of the public in general and of Nepal in particular are due to the author Shree D. R. Regmi, for this account in lucid and fascinating style, of the history and present position of Nepal. Where there is real awakening of the people, no one can resist their right to inherit what is theirs by right and by efforts.

New Delhi :
19-10-1949.

(Sd.) B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya

CHAPTER I

Introductory Observation

Terra Incognita

Nepal has remained so long a hidden land relegated to a situation of darkness and obscurity and in a slough of despond and medieval slumber, into which it has been persistently blamished by the aristocracy and from which it cannot rise unless there is total freedom from this selfish stock. Those who are enamoured, so as to fall in with readily, of British propaganda, a stuff of nonsense served to people outside Nepal which has obtained credulity because of the reason that those who accept them have hardly any interest in that hapless country, lose sight of the hellish condition under which the people are groaning, almost starving, foodless, ignorant and uncivilised. It is one thing to pride in the beauties of natural sceneries or to take stock of the past, of the various splendours of art and architecture and Nepal is wonderfully prolific in this respect, but to make them objects to screen palpable exploitation going endlessly behind nature's soft hand and under a glorious past is what would amount to a great injustice not only for the cause of the poor people of Nepal but for all true sense of justice and right which have been too

glaringly killed is our country, more so even as the glories of the past have been freely axed and interfered with by those whose praise is sung by foreign mercenary flatterers.

Nepal is a triple incongruity. Geographically it is a part of the Indian Sub-continent, but yet outside her so much so that it has lost almost all connections with India, even the most rudimentary type of intercourse like telegraph communication is non-existent. The country is supposed to be independent (?) and even accepting that it is so, there has been practically no endeavour towards bringing the country in line with other civilised countries, the status of independence has come only as an immunity and a shield from punishment for all acts of commission and omission perpetrated by the rulers, for though the British Government had always controlled the foreign policy of the country, they had so tactfully kept themselves aloof from internal administration that the Ranas, the rulers of the country, have found the situation to their own advantage, they are today as also in the past monarchs irresponsible and irresponsive doing whatever they like without fear of admonition or otherwise by any external agency or Political Department of the Government of India. Britain had never cared to redeem the condition, the people were suffering under and though the entire population was ignorant of Britain's tacts and designs yet the impression was that Britain had protected the Rana autocrats for its own sake, because only under feudal subjugation and misrule a foreign Government can draw upon the resources of an inde-

pendent country and curiously Nepal had been kept nominally independent to that end from the very beginning, even though the British might have absorbed it at any time. The incongruous nature is doubly expressive, while the British lived, the country was neither really independent nor the rulers had rendered its plight so as to deserve this kind of status and strengthened themselves to maintain that position but at the same time they had so falsely assumed the garb of independence that this had been utilised to cow down the dissenting elements rather than to enhance the prestige of their country. Thirdly, the country is rich in natural resources with plenty of water power, forest and mineral wealth, but it is so much backward that a Railway engine is a curio inside Nepal. This triple incongruity is a tragedy writ large in its face which we suffer heedlessly and unknowingly as though it were a part of existence and deaf to the call of freedom and imperious to all what tremendous changes have affected them.

If this is not a tragedy, what else it is ! Think of a country like Nepal vast and abundant, which enjoys every facility for a large and speedy development in industrial and agricultural spheres ; think of its forest wealth, of water power supplied by the seven Gandaks and seven Kosis running through its entire length and breadth ; think of its mineral wealth, of its innumerable copper mines, mica, tungsten, gold, silver, petrol, of various stones and crystals, of its botanical luxuriant. Another Japan or Switzerland it would have become. But in the absence of an agency to exploit them, the

wonder is that not a mine is expropriated and not a single water-fall is used for generating hydro-electric power, the whole country with a great potentiality and possibility is rotting in darkness, poor and helpless with its people ignorant and illiterate.

FAMILY OLIGARCHY

Why this is so ? To answer this question one must study the political machinery of the country. Where this machinery is appropriate, necessary improvement of a country is a sure corollary. It has been found that for this machinery to be appropriate, it must be controlled by those who are responsible to the public or at least responsive to their needs and aspirations. But where this is not so, there is no room for improvement for the machinery being removed from public contact is rendered moving for a selfish end of a particular class or a group, holding positions of superiority and grandeur. Neither in these circumstances private initiative on the part of the subject class can affect the general policy, nor is it possible to push individual enterprise in the narrow scope the people are left devoid of necessary civil liberty and of help from the State. In Nepal, the political machinery, here we may mean, the force of the State personified by the Ranas, is in the hands of a family who have controlled the whole aspect of social and political life of the country as though it were their own private property. The analogy would be with the theoretical stand of the Prince's rule in India now fastly disappearing with only one differ-

ence that whereas in Indian States the force to be counted was always a single prince succeeding by primogeniture, there is a family of one hundred souls in Nepal all claiming superior status and privileges attached to birth. The family in power calls itself the Rana family, claiming its origin from the illustrious Ranas of Chitor. The Ranas family captured power in 1846. Rana Jung Bahadur, by a tactical move, rose from a humble position to that of the Prime Minister of the country. He won the confidence of the army by deceit and intrigue and after a time controlled the whole of arms and ammunition enabling himself to occupy a most formidable position, where even a coup by the army was not possible. By 1857 he completely overshadowed the throne and came to be virtually accepted as the throne itself. Since that time the King of Nepal has nothing but nominal functions, all executive powers being vested in the Rana Premier. Jung Bahadur had not acted in good faith when he secured the Sanad by which the King signed away all his powers to him and his family. The latter was of an unsound mind at the time it was executed, which is testified by no less a person than Dr. Oldfield, the then Residency Surgeon at Kathmandu. Jung Bahadur made Premiership hereditary through brother for he had seven of them to satisfy, each of them being participant in the fateful conflict, whom he could not forsake. The procedure of succession which has continued so long in full force is designed in such a way that every legitimate issue of the Rana family is entitled to aspire for this august post, and the process of exploitation is orderly on the

very face of it and every tissue of the Rana fibre is welded in a tie of selfinterest so that whenever there is any opposition from other quarters, the Rana family, as a whole, to each legitimate successor presents a united resistance. Along with the premiership, almost all the top positions in the army and civil are held in order of hereditary succession by the Ranas.

The Prime Minister is the highest personage in the land, he is the highest executive and judicial authority. His power is unlimited and unrestricted. By virtue of his control over arms and ammunition, he wields a very high power unequalled even by Hitler and Mussolini in their respective countries under fascist dictatorship. His word is law, and he can make or mar the fate of any body next to him in the realm.

As in theory so in practice the Prime Minister exercises his power with unchallenged authority and zeal, and his supervision is entirely personal and in its scope extensive down to the minutest detail. As the administration is less cumbersome owing to the medieval character of the State, the Prime Minister conducts his Government as though it were a managerial concern under the Zamindari system.

Some of the Prime Ministers have satisfied themselves with only the work of supervision thus releasing the spare time for their personal rest and enjoyment, which is not the less immense but many of them have shown a tendency to look into the very minor affair of administration, which has wholly overshadowed the State machinery of Government and effected in practice

total subjection of the same to one individual will.

As matters stand, even peons of various offices have to be taken in person before the Prime-Minister for formal appointment which is indicative of the nature of control he exercises over the administration.

Though at times the Prime Minister wields supreme power, and wields it in a way to discard the need of the advice by his kinsmen of the family, yet in general he has to share the management of State affairs with the senior members who hold the next important ranks in order of succession

Thus all the important posts in the state have been monopolised by the Rana family. All the nine vital posts of the army are held in order of seniority, and this includes the office of the Lt. General. Again, all the adult members of the Rana family are adorned with titles of military rank, and there are some who are entitled to claim ranks from the very birth. Illegitimate issues can go up to the rank of a General and not beyond that. For those who do not belong to the Rana family the highest rung of the ladder is colonelship, and that too very rarely conferred. Today as there are more than two hundred members of the family, captainship and not colonelship has come to be the climax. Not a single civil department has a non-Rana head.

If the fourth line is not counted there are altogether eleven men on the immediate roll of succession. The last is a son of Chandra Shumshere and nearly thirty years old. The number of those on the roll does

not exceed forty. The Rana family in itself is symbolic of Nepal aristocracy's superiority complex, every member of the family being looked upon by the general populace as divinely superior and endowed with all the qualities (?) befitting a royalty. Its members enjoy a superior status, he must be addressed in respectable terms in Moghal fashion and he in right earnest shows himself off as a miniature Grand Moghul in his miens and make up. The Ranas lead a very artificial life of pomp and splendour. They live in a world of Parisian luxury, all sorts of western fashion and comfort are theirs Movie, Cars, Sports, Toilets. Worse than that but singular for them they manage each to keep concubines numbering over fifty and this is very common and observed by every one of them without exception. Power has enabled them to snatch girls of their choice, while poverty in the populace helps them to secure fulfilment. The result has been this. While the people are groaning regularly under the stress of penury, the Ranas are lording it over them without any thought of public welfare or administrative responsibility. While the system of polygamy and concubinage has tended to increase their number, the burden on the treasury and limited resources of the country has increased, for the Ranas curiously do not happen to be earning in another way save and except by misappropriation of public money. There are now in roll about forty members The cost of maintaining them is very high. The Prime Minister pockets almost the whole of public income for himself. So these forty people have to be given independent Jagirs. Each Jagirdar earns

rupees one to ten lakhs annually from his Jagir. Besides, these forty people are from their very birth holders of high posts in the army and also in the civil for which they are paid one to five thousand rupees per month. The other group of fifty who are mostly illegitimate are also provided with jobs. They are generally placed at district head quarters. The entire annual income of rupees four crore is thus distributed.

As a matter of fact the Rana family claims to present a structure of Government which shows master-slave relationship in dealings with the subject population. Each member of the family enjoys the attributes of a ruler and when at the helm of affairs dispenses very freely the business of the State in a spirit of personal concern as though it was not different from management of personal belongings. It is not only that they govern the country without a sense of responsibility, but what appears so anachronistic is that the Ranas are used to treat the entire country and its people as their own private property with right to dispose of them at their discretion.

The Ranas, as masters of the soil, control all the departments of the State. There are certain posts which are reserved for them only, such as the posts of Colonels and Generals in the Army and administrative headship in the Civil departments. Merit has no consideration. From his very birth a Rana may become a General or Colonel in the army. From his very fifteenth year he may pass as the Director of Education. The whole situation is hopelessly confusing and by nature of

things the administration is full of absurdities. Every post is sinecure and the machinery functions so inefficiently that it all looks a Zemindari concern. And yet the Ranas are said to be governing the country. Really speaking we have no government in the sense a government is understood in text book of politics. If we have anything, we have a police state in the hands of an inefficient aristocracy which is bent upon thriving its own interest unmindful of the larger interest of the people. Unfortunately even the work of maintaining law and order is wrongfully neglected, for there is a barbarous lawlessness in areas lying far from Kathmandu owing to non-deployment of police machinery. It is also a fact that the Ranas while curbing the law-abiding subject countryman do often let loose the forces of disorder by encouraging acts of brigandage and pillage.

Sometimes Nepal is compared with Indian States of British days in point of backwardness & mis-rule. Possibly it may be compared with the worst of them, but, in no way, with the best governed of them. In States like Baroda or Mysore or Hyderabad, in spite of what had obtained as the irresponsive administration, they had a set of able administrators, who, at times, are take pains to improve the lot of the people. But in Nepal as we have all posts controlled by those coming in hereditary succession the efficiency of administration is seriously impaired. We have a Premier who has no political education to his credit, a Commander-in-Chief who does not know what military training is, a Chief Justice who never went to school and so on.

We may not object to the King's being not educated for he has no function at his hands, but ordinary administrative etiquette demands that those who have administrative functions to perform should know the A. B. C. of administration. In Nepal, the prevalent condition is just the opposite, just those people are thrust into power, who have the least aptitude for exercising it. The resultant atmosphere is wrongfully intriguey as is natural in conditions where the whole governance is being run as the personal concern of a particular family. The aristocracy sees that the interest of the family shall prevail over the larger interest of the people, in the scramble, for undue advantage the very life of the country is killed, all avenues to development are closed and as a result of irresponsive administration the whole country is seething in extreme ignorance and poverty, distrust and suspicion.

Incidentally we may refer to the judicial system of the country. It is this which is conspicuous for its injustice and deformity. Nowhere in the world justice is so barbarously administered. There is no judiciary worth the name, as all departments concerned to dispense justice are neither independent nor are equipped to deserve such position in the circumstances. They are just like other offices of the Rana Government and the analogy may appear in the system of the most backward Indian States existing in British period. The courts have both executive and judicial functions. There is no proper procedure of trial and hearing and pleading and trial do not exist on an ascertained basis.

The onus of proof rest on the accused and there are no assessors and jury Bribery is very common ; as the District Judges happen, in many cases, to be of poor education and so meagrely paid (Rs. 150/- p. m.) they are that the feasibility of their boldly withstanding the temptation of bribe is practically discounted. Further they are under occasional risk of punishment at the hands of the higher tribunal, for whenever the judgment is reversed by appellate tribunal sitting in the capital the trying judge is heavily fined or bodily punished. Punishment in this case and in other cases ranges from physical torture to fine or imprisonment or both, which may six months or more. The district executive heads, called Badahakims, are very often members of the Rana family, in which case they are immune from punishment, but whenever the Ranas are at the head of district administration, their high handed action is almost a torture to the people. Against a member of the Rana family there is no appeal.

Let us have an idea of the country's annual income and expenditure to be able to know how much personal is the nature of the present regime. Nepal is an agricultural country, and public revenue comes almost entirely from this source. There are a few more sources, like electricity, customs and forest, which yield a crore of rupees. The total makes about Rupees four crores. The public expenditure, however, is not even a crore. Fifty lakhs of rupees are spent upon the army (militia excluded) four lakhs on education for maintaining a few secondary schools and a college and some hundred

Pathsalas and the rest on maintaining various administrative establishments. Thus Rs. 3 crores in *toto* go to support the snobberies of the Rana family.

The system of taxation is regressive in its character and incidence as is common to all levies under a medieval administration. While the rich are excluded from the burden of taxation, there being nothing of income tax and other parallel levies, the poor have had to bear the brunt of the whole of state revenue through so many channels of remittance. Besides land revenue, they have to pay dues for the upkeep of the forest and elephants belonging to the Rana family. A very cruel form of exaction which tells severely on the proletariat section of the people is the tax on coolies. All these have tended to hit most injuriously that strata of society, which is productive, thus jeopardising the very economy of the country, which has a tendency to stagnate.

We would leave it to the common man in the foreign country to imagine the general state of the country and compare it with that of British India. It is not our intention to under-rate the situation as still obtains in some areas in the Indian Sub-continent. But all the same it is certain that we are, compared to them, at least sixty years behind and in a medieval slumber. In every respect, whether culturally or industrially, we are very much behind times, we have not those institutions which all civilised countries can boast of, we have no such agencies as cultivate the country's prosperity. The country has no plan, nor the Govern-

ment has departments having functions of a welfare State. Even such organs, as were found since the very inception of British Rule in India, are missing here on top of it the administration is also suffering from a lack of secretariat organisation. The Premier may decide anything from his wise head and this has to be binding on the people, even when the entire policy of his may prove ultimately injurious to the larger interest of the country. And the pity is that while neglect gross of public affairs continues the Rana Premier may be busy in playing with concubines or building his palaces or squandering money on despicable snobberies.

Indeed, the administration is so badly lax that except for collecting revenue, the Rana Government has no other function to execute. For their own interest, however, the Rana rulers move heaven and earth and the policy of self-enrichment is severely executed. In the scramble for exaction, heaviest sacrifice is expected of the peasantry, who form the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants. Ejection from holding on the slightest pretension is very common. For the same reason taxation on land is increasing. The Ranas find that it is the only source of income to cater to their snobberies. As a result weights and measures have been so manipulated from time to time that at each time of assessment the peasant finds his share of contribution increasing. The chain used for measuring lands has come down today from a length of 18' to 9", nearly 50% lower and thus the peasantry is made to pay a cent. per cent. higher tax on the same unit of land.

The Ranas have got large estates under them and in these estates the tiller and cultivator are denied the most elementary rights of tenantry. Their plight is certainly inhuman. The peasantry is suffering from indebtedness, they are occasionally liable to displacement and deprived of their property rights by money lenders and Rana estate holders. There is no facility of proper judicial enquiry, even the ordinary protection from injustice by monied class (the Ranas) is withheld. The escape from this adversity is by way of migration to India and every intelligent reader may read a lot in the face of those hundreds and thousands of Nepali labourers in India. It depicts a tale of sorrow and merciless exploitation at the hands of the selfish Ranas.

The above is a very faint picture of the machinery known as the Government of Nepal, which, as we have said, does not possess anything in common with the texture of a structure passing as Government by universal usage or understanding. What we have is a crude type of personal rule free from touch of Governmental responsibility so essential to an administration of a big country. In the name of the Government personified by the Rana Maharaja who combines in himself the two functions of the Premier and Supreme Commander, the Rana family manages the affairs of the state in a thoroughly irresponsible manner neglecting its duty towards the welfare of the governed, and using all resources of the country to its own private interest. The possessiveness has gone so deep and pervaded so extensively that the Rana family is used to take the adminis-

tration of the state as its own private concern making use of the power without distinction of the nature of the subject personal or otherwise to which it is directed. This sort of absolutely personal rule has no parallel in any part of the world. We doubt if in medieval age also such practices as to govern the country in terms of personal property of the family obtained. But in Nepal up till now the Maharaja treats the police and army as his own personal retinue and body guard and the judicial court as his managerial department to reimburse his own financial commitments. He has unquestioned authority over the revenue of the state and whatever accrues to the exchequer, sources not withstanding, he appropriates for his own private purpose. He has the power to call any case from any court and dispose of it in any way he deems proper and to allocate the disbursement of the fine imposed at his sweet will. He can and sometimes does transfer a confiscated property decreed by a court to a hand which deserved reward for personal services rendered to him. Every other department of the state acts in the same subservient fashion, and the officers have to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the direction and commands of the Maharaja, but it is his whim and caprices that are sometimes the arbitor of their destiny and then the work is so tough that they dare not forget that they are his servants and most absurd of all the departments in turn are planned and shaped to look more as private offices ill-organised and shabby than such institutions of dignity and responsibility as appertain to a highly developed modern type of admi-

nistration. Corruption is rampant to a degree that is Nepal's mortal paralysis under the Thumb-rule of the Master family and in consequence the people suffer untold misery due to neglect and apathy, which is a rule rather than exception. Beneath the greedy eye of the selfish Ranas, Nepal's lot has never been to be blessed with the benefices of an organisation much less of a Government. The whole arrangement is full of absurdity and idiocy that is a shame to the age we are living.

The pitiful relegation to a State of backwardness which has almost killed the soul of the nation cannot be justified as many interested European scholars have tried to represent, and no amount of word jugglery as to the unreceptibility of western methods of administration by the Oriental Gorkhas and similar other trash arguments shall convince one today about the efficacy of the system which has been all tyranny and misrule to the vast multitude of Nepal. The family oligarchy established by the Rana Rulers far from tendering any good to the country had definitely added to their misery and privation by depriving them of organisational set up, the harm done by which is so glaringly manifest through the anarchy and misrule imported into the society.

SUPPRESSED PEOPLE

For a Nepali the world is dark. His education has no value. While the Rana by virtue of his birth is entitled to draw a high pension from the State besides

what he gets as emolument for his sinecure jobs, a subject Nepali may have to remain content with Rs.100 per mensem even though (he may have obtained high university degree and though) there might hardly be a dozen persons of his calibre. But he has to prefer it even though this may mean the enslavement of his soul, for he is so much emasculated and sucked gradually during the past ten decades that the alternative to him is starvation. One may ask if commerce be not his choice. But this also is not possible in view of the restrictions the Ranas have imposed on this pursuit, for there is a law which forbids the carrying of a trade on many articles by a subject Nepali, side by side with the fact that there is no scope in this field as trade in Nepal is mainly distributional and entrepot.

The Ranas have killed the soul of our nation by first killing religious and civil liberty. Outwardly a rough line of comparison may be drawn between conditions here and there as obtained in Indian States before August 1947. But we are in worse plight. In most of the Indian States, ordinarily, civil liberty, like freedom of speech and religion was to some extent recognised, there was also freedom of association though at times it was usually interfered with. But we have not even the shadow of freedom in Nepal. Here nobody can ask for anything of political or social reforms by way of collective appeal or even privately. The people are also quite ignorant of the democratic channels of ventilating grievances, and a distant reference to a ruler's duty and responsibility if noticed may invite dire consequences.

Pandit Murali Prasad in December 1938 was given 3 years R. I. for defining the just duty of a ruler in course of his Katha recitation. Even today liberty of faith and conscience is quite unknown. We have been denied the most elementary religious rights. Inside Nepal the maintenance of *status quo* is the only rule. You must remain what you are runs the stricture. There is no question of conversion from one faith to another. Slightest heretical beliefs are punished with vindictiveness. In 1909, Madhavaraj Joshi was publicly lashed and exiled for being a follower of Swami Dayanand. His son, Sukra Raj Sastri, in 1941, had to give up his life for his alleged attempt to propagate Arya Samajic principles in Nepal. The poster pasted on the back of his corpse read "Treatment meted out to one who follows Swami Dayanand in contravention of the Sanatani rules of worship." The Ranas have tenaciously adhered to the policy of maintaining *status-quo* in matter of religious beliefs. The rules of caste division and untouchability are strictly enforced. In the code of law which prevails in the country breach of caste rule is punishable. The vagary will be noticed in various instances, *e. g.*, a Brahman cannot take tomato and must observe all the rigidity of kitchen and departure from these is punished by law. As mainly inhabited by Hindus, the problem of caste rigidity and orthodoxy is the same as in India in its viciousness and intensity. But the assumption of responsibility by the Rana Government to preserve these has made the problem more complex, and social injustice on that account is of an enormous magnitude.

Nobody in Nepal has any knowledge of judicial trial as understood in civilised countries. There is not only no habeas-corpus, but there is total absence of the rule of law. There is no legislative assembly, no newspaper and worst of all no agency for ventilating public grievances. The Ranas have so much terrorised the people that few dare criticise the action of the Government, however condemnable the same might be. Even otherwise every body is in occasional consternation and dread of life and, of course, another question posing at this stage is, how many do really realise the gravity of the situation.

In order to check the least possibility of association, and underground activity the autocrats have imposed night curfew in many of the localities, particularly in the prominent towns and market places which prevents occasional intercourse between citizens. Under the circumstances all these areas have worn disturbed appearance, while down below there is grave-like tranquility. Perhaps Kathmandu is the only instance of a Capital city to have been eternally clamped under night curfew.

Nepal is almost wholly mountainous. There is also a small portion, one-fifth of it, which consists of even lands at the foot of the outer Himalayas, called the *terai*. This part of kingdom is the richest from agricultural standpoint and the Ranas derive their fifty per cent. of income from here. But as the Rana Government takes only from the people and has nothing to give in return, the peasantry is in a hopelessly critical

muddle. Whereas on the other side of the border the Indian peasantry has at least the spirit and opportunity as ordained by law to fight injustice, on this side there is a deadening influence of an autocratic regime shutting the breasts of those who in other circumstances might have given vent to their pent-up feeling. The *terai* peasantry is the most downtrodden producing class, the human history has ever seen.

The valley of Kathmandu may appear a contrast to the surrounding places. Here the bright palaces of the Ranas may remind one of similar stately buildings in large towns of India. But the bright picture is only restricted to the Ranas. The people generally are, in no way, better than those of the hills or the *terai*. The Ranas have occupied stately palaces, each costing Rs. 20 lakhs or more, but to the lot of non-Ranas a small hut is a luxury in the whole of Kathmandu one scarcely comes across a mansion owned by a non-Rana. There is no municipality to look after the sanitation of the town. We have roads over which the Ranas ply their cars, but these are just for this purpose and the subjects may not use them. The Ranas have their own private schools and colleges for their children. Each of them commands the services of a whole staff of such institutions but the general populace have no body to look to and the pity is that even in these private schools of Ranas Nepali teachers may not find place and they are usually excluded in favour of outsiders mostly Bengalis. There are no libraries for the public, no reading rooms, though each Rana maintains a grand collection of books merely for purpose of exhibits to be

shown to some distinguished visitors from Europe and India. There are no newspapers worth the name, the whole kingdom has only one paper but this also stands very much below when compared to the worst paper in India.* The Ranas for themselves have their supply of standard periodicals from Europe and America and able interpreters to read to them and also best radio sets which the public could not keep till 1946. There is a law in the land which forbids using of any conveyance by the citizens, even rickshaw is not spared to them. Even in point of dresses, a distinction has been drawn by restricting certain costly and fashionable types of clothes to the Ranas. Thus a Sherwani may be worn by a Rana only and not by others. In marriage ceremonies, the Rana alone may use elephants and horses and musical bands are played exclusively in their festivities, while the populace have to be content with old conventional instruments.

The Ranas have affected a position of superiority much higher than the people they rule. That is a plane higher and farther in the air not to be reached by those under their rule. Thus an artificial social stratosphere has been created. A Rana as a superman (?) has deep seated caste prejudices. As every other Nepali is a slave of his, he cannot have any social intercourse with

*Some papers from India are allowed entrance, but reading of newspaper is looked upon with disfavour. In fact, many people have been thrashed. Baburam Pandit had to pay a fine of Rs. 30 (1930) for reading a Hindi News Weekly at a shop.

him. He would not condescend even to address a citizen in a gentlemanly manner, nor he would shake hands with him. Many highly placed Ranas avoid parties in their honour while in India for the only reason that they will be asked to shake hands with their emigrant Nepali brethren. A Nepali military officer in Dehradun tells me that he had to cancel a reception programme on being told that the guest, a Rana General, would only shake hands with non-Nepali officers.

This finds a very injurious expression in marriage relationship which they have set up with outsiders. As no Rana girl can marry a subject Nepali, she must choose her husband from outside. Thus a great amount of money is drawn by Rajas and Zamindars in India as dowries and tilaks, which may come to lakhs and crores. No consideration other than that of superiority complex weighs with them in their treatment of Nepali national, not even the welfare of their daughters who while with the *talukadars* and princes of India are all worse and have everything to lose and nothing to gain by way of domestic happiness.

This evil practice of marrying their daughters to the Indian Rajas and Zamindars was commenced by Chandra Shumsher who had only satisfied his vanity ; for he regarded his family as one very much superior to fellow Nepalis. Before him the practices had been to cultivate marriage relations with the *Thakuris* and other clans that were conventionally regarded as pure Kshatriyas, a status so long denied to the family of

Jang Bahadur. Chandra reversed this practice, and not being content with his own elevation to the rank of the pure Kshatriyas tried to by-pass them in an attempt to seek relations beyond the frontier of Nepal where, of course, none of the ancient houses of Kshatriyas agreed to oblige him.

The worst part of exploitation is with regard to the way the people are treated. A Rana is an object of divine grace and by the law of land enjoys the highest respect due to divinity. He is a superman. To him people go to bow down and ask for favours. He has got the command over all services and it is according to his discretion that allotment is made. When he walks in the street urchins run away in terror, while the elders wait on him in trembling shoes. In Kathmandu nobody may look out of the window when a Rana of pure blood is passing on foot. If a Rana's house happens to be within the range of eye-sight from a subject's house, the windows of the latter must be closed, distance not counting and even if inadvisable it may appear to be for reasons of ventilation for the Rana shuns even a distant eye over his surroundings. If he required extension of his building or garden, the neighbours may be evacuated compulsorily. In short, the Ranas have enjoyed every power to interfere in the life and domesticity of a commoner and no idea of neighbourly sympathy or fellow-feeling is entertained in dealing with him. Outside Kathmandu where even the most elementary amenity of civic life is practically unknown, the law prohibits building of a pucca house with tile roofs by a non-Rana without the permission

of Kathmandu authorities. A kiln for burning bricks cannot be started in the locality unless the Government gives permission to that effect.

Life and property are not safe in Nepal. One man may become a pauper by a mere frown of the rulers. In fact, the Ranas are very much strict in maintaining their privileges. No one should betray his enlightened views save at the cost of his life. According to convention a subject should not build a fashionable house, should not wear a like dress or do anything which may go to show equality of status with the Ranas. I personally know the case of a person who, not long ago, was harassed simply, because he was found not saluting one of the sons of Chandra Shumsher in dinner party at Calcutta. To another Newar trader it cost him his entire property when he was seen hurrying in a motor car without paying attention to his master crossing him in another car. Anybody contravening these practices lands himself in danger.

As we have said, the people have no rights as fundamental rights, nor they are in a position to assert them for reasons of ignorance and economic distress, which have resulted from the century old oppressive rule. By convention the Premier is in possession of every life and property in the Kingdom. In practice each Rana asserts this right in ruthless fashion whenever he feels himself called upon to do so. A single offence or any act of displeasure is enough to invite disaster, not excluding confiscation of property. Many people have been deprived of their life and property on simple pretext.

The lack of security and safety has tended to produce a great economic loss to the country. The population is incomparably poor. You will not find a single person other than the Ranas whose income is Rs. 1,500 or more per month, and there may not be even one hundred persons who can be wealthy enough to have a claim on an annual income of six thousand. All avenues for employment are closed. The people have an ingrained fear that the Ranas do not brook anybody's prosperity and, therefore, any attempt in the direction of self-development may incur their displeasure to ultimately bring about self-effacement. Therefore, only those who flatter to the Ranas have in any way acted to amass wealth and maintain luxury. It so happens that because of this factor the Ranas are looked upon as the source of all emoluments, and care is given more to their pleasure than to education or any kind of training. Because, the Ranas are averse to giving employment to educated men people have been showing dislike for education. And thus a host of young men who should have ordinarily found their way to educational institutions waits upon the Ranas for his good grace. In all matters affecting appointments in or dismissal from services the Ranas act as high-handedly as possible and as though it were dispensing purely private business and favours. There is no Public Service Commission to consider the fact of merits. Day in and day out there is a peculiar congregation of young men at every door of the Rana and the latter makes his choice of the nominees from those who have put up to their credit the meanest kind of flattery.

The result is the greatest impediment to the efficiency of administration

This insecurity has greatly affected the position of the Ranas themselves and much detrimentally the country's economic interest. It is not, however, for the insecurity dictated by the interest of the State and for fear of popular revolt that the Ranas feel in any way perturbed. In the nature of things the Ranas know that no large-scale popular revolt can take place unless an all round consciousness against their misrule grows up. A starving and ignorant people, orthodox and priest-ridden, is too simple a creature to be afraid of.

But there have been attempts on the life of the Prime Minister by those of his relations following close on the roll of succession. As power is concentrated on him a single individual ; there is a strong tendency in others to try to speed up the promotion even by recourse to a method of physical removal.

In between the people it has sown at terrible seed of distrust. In course of the century the Nepali has been reduced to a phantom untrust worthy and distrusting. Even in treatment of a near relation one moves cautiously. The most popular saying in Kathmandu today attributes ears to the walls, which is quite significant. A father may not trust a son and *vice versa*.

Not that betrayal in the hands of a near one is uncommon as if, the people have imbibed the narrow and mean outlook bequeathed by the environment. Incidents fraught with treasonable conduct have come to light very often. And it is not dying even at present.

No one is more cautious than a Nepali while he has to talk of politics, and before he expresses his opinion he makes it a point to assure himself that his confidant is not a spy. This habit does not leave him even outside Nepal. This is also a very common practice amongst our students to suspect each other as spies. Habit is second nature, and worse than that the habit of distrusting all, save himself, has become a serious disease with the Nepali.

Is it peculiar to a citizen of Nepal only ? one asks. No, not that. It is common to the type of environment as obtains in present day Nepal. This timid, suspicious and narrow mentality is a special product of the circumstances in which we are finding ourselves under the repressive rule of the Rana family who have encouraged this mentality, by a regular crusade against free thinking, forwardness, and bold and open expression.

An idea of the effect of mal-administration on the country in general has been already obtained. To pursue the matter further, let us recapitulate that the people are subjected to the most heinous type of oppression, exploitation, injustice and dishonour unparalleled in the history of any country at present. The peasantry is persecuted and put to untold suffering. His land is forfeited, absorbed in the various estates of the Ranas. Whatever remains of him he can not utilise properly to his advantage for lack of irrigation and agricultural facilities. He has to render work for the estate-holder free of any obligation in return, and load carriers too are not exempted from heavy duties. There is a

pressure on land, though a large part of fertile river valleys lies fallow. As there is no other source to fall back upon, a large part of population nearly 1/10th has migrated to India in search of food. The ten lakhs of hungry souls here are living examples of the barbarous persecution reigning in Nepal.

The country, on the whole, has seriously suffered. The Ranas have resorted to the most uneconomic activities in furtherance of their own self-interest. Finding that the existing land revenue is insufficient for their rising snobbery, they have resorted to currency manipulation. From 1931, a relentless effort has been made to pass alloyed silver coins at their original face-value. A silver coin of Nepal called Mohar today does not contain even a tenth of pure silver. The profit of the mint is pocketed by the Premier. Besides, the estate-system of administration has made the public finance a trivial concern and a matter of personal interest, for, as it is found, that only 1/8 of total annual income of the country comes for public expenditure and the rest is divided as spoils amongst members of the Rana family. The income of the Government is decreasing to the extent that individual Ranas have gained. In matter of foreign trade as Nepal does not export goods worth more than a few lakhs of rupees, the large yearly import which amounts to nearly ten crores of rupees had before the war to be met with a regular gold flow. Nor it is possible to reduce the imports in view of Nepal's unavoidable dependence on them for we have even certain necessaries to get through India. The electric rope-way connecting Kathmandu with the nearest spot

on the *terai* is a barometer to record the situation. It has so happened that all the buckets over the electric rope-way coming from Kathmandu are empty, while every bucket going thither is loaded to the brim. This loss of foreign market has led to the depreciation of the currency in Kathmandu which was further accentuated by the action of the Ranas in transferring the entire revenue of the *terai* to banks in Calcutta. Uptill 1935 the revenue which came in British Indian currency was sent to Kathmandu and passed as medium in foreign transaction. But as the same was since then transferred to Judian banks, a great drain on gold reserves of the country is the result. All but the Ranas are very much hard hit by this development, and this was arrested only during the war, and in the scarcity days of the aftermath when imports had to be automatically curtailed.

THE ABORIGINES AND BANDAS

Of the eighty lakhs of people inhabiting Nepal a considerably large number belongs to the aboriginal tribes who are still living in a savage condition. Their condition can better be imagined than described. These people are so far removed from civilisation that to them even pottery is a curiosity. These aboriginal sons of the soil, the Tharus, Chepangs, Danuwars, Rajavansis, Meche, Koche, Thaksais and Lamas have been always kept outside the fringe of civilisation under the Rana Regime. Not only no attempt has so far been made to raise them out of the slough of barbarism there

seems a deliberate conspiracy to perpetuate that state of life which keeps them impervious to the influence of factors that have wrought some changes amongst the more advanced section. It is so pervasive that the aborigines betray in all expressions and behaviour the characteristic of a society of the most primitive age at the dawn of history. Any Government which has under its care a vast population of the type just noted is duty-bound to see that they are well-looked after and provided with amenities to place them on the road to cultural and economic advancement. But during one hundred and two years of their regime the Rana family acted in a most complacent manner towards these unfortunate people. They have not been given that much semblance of social benefits which has fallen to the lot of the Parbatiyas and Newars, as well as of Magars and Gurungs who compose the civilised strata of Nepali masses.

Slavery existed in Nepal as late as 1923 when it was abolished as a result of pressure from the British Government. But another system equally obnoxious still exists. A man voluntarily agrees to the loss of his freedom by mortgaging himself. The difference between him and the slaves is in regard to the right which a mortgagee enjoys, which makes it compulsory on the master to accept the price mortgaged whenever offered. Very often it is found that the aborigines once in contact with the more developed of his country-men is tempted to mortgage himself and thus automatically falls into the clutches of the well-to-do. The Rana Rulers do not find anything objectionable in this process

of exploitation of the aboriginal races. At times they themselves become a party to exploiting these men who serve to carry timber from the forest of the *terai* to Kathmandu for the use of palaces.

As they cared only to feed themselves fat on wealth of the country, they consistently neglected to introduce industries for fear of creating complications likely to revolutionise conditions which, in the end, might deal a death blow to the feudal regime altogether. This has led them to leave the whole country in a state of primitive economy, wherein a modern society could not grow up. Even the section whom we have called advanced in comparison have hardly passed the barbaric stage. Modern civilisation has certainly entered Kathmandu, but not so easily and extensively and its scope has been too much limited. In spite of the abolition of slavery the lot of the average inhabitant of Nepal is no better than that of a slave and aborigines.

There are aboriginal races in India and in other countries. We also know that this attitude of indifference towards the primitive dwellers is shared in common by almost all the Governments. But these, while themselves doing little in that direction, have not impeded the efforts of social workers who with missionary zeal are to be found engaged in the admirable task of reforming the poor savages. In Nepal, however, there is standing an agelong ban on such activities jealously enforced and guarded by those in power, which has equally resisted the encroachment of modern civilisation on the country. It is a well calculated

measure which the rulers have adopted to keep the gulf unbridged.

The aborigines in Nepal are not an insignificant minority as in India. In the farthest north of the hilly region they are in overwhelming majority. They are scattered throughout the length and breadth of Nepal from the upper reaches of the R. Narayani to the Indian 'Trader in Darjeeling except the valley. If we are particular as to consider deeply the ways of living, and backwardness of the environment they are forced in, the aborigines may be very easily placed side by side with the other stocks whose lot, as we have hinted, is no better. The Gurungs and Magars have, therefore, to be included in the enumeration of the backward tribes, which means that the problem of aboriginal tribes is a national problem.

Not that amongst the higher strata, amongst the Parbatiyas and the Newars there is to be found a higher and better life. We have thrown light on the various disabilities they have been suffering, and their resultant pitiable condition. This should bring home to us the picture of exploitation of the whole people, which practised regularly reduces the country to no less than an undeveloped tribal territory. The one purpose to refer to aborigines here is not so much to draw attention to a tribe living in savage condition as to show that there cannot be drawn a line of distinction between the two sections. In the hands of the Rana Rulers the exploitation has been universal. The lot of the Brahmans, Khasas and the Newars is as unhappy as that of

the aborigines. If there is to be noted any distinction it should be done in respect of the Kusanda and Chepang savages who shun the very human contact.

THE NEPAL ARMY

Now a few words about the Nepal army. Those who imagine a picture of Nepal with the traditionally valiant Gorkha soldiers will be disappointed to know that Nepal has no standing army in the modern sense of the term. There are some thirty-five thousand troops both regular and irregular, but they lack in training and most of all in equipment of modern arms. There is poorly equipped artillery and no air force in Nepal. Besides, there are no trained and experienced generals to lead them. The Ranas who, from their very birth, are promoted to colonelship or generalship in the army cadre can pass only as mere exhibits whom a British General termed as 'toys.' In the hands of these toys, these contingents have been reduced to an abject position of infirmity. They are poorly paid, the usual monthly salary of a soldier being Rs. 18 inclusive of food charges and any one can imagine what the stamina the soldier might build for him from this petty sum, with which he has to carve out a living. The army, therefore, have no role to play in the political sphere. As a group of poor men, serving to keep body and soul together, they carry out the behests of the Ranas, use guns to kill down their opponents and are sometimes manoeuvred to cow down possible rebels ; considered otherwise they are of no use against foreign

enemy. A lakh of such soldiers would hardly be a match for twenty-five thousand of the best trained British soldiers. Yet the Ranas take pride in their military efficiency and their so-called independence.

Some Indians not knowing this particular nature of the Nepal militia have spoken eloquently of contribution to the defence of the country. It is, however, a travesty of truth to say that the militia force which never saw a battle-field might have any thing to do with the external or internal defence of the country. The militia men have not even the equipment and ability of regular personnel of the Kathmandu Regiments. They use antique weapons, and lack in training and exercises common to a military body. The tragedy is that they have not been trained even as a guerilla force. They certainly look after law and order in their respective areas, but the ruggedness of the country render their task so difficult that they are hardly needed any where. The very fact that at the headquarter of the district there is a contingent of militia men has certainly been a deterrent factor for mischief if at all it has exercised any influence over the state of crimes in the locality, but for that also they should hardly get credit, because the apparent tranquility is due to the primitive nature of the society. People are compelled to live in rather than to anything done by the Government in the field of social welfare or defence.

The militia in Nepal consists of about 6000 soldiers, and their distribution is nearly 150 to each district under an Officer of the rank of a Second Lieutenant.

They do mostly a periodical work called to duty during three months of the year, A militia man gets Rs. 6/- per month as his salary for the period he is on duty.

By the above remark it is never my intention to disparage the character of the Nepali in his soldier's capacity. In fact, one would rarely find a specimen of soldiery so full of valour, courage and capacity to bear penury and hardship as the Gorkha fighter has proved himself to be through the myriad of achievements he put in diverse phases of the war. One, who has witnessed the exploits of the Gorkha, in battle-fields has nothing but praise for his soldierly qualities, and on all tests he has established himself as equal if not superior to his European counterpart. Again for fights in the mountains and rugged areas he has no equal which he so successfully and gallantly displayed in encounters with the Japanese in the Burmese and Malayan jungles. But all this sterling worth of his could only develop through contact with the British under their leadership. It was not a raw contingent from Nepal that was employed in the war to shine in glory. All those who fought and challenged the Germans and the Japanese had a long record of training at the hands of the British which only proves that given proper training in the art of war the Gorkha can show himself up as the finest example of valiant fighter with his sturdy and robust body and natural skill of a mountaineer and faithfulness that forms a singular feature of his character. But in the beastly condition under the malignant rule of the Ranas, without a single fighting quality developed, he

is no better than a beast of burden. It is absurd to associate him with the glory of the battle-fields of Italy and Mesopotamia, if he is to be dis-associated with the traditions of the British trained Gorkha Regiment.

Before the Rana rulers demoralised him the Gorkha needed little training from the British to rise to his height. The record of the Nepal war is a testimony to his acumen as a valiant soldier who had challenged the Europeans successfully against heavy odds. The British Officers have left in their Memoirs high appreciation of the valour, skill and incorruptible character of the Gorkha Soldier. It was the time when the Nepalese copied without the least flaw the very latest model of European artillery, and used them in defence and offence against the British. They were also fully equipped with the talent and experience of mature leadership. The Gorkha officers were second to none as far as sound leadership went and their skilful manœuvres was a problem to the opponent. Thus in every respect of military life Nepal uncontaminated by the Rana Rulers presented a true picture of a warring nation, which was fostered and encouraged by the Government in power without least diminution of interest. But the glory that was Nepal is no more. We do not get even a shadow of that glorious past at present. That bright chapter seems to have closed in 1846 never to reopen.

It is really tragic that the Nepal Rulers are not conscious of their shortcomings when they vaunt of their independent position. The falsity of their claim to recognition as a power able to defend territorial inte-

grity of the country is nowhere so trenchantly displayed as in the pattern of military defence, which all along suffers from a lack of skill and equipment to a great degree. Nepal is proverbially poor in respect of artillery and it has not yet possessed air-force even to the extent of commanding a single aeroplane. This backward state of affairs is definitely not the thing to inspire confidence and respect in the mind of the outsiders. If the arrangement of defence were to be the criterion of independence then the Rana of Nepal is the least fit country to lay a claim to that status. Unfortunately the country has not yet changed its role which it was forced to play under the British as an adjunct of Britain tied to the tail of India, which was limited to supplying man-power as fodder to the British guns.

CAUSE OF SLOW AWAKENING

The situation had reached a climax long ago. It was too intolerable to admit of further complacency. But in no quarter there appeared signs of revolt to this inhuman crime perpetrated till a very late period of our history. Amongst a crore of Nepalese there were hardly a few who thought of resistance, and even they were not courageous enough to take up leadership and march on to the goal of freedom.

This is certainly strange, but one who has studied Nepal and the character and circumstances of her people will think otherwise. Nepal, as at present governed, allows no possibility for a large scale public revolt, though every moment demands it. The reason

is not to be found in the capacity of the Ranas to resist it but in the weak and almost beastly condition of the people. The people are ignorant and insipid, prone to cling to medieval orthodoxy, ever credulous to have respected the divinity of the Ranas, as they are deliberately kept in this state of credulity and superstitious belief by a regular process of ineducation and suppression. These teeming millions have taken their present plight as one pre-ordained and natural coming from the heaven as malediction for their past sins. In spite of regular crusade against their goods and women, they were showing the least sign of stir and anxiety. Even patience would have tired.

One of the drawbacks of the social development in Nepal has been the very slow growth of the middle class which has remained in an embryonic state for a long time. As a class most interested in the change over from feudalism to democracy, its growth to stature is a prelude to any shifting of forces. In our country, however, the very medieval environment encouraged and perpetuated by the ruling aristocracy has been a factor to prevent such a middle class coming into existence. Lack of efficient leadership at the present time has also to be ascribed to the same situation.

Even to this day no public agitation is possible inside Nepal, not only for reasons of popular ignorance and weakness, but also because the Ranas quench the spark of revolt with undue animosity. The procedure has been that an ant is killed by a heap of earth. The Ranas do not brook even the slightest interference in

their work. A word of suggestion to mend matters may be answered with death penalty. The people have to willingly submit to what they do, no matter their interest be jeopardised by such actions.

Examples of how the iron rod of the Rana Government is adversely killing individual initiative are very many and every Rana Ruler has proved himself the cruel taskmaster that he is in this direction. The Ranas in order to maintain their dignity have ruthlessly suppressed any kind of self-development in the public, be it in the field of education or industry. Thus, if a Nepali boy in an Indian University shines himself out as distinctively meritorious, he is sure to court the displeasure of the Ranas. They do not like that their subjects should outshine them and as they themselves have the least ability to shine, the very potentiality for such distinction in others is made to lie dormant. Because of this and because of the fear of public consciousness, the Rana Government has withheld all facilities of physical and mental development from the public. We are so much backward in physique and culture that we have no place in the comity of modern civilised nations. We have no well-advanced literature, we have as yet not been able to produce talented writers and poets, historians and economists, doctors and engineers of high ability and reputation and we have no one who is distinguished in any walk of life. The pity is that we have to import all our experts from India. The Ranas have very unjustly distrusted some of the young men who managed to attain efficiency in

the above noted branches of learning, but except for the doctor who, however, can utilise the weak health of the Ranas to his advantage, every other proficiency has no room for absorption in the State services so that learning is too much discouraged. Only antiquated type of Sanskrit culture is patronised to attract young men, thus preventing all doors to public consciousness, but even they have been forced to lead a hand-to-mouth living.

How even the most elementary academic pursuit is interfered with will be evident from the very recent action of the Nepal Government in threatening the author of this document in 1940 with dire consequences if he did not stop writing articles for the Indian periodicals. The absurdity of the demand made will be brought home to every one, if the nature of the contribution were known to him, which always excluded reference to Nepal in the content. Again while he had published a historical work on the subject of Muslim invasion into Nepal, the Maharaja chastised one of the author's relations for the publication. It came to my knowledge later on that Dr. Jayaswal too was not spared from threats and chastisement when he had for the first time referred to, in an article, the fact of Muslim invasion into Nepal on the strength of an inscription which he had traced in his sojourn to Kathmandu. The Rana autocrats pursue a consistent policy of gagging the people no matter it is exercised in regard to academic or intellectual pursuit.

By a policy of denial the Rana rulers have been

able to keep the country backward. In the absence of the means for higher education, many promising young-men who would have certainly shined in life are made to drag a miserable existence in a state of despondency. But even the few who can afford to take up higher training at their expense find the doors closed, as permission is rarely given to such of them as intend prosecuting studies in foreign countries. Conventionally sea voyage is prohibited to caste Hindus, and the Nepal Government often does take a stand on that ground to discourage overseas contact.

POSSIBILITY OF AGITATION IN INDIA BEFORE 1946

In British India an agitation could be carried. But thus far the British Government had cast impediments on the way. Everybody in India knows about the stakes of the British Government in Nepal which have prevented them all along from adopting a lenient policy towards any popular movement of the Nepalese. Nepal uptill now forms a free recruiting ground for regiments in the Indian army. In peace and war the recruitment is free and helped by the Rana Government. The British Government thought that under any other regime free recruitment is not possible. Indeed the Premiers before Jung Bahadur were in no way reconciled to the idea of free recruitment of Nepalese by the British. But Jung Bahadur put his selfish

motive before everything else and finally signed an agreement allowing perpetual right to the British Government to recruit Gorkha soldiers in Nepal. In response the British Government on their part had secretly guaranteed protection to the Ranas. The interest shown by the British authorities in discouraging agitation against the Ranas may be explained with reference to this guarantee. The treaty of 1923 imposed a special obligation on the contracting parties to stop by all means every form of agitation carried against the one from the territory of the other. Public agitation in British India was accordingly out of question unless the British Government gave up the old policy of mutual assistance. But the British would not abandon such a policy for reasons of the stake they had in Nepal as mentioned earlier. They were bound to crush the anti-Rana agitation in the circumstances. In case of defiance of the Prohibitory rules the whole might of the Empire might have been, therefore, used to silence voices of protests raised against the Ranas in India.

What the Nepalese apprehended, more than any other measure, was unconditional surrender to the Ranas by the British in cases of political crime, which is however, strictly forbidden by international law. There have been many cases of political exiles taking shelter in British India, but so far till 1944 no incident of surrender was reported. But the fear had gained ground and until that was dispelled no agitation in the name of exiles could stand. Of course, the British Government has displayed the basest form of ingrati-

tude towards the people of Nepal, while they had ignored the services the Gorkhas rendered in the cause of the Empire. It should be noted that the British have always regarded the Rana family as symbolic of everything connected with Nepal and naturally the people were no concern of theirs.

The emigrants might have done so at the peril of punishment according to British law. The law regulating such actions comes within the purview of the Foreign Relations Act, which like the Indian States Act, prohibited agitation against the present regime in Nepal. But the stipulation did not deter the action so strictly as the fear of surrender did. Even when as in the past the British Government had tried to emasculate the dissenters financially, agitation had been discouraged. During the Great War two papers 'Gorkhali' edited by Debi Prasad Subba, an old Nepali revolutionary, and 'Gorkha Sansar' were started in British India to conduct campaigns of agitation against the Rana regime. The British Government demanded heavy security from the press, in both cases, forfeited it and thus suppressed the papers.

A short observation may be made on the so-called right of demand for surrender, for this is a very important part of the Anglo-Nepali relation and often misconstrued so as to make infructuous any movement in British India against the Ranas by creating a sense of fear of unconditional surrender in the minds of the workers. Such fear, however, was not entirely baseless, for the treaty of 1855 has not definitely laid down provisions

disallowing surrender of politicals and the apprehension that the British Government may disregard them to please the Ranas could not be discounted. The treaty of 1855 (10th February) has definitely laid down that criminal cases of the nature specified in Article (4) are alone subject to surrender, and all other offences not specified in and civil offenders, according to Article 3, are not to be delivered. The offences mentioned in Articles (4) are (1) murder (2) attempt to murder (3) rape (4) maiming (5) Thuggee (6) dacoity (7) high-way robbery (8) poisoning (9) burglary and (10) arson. To our advantage the procedure of surrender is elaborated and unless and until definite proof of guilt is established by the court of law in British India in accordance with the provisions of the laws applicable to similar allegations, no apprehension and detention, not to speak of surrender, can take place. These provisions have not been changed since then, and the reader can judge how it was not at all easy to secure politicals from British India for trial in Nepal. But, we know as well how the British callously trampled down all agitations carried against the states in British India and it was not unexpected that they might disregard the treaty of 1855 and surrender the politicals specially when a valuable and loyal ally like the Rana Government was to be benefited.

The Ranas, on their part, had always tried to wantonly override the provisions of the treaty of 1855 and had demanded political and civil offenders, from time to time, though not without failure. The first demand, as far as we know, was put forth in the case of

the Ex-premier Deva Shumsher with Subba Homnath Upadhayaya who hatched up a plan to capture power in Nepal during the absence of Chandra Shumsher at Delhi Durbar in 1902. Deva Shumsher was then living in Banaras. A band of his loyal followers with guns and muskets were ready to pounce upon Chandra immediately he reached Raxaul, while a secret move was already being made to secure the consent of the King, who was then at Amlekhganj. Before however, this plan was being carried into operation, Chandra Shumsher got the scent of it through an approver and hurried to Nepal to meet the contingency. Deva Shumsher and his band were arrested in British India for the alleged offence of conspiracy the Ex-premier was honourably interned. The matter was referred to a Magistrate's court where Deva Shumsher could establish to his profound joy his ground of exemption from trial and conviction by the British court and from surrender to Nepal for trial by Sessions for the same allegation. The judge found him not amenable to Indian laws agreeing with the opinion of Deva's counsel.

During the First World War and after the early twenties some patriots had started weekly papers in the Nepali language to conduct propoganda in British India against the misrule of the Ranas. The British Government, however, merely contented themselves by forcing them to close the press and cease their activities. A demand made for surrender of persons found guilty of traffic on Nepali women in Banaras was similarly set aside, the person being convicted according to law in British India.

In 1938 March, a non-Rana graduate tutor, Bhet Narain of Vaisya caste, developed intimacy with a daughter of an exile Rana General Pratap Shumsher, who was then living in Calcutta. The mother of the girl filed a suit for the restoration of the girl in the court on the ground of her minority. The court on a motion referred to by the Police Department investigated the case and summarily dismissed the suit. The girl was then nearly 24 years old and she was accordingly married to the tutor subsequently after at Banaras according to Arya Samajic rites. To the Ranas in Kathmandu, this was too much. A Vaisya subject of theirs and a subject under caste marrying a Rana girl of divinity and superior blood was something very much criminal and they indirectly evoked the help of the British Government to punish him according to the Rana's law. But no surrender was made, perhaps the Government of India were exasperated by the flimsy ground put forth to demand his surrender and refused to comply with the request. Bhet Narain, however, lost all his property lying in Nepal, which was seized by the Government as a measure of penalty.

Three cases of arrest, as will be referred to later, were also made in Calcutta in 1940 at the instance of the Ranas who demanded their surrender, but the Government of India refused to comply with the request for political reasons. One of the arrested person was Santbir Lama, who had been victimised three times consecutively in similar circumstances. In an earlier extradition case he had established his being a citizen of India.

Bhet Narain kept in surveillance died a consumptive in that state sometime after in 1941 perhaps much to the relief of the Rana tyrants.

The arrangement which prohibited anti Rana agitation is now ceased to be binding. Looked that way the above will appear a superfluous attempt to add to the volume of the narration. We have no interest in this arrangement as well so it has floundered at present. But sometime back this had been practically responsible for suppressing any move conducted against the feudal Government of Nepal and there lay its importance, and we have, accordingly, brought it to our picture. Today, we do not encounter the galling restrictions which made it totally impossible to raise even a straw in the matter, and this freedom from possible difficulties and dangers is apt to make some of us forgetful of the past. But if we know that there have been left a legacy of pessimism and fearfulness still remaining intact, we will not under-rate the situation as then prevailed, and of our delineation of the same.

It was really a very painful picture. The way the British zealously safe-guarded the interest of the Rana family made it virtually impossible for any agitational work to stand for a little long. Any open activity as will be evident from another part of the narrative was out of the question. The British authorities did not even tolerate democratic activities conducted purely for the local interest of the emigrant Nepalese. A shadow of terror always hung over these poor people. It seem-

ed that the terror of the Ranas had followed them as far as British India.

The only effect of the policy of discouragement and suppression had been to keep the Napalese away from the main current of national liberation fight in India which had sent again its repurcussion in making them impervious to the influence of progressive forces. That terror of the cruel Ranas had almost paralysed them. Even now with India free and no fear of punitive action by the authorities the Nepalese have not been able to shake off that age long stupor. They are moving very slowly if at all we mark a movement. It is really a tragedy that the same paralysis is gripping them up till now.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF THE RANA FAMILY

The unification of the entire portion of the territories now known as Nepal is a very recent phenomenon. The present king's ancestor Prithvi Narayan Shaha was responsible for this glorious achievement which was completed in about the year 1770 A. D. Previously, the country was divided into petty principalities, and even the valley of Nepal was a loose confederacy of three independent states which at times did not hesitate to draw swords against one another. Not that a united Nepal of the present size was an unknown factor in history. On the other hand, there were periods of glory from this point of view as well

as from the point of view of the achievements in cultural and economic prosperity. But before 1770 for about seven hundred years Nepal had diminished much in size, and practically fractioned and, therefore, when the unification re-appeared in 1770 it presented itself as a novel phase. Besides, it is to the credit of the statesmen who built the kingdom that it has successfully withstood the pressure of disruptive forces, and did not suffer dismemberment in the darkest crisis.

But the descendants of the man who carved out Nepal were to disappear from the scene from the very beginning. As it happened none of them could handle reins of administration. From 1770 onwards, the successors to the throne were invariably minors, and as such the administration was always controlled by the Palace Aristocracy composed of the Pande, Thapa and Basnait family who were associated with the royal family from the early day of its ascendancy. Even when two of them in 1896 and 1830 respectively attained majority, and exerted themselves to exercising royal prerogatives they were so ill-equipped temperamentally that it was more a case of bungling than of sound administration which all the more went to precipitate the crisis. In fact, it was Rajendra Bikram Shah's capricious, effeminate and weak handling of administration that prepared the way for Jung's advent into power. The succession of minors to the throne had thrown responsibility into the hands of the Queen Regents who, in turn, were guided by men of the aristocratic families, they loved or favoured for reasons of intimate relationship. This had produced a very

undesirable repercussion on the administration which suffered from all the evils of instability. Only the premiership of Bhimsen Thapa was an exception for he could rule uninterruptedly, for a long span of nearly 30 years, but he too fell a prey to the traditional disease as soon as the feminine power supporting him was snatched away by death in 1835.

The aforesaid four families of aristocracy changed fortune at a tidal speed in keeping with the power of the Regent whose very existence depended on chance. But nothing was so ghastly and injurious as the element of insecurity which formed almost a general rule of administration.

It has been a special feature of the Nepalese history of the period that not one premier met a natural death. Sometimes one family after another of aristocracy faced total extinction as one superseded the other. This went on, as far as 1846, when the king's power was finally taken away from him to be placed in perpetuity into the hands of the Rana Premier who rules by hereditary rights of succession. Since then, the Shah dynasty has ceased to be governing while it continues to pass as a nominal ruler.

THE KOT MASSACRE

Jung Bahadur rose to the position of an all powerful ruler from a very humble situation in life by sheer energy and though often by questionable means. His father was a courtier in the palace, and this had pro-

vided for him an opportunity to enter upon a political career to push his own interest. At the time he attained maturity the court presented a pitiable scene of disruption and internecine strife, wherein ambitious individuals found easy field for the most unscrupulous kind of personal advancement often using the inviolable name of the ruler who had been reduced to imbecility unknown before in the history of the Shah dynasty. The King Rajendra Bikram Shah was a weakling and was doubly controlled alternatively by the queen and the prince, her step son. The courtiers were divided on that account and respectively owed allegiance in groups to the three personages who appeared vying with one another in power and prestige. At first the king seemed inclined towards the prince, but since March 1843 he had lent his weight to the side of the queen who was now invested with all the royal prerogatives being appointed the Supreme Regent of the Realm. Describing the condition of the court Dr. Oldfield, the then Residency Surgeon, writes —

There were three parties in the Capital, and these owed loyalty to the king, queen and the prince, respectively.

1. The party of the queen, who was anxious to secure the Crown for her own son, and meantime a permanent Regency for herself. This party by far the most powerful was led by General Gagan Singh, Commander-in chief. Although a parvenu, his personal demeanour was not arrogant, but his previous birth and occupation made him unpopular with the other chiefs,

while his notorious amour with the queen made him an object of jealousy and dislike to the king and the royal family. He always used the name and authority of the queen, whose agent he professed to be, and on whom he was constantly in advance.

2. The party of the Heir-apparent—The prince, Surendra Bikram Shah, was now comparatively quiet, and his party neither numerous nor strong. His chief partisan Jung Bahadur was growing lukewarm, and seemed half-inclined to join the queen's side.

3. The party of the Raja—This included the Chautarias, and many of the more quiet and least ambitious of the chiefs. The king, though weak and vacillating, himself had hitherto succeeded in playing the rival parties so cleverly one against the other that things had, on the whole, turned out very much to his profit and advantage. His chief stay was Fatehjung, a high-minded and unambitious chief, who was then evidently waiting for events, and though nominally premier, took very little part in any business of the Government, except that belonging to the Foreign Department. General Abhiman Rana another potentate, followed the lead of Fateh Jung, and confined his attention to civil affairs. He was sensible and well-disposed, but of no greater energy or ability.

Dr. Oldfield wrote of the situation on the eve of the famous Kot massacre of September 1846. Earlier the queen had contrived to cause the death of Premier Mathabar Singh Thapa, who, though raised to the exalted position by the queen's favour, had showed

tendencies to become her rival in power, and a protagonist of prince Surendra's right. Jung Bahadur was related to this man as his nephew by his sister, but participated in the plot playing the chief role as the person who shot the premier dead at the instigation of the queen. Since then Jung Bahadur was taken by the queen as her confidant, and he had cleverly managed to gain the confidence of hers and her paramour General Gangan Singh, who was then appointed Commander-in-chief of the army. Inwardly, however, he hated the queen, and thought of exploiting the situation for himself on behalf of the prince.

Summing up the situation after the death of Mathabar, Jung's biographer and son Padma Jung, writes—

“Two months after the death of Mathabar, Gagan Singh, in addition to the command of his Regiments, secured the charge of all the magazines and arsenals in the country. To Fatehjung was assigned the duty of supervising civil and military administration of Gorkha, Palpa and Doli and Foreign Department. Eastern Terai was allotted to Abhiman. A new member was taken into the Council to represent the Pande interest and the choice fell on the surviving leader of that party, Dalbhanjan Pande. As to Jung Bahadur he was entrusted with the duty of improving the discipline of the army under him ”

Jung Bahadur had proved by his unscrupulous conduct in shooting his maternal uncle that he went to

any length to further his self-interest. This was a strong trait in his character which attracted British attention in him and the British Resident promptly extended his hand of assistance to him to march onwards in the glorious path to power. In the beginning all the same the then Resident Col Lawrence had a very poor opinion of his character and wanted to use him for imperialist interest not without certain amount of test of his sincerity and loyalty to British cause, which till the Sikh War had not been furnished. But in that war Jung gave ample proof of his attachment to the side of the British. The British knew that but for him the Nepalese might have joined the Sikh forces to their own embarrassment. Jung had to encounter and overcome a strong anti-British party to dissuade the court from the intended course of action involving definite line up with the Sikhs. The British now more than ever before would not remain unconscious of the value of friendship of the man who had stood in good stead by their side, if at all they were to have an upper hand in Kathmandu. He was too valuable a man to be left unnoticed, more particularly, in this crucible moment while the fate of Nepal was going to be decided and it was to the interest of the British that a man friendly to them come out victorious. Naturally in the circumstances the suspicions entertained by the Resident could not remain long in his heart. After some-time Jung found that the same Col. Lawrence came profusely with all out help.

Thus backed by the British arms Jung Bahadur

proceeded to capture power with the most consummate skill of a conspirator. He was a shrewd and master-hand in playing a double game. As he saw that he had nothing to fear from the prince who was of an unsound mind, he championed the lost cause of that personage secretly aspiring to overshadow him and he himself seated in power with the help of the party. But he was equally popular with the queen, and as we have seen from the way he killed his uncle Mathabar at her bidding, he was taking every opportunity to please her and secured a position of advantage in the palace. At the beginning of that eventful year he had so ingratiated himself to the queen that she took him to be no other than her loyal collaborator. He had regulated his movement well enough to dispel any doubt about him from the side of the queen.

Jung knew that unless he removed his opponents from the arena he would not even dream of the final capture of power. So he planned to kill Gagan Singh and use the commotion thus engendered for the end he sought. He was aware of the risks involved in the undertaking but he also could not remain blind to the state of disturbance that would ensue, which any dexterous individual might have exploited for himself. The only thing he was to achieve to successfully carry the game to fruition was to disarm the queen of the least suspicion about himself so that he could very well lay the blame at the door of his opponents. This he had done by profession of loyalty to the queen and pledging his support to the design she wanted to

practise upon her step sons to secure the throne for her own child.

Exactly at 10 P.M. on the 14th of September, 1846, General Gagan Singh was shot dead through a window while he was engaged in prayers. The queen's suspicion naturally fell on the King's party for she knew that Gagan Singh was strongly despised by the King and his associates for reason of his attachment to herself. She had not the least idea of how Jung Bahadur could be capable of double dealing being thus falsely led to believe him as her confidant. Rather she consulted Jung Bahadur at every moment of crisis as to the step to be taken to meet the situation. Jung Bahadur for his own sake advised her to summon all the Courtiers to her presence immediately, which was complied with then and there. By 1 A.M. subsequently after, all the noblemen had assembled in the Palace Courtyard, the usual place for the meeting of the Court Assembly.

None of them knew the cause of the queen's order. So all of them had repaired to the court without scenting any danger for themselves and, therefore, absolutely unarmed. Jung Bahadur alone had brought his regiments, who were lying in ambush and had kept them in readiness outside to use them to meet the contingency which he had envisaged.

While to the Courtiers Jung Bahadur affected to have earnestly desired tranquility, he incited the queen to avenge the murder. He said to the queen, "Madam, I am a close friend of the late General. On that account my life is not safe. But I feel, Madam, you

and your son, too, are not now out of danger. Therefore, you should act on your own responsibility according to the powers you are invested with since 1843.'

If the King had acted boldly on the occasion many of the lives killed that night might have been saved. But he did nothing beyond asking the queen to afford opportunity of defence to the principal suspect, Birkishore Pandey, who had been arrested and chained by order of the queen. After sometime when the matter took a serious turn, and his partisans who stood in danger of life needed him most he quietly left the place for British Legation to inform the Resident of the happening at the court, where to his profound resentment he found the doors closed. Col. Lawrence had not even the courtesy to come down and give a hearing to the Royal Visitor.

In the absence of the King and of the only checking power, the queen was given a free hand and with Jung Bahadur to influence her passion she proceeded to the most ferocious part of the game, uninterfered with and ordered for the instantaneous killing of Birkishore Pandey and Dalbhanjan Pandey, the latter for having refused earlier to execute her order of arresting Birkishore. The Prime Minister Fateh Jung Chautaria could not accept this outrageous conduct of the queen, and warned her against the consequences. Both he and General Abhiman, about whose sensibility and exemplary behaviour Dr. Oldfield has highly spoken, opposed the queen with all the force they commanded.

The atmosphere was tense and passions were running high. Dr. Oldfield writes that Jung Bahadur had offered his hand of friendship to Fateh Jung just to dupe him and tried hard for his consent to securing the death of the two suspects. But the old man refused to be a party to the heinous act proposed, and as a result met his death along with Abhiman at the very initial stage of the massacre.

Narrating the course of events Dr. Oldfield proceeds : "Fateh Jung, however, refused to be a party to the plan and proposed that the Pandey should be fairly tried, and if found guilty, punished..... This conversation between Jung and Fateh Jung took place in the quadrangle surrounding the building of the Kot..... The queen was seriously offended at the attitude of Fateh Jung and herself tried to use the sword on Birkishore who was in irons. The three ministers restrained her, and trying to pacify her, followed her from the hall towards the upper storey, when suddenly shots were fired, and Fateh Jung and Dalbhanjan fell dead and Abhiman Rana wounded. The last, while endeavouring to crawl out, was cut in two with one stroke of the sword by Krishna Bahadur, Jung's brother.....Then followed the mellee when the Kot experienced a blood bath."

Dr. Oldfield with his pro-Jung views as was natural to the officer of the British Residency justifies the firing in the following terms :

"There had been high words passing below among the Sirdars of different parties as the queen withdrew, and it

is probable that in the excitement of the wrangling, one or more of Jung's younger brothers, who were present, on seeing Abhiman Rana's soldiers loading their muskets in accordance with that General's orders imagined that this was preliminary to some treachery against them and rashly gave the order to fire on Abhiman and his friends.'

For Jung Bahadur in the words of the same Dr. Oldfield, "It was a moment when he felt that all who were not members of or known to be attached to his party were ruthlessly shot or cut down." In an official report made to the Resident by Jung Bahadur the number of the Sardars and military officers killed in the massacre was thirty-one and all included totalled 134. Jung Bahadur was, thereafter, made the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief.

Jung Bahadur on no account can absolve himself of the guilt of the Kot massacre. His authorship of the tragedy has been established by circumstantial evidence which was further supported by the admission of the King that the event was fully inspired and calculated. In the foot-note Dr. Oldfield observes: "In August 1856, on the occasion of Jung refusing the premiership, the Maharaja was recounting Jung Bahadur's services to the State as a ground for conferring extra bonus on him,...he declared that the Kot massacre was a premeditated affair, and was planned and carried out under written instructions from time to time issued to Jung Bahadur."

Nearly a month and a half after again on the 31st

October Jung Bahadur killed some more Sirdars particularly those of the Basnait family on charge of conspiracy against his regime. He also forced the queen to quit to Banaras as a punishment for her complicity in in that affair.

The episode which culminated in the banishment of the queen is known as Bhandarkhal Parva meaning the massacre of the store-room. It took a toll of 60 lives twenty-one of them butchered in a room in the cruelest possible manner out of a base motive of vengeance. All those people who supported the queen as against Jung Bahadur met their end in this calculated murder. Pro-Jung reports explain this tragedy as a measure of retaliation against the conspiratorial attempt of the queen to take Jung's life. It is said that the queen wanted to use Jung for the Kot massacre alone and no further, and she was opposed to the idea of his continuing as the Premier of the land. But she had realised that the latter had too firmly seated in power to be unseated easily. So she had resorted to a course of conspiracy to remove him physically by an act of murder. The direct cause of her angry design is said to be Jung's refusal to instal her son on the throne in supersession of the claims of Surendra. She was asking him to murder her two step sons while sleeping in the apartment in order to pave the way for her protege. But Jung found it hard to oblige her if only for his own safety, because she had appeared to him extraordinarily dangerous and he rightly thought that the Crown Prince's end might prove to be the precursor of his own downfall. Accord-

ing to a more accurate version the fact of Gagan Singh's murder had come to the light of the queen and she was now convinced that Jung was befooling her by playing a double game with the intention to grab power for himself. This realisation had driven her to take revenge on Jung Bahadur and finish his life in cold blood as he had done away with Gagan Singh earlier. The scheme prepared was that one noon Jung was to be called together with his six brothers in audience to the King at the Palace and all of them shot on the way outside or within the Palace precincts, wherever feasible, by men lying in ambush for the purpose. It would have been a surprise attack on the persons of the queen's enemies and surely they would have been instantaneously caught and finished unawares. But just a few hours before the appointed time Jung was informed of the impending catastrophe by one Vijayaraj Pandey, tutor to the queen's sons, who had learnt it from her maid-servant. In those days palace secrets often leaked out through the harem girls who confided in the men they carried clandestine relationship with, which was not uncommon in the filthy atmosphere of the palace where sex starved women sought amour indiscriminately. Vijayaraj naturally used to obtain his share of secrets through such relationship. It is said that Vijayaraj and Jung Bahadur were old friends from the day the latter was a truant in Banaras and the former was thrust into the Palace on the latter's commendations to serve as private tutor in which capacity he was also to trace and report to him all overt and covert movements of the queen. As soon as the

news was broken to him, Jung promised the highest religious post of the land to Vijayaraj to be enjoyed in perpetuity by him and his descendants, and himself proceeded on a precipitate course of action to depose the queen. He had no time to lose, because the information had reached him at the eleventh hour. It was sheer presence of mind and balance of head that came to his aid and carried him through the crisis triumphant. The regiments would not be prevailed upon to march on to the Palace,—he had not possessed that much command over them as to demand exclusive loyalty, so he had to make a dash with only a few riflemen and his brothers as his fate willed it rose to the occasion. Jung Bahadur passed in a palanquin well-shielded from an attack of bullets, and the others followed him in all guardedness with muskets loaded and kept in readiness to fire. The shot fired from behind a bush near the Jorganesh temple in the vicinity of the Palace by one of the miscreants did not hit any one of them, but gave them a provocative cause to respond to the royal summons with incessant shots fired from their muskets, which continued till they met the queen. At the gate they were joined by Prince Upendra and the Royal Body Guard of one hundred men, which made it easy for Jung to overpower Kazi Birdhoj Basnait and twenty-one men who were furtively waiting for his arrival from inside the store-room. Before Jung confronted the queen the twenty men including the Kazi had been killed outright.

Jung Bahadur then proceeded straight to demand from the queen the cause of the royal summons. As the

original plan of murder at the gate was foiled, there was no further trouble in between the gate and the queen's apartment. The conspirators had left the preparation complete at that point, and once Birdhoj collapsed the queen's cause was as good as lost. It was really a painful surprise for the queen to have seen her inveterate enemy facing herself in a triumphant mood at the time she hoped to see his head to be brought to her. Fate was never more unkind to its victim than when it made a prisoner of the queen in the hands of Jung Bahadur.

The queen was immediately ordered to make way to Banaras as a punishment for her criminal deeds. She was charged with the offence of causing bloodshed of a large number of innocent people at the Kot massacre and with the intention of releasing a murderous plan of action to deprive the prince and his partisans of their lives in the present instant. Jung Bahadur felt very much relieved when this sentence was served on her. It was going to automatically put an end to all the inimical manœuverings directed against him, and had the king preferred to forsake the queen there was also an opportunity to free him from her influence. The King, however, would not consent to live in Nepal without his wife. Jung Bahadur had to let him go along with the queen at a regular risk to himself. The King was evading his surveillance and making himself open to approaches by disgruntled elements and to incitement to rebellion against the newly established order under their influence. But he had had the satis-

faction that within Nepal he was the master of the situation having got rid of the mistress whose stealthy practices and evil designs were disturbing his mental peace, and haunted him with a feeling of insecurity.

Thus Jung Bahadur eliminated all his rivals, and with the exit of the queen assumed on himself the guardianship of the Heir-apparent now openly taking up his cause to function in his name. A year after he manœuvred to discredit the king, and enthroned the man of his choice on the Royal seat as will appear from the following paragraphs. Prince Surendra easily became his tool. As he was of an unsound mind and too weak to handle the intricate machinery of administration, Jung Bahadur became the sole authority of the kingdom of Nepal. He further secured a Sanad from the insane king, which gave him all powers of a hereditary ruler.

As long as king Rajendra lived with the queen in Banaras he was ever a source of annoyance to Jung Bahadur. His presence in Banaras was utilised by his opponents to rally anti-Rana forces and the queen in these dealings as in others played the most prominent part to viciate the atmosphere and plots and attempts on her account at dislodging the usurper were numerous. Jung Bahadur for his part was assiduously trying to call back the king to Kathmandu in order to sterilise him and free him from the evil influence of the queen, but the king could not consent to go alone and the Prime Minister, even if he desired for reasons of his own, would not agree to his being accompanied by the queen.

Rajendra, however, was forced by circumstances to quit Banaras without the queen, because Jung had threatened to dethrone him if he did not reach Kathmandu soonafter. He could not entertain the prospect of dethronement by Jung. But he entered the Nepalese territory too late to find himself a little later a prisoner in the hands of Jung Bahadur after his design of an invasion thwarted. Two assassins hired by his wife to precede him were caught before they could lay hands on Jung Bahadur, who deliberately made capital of their suspicious presence to expose Rajendra's designs and on their confession of guilt enthroned Prince Surendra forthwith. Jung Bahadur had scored a tactical victory in taking advantage of the situation and then alone it was clear to the monarchists that the royal cause was lost. Rajendra had collected a loosely united body of mercenaries, which was to accompany him to Kathmandu, but this was no match to Jung's army. It was clear that he was depending too much on the allegiance of the state forces at Kathmandu, in whose loyalty he had confidence enough to cherish an ardent hope that they would come over to him as soon as he made appearance in Nepal. But Providence devised otherwise. The detachment sent from Kathmandu made him prisoner at the instance of Jung Bahadur. A skirmish occurred near Parevabhir on the outskirts of the great Terai forest. In this engagement his regiment was completely routed, which culminated in his defeat and surrender. Rajendra was treated as a honoured guest while he reached Kathmandu, but Jung would not leave him free. The throne would not be restored to him,

and he was also not to enjoy the Royal dignity now fallen to his son. He was treated no better than a virtual prisoner under Government surveillance as far as his movement went, and he could also not contact the queen. Rajendra might have repented his coming back home, because while he had run for gauntlets to Kathmandu, distress and grief lay in waiting for him there and he found himself in their close grips in total isolation from all congenial forces. His indiscreet act had only allowed Jung Bahadur to strengthen his position, and free his administration from all the embarrassments which would have often ensued had the ex-king been living in Banaras with his consort ever busy to cook up plots and conspiracies for him. Rajendra Bikram Shah had ceased to be a problem for Jung Bahadur as soon as the latter got hold of his person.

Rajendra had miscalculated his resources in making a bid for power in Kathmandu. He had obviously in mind the example of his grandfather who by his bold entry into the forbidden land had been able to get back his throne, the opponents having fled or resigned for sheer lack of courage to face him in front of the army. But Jung Bahadur seated firmly in power appeared a formidable barrier and no amount of threat short of actual physical overpowering was to unseat him. Rajendra lacked that sort of strength and found that the event almost repeated ended in a farce with himself a virtual prisoner of a comical type in the larger internment camp of Kathmandu.

Having had his own choice of the man on the throne whom he had subsequently after turned into a

puppet and made prisoner of the rightful occupant on charges of immoral conduct, Jung found himself under the most propitious circumstances. He had already crushed his opponents in the aristocratic circle, in a series of murderous assaults, and now with the royal personages in his captivity he obtained the most unchallengeable powers. Within six years of the Kot massacre he had attained the almost supreme position in the realm, and of a dictator at that, whose power was unequalled by similar personages in the past. How wide and sweeping his authority had been and how the same consolidated can be seen with reference to his superb courage in venturing a voyage to England at a time when in any other circumstances his absence even for a moment would have entailed irreparable injury to his person and family. Had his position been not secure Jung might not have dared to be away from his country and leave his position to full exposure of the play of clandestine forces. But having suppressed them he had little to be afraid of these forces or of any *coup d'etat* in their hands. It was a unique venture of courage he undertook, which Indian Princes before his time would not even dream, and undertaking might have courted disaster. It goes certainly to testify the organisational and consolidational ability of the man who could afford to be absent from a place which was only a little earlier a hot-bed of intrigues, yet to come back and be installed without any untoward incidents. But more than that we can read his almost unbelievable self-confidence the nature of the situation then obtaining, which was in no way of the sort to give cause

for anxiety. Jung's self-confidence sprang from the realisation that he had done away with all the foes in the arena. In the circumstances when all key-posts in the state were occupied by his brothers and relations, and the throne reduced to imbecility, this self-confidence was simply natural. As long as he retained loyalty of his brothers he had nothing to be worried about his security. It may be remembered that after 1848 all the cases of conspiracies have direct connection with one or another member of the Rana family, which proves that Jung's calculation was perfectly justified. As for him his brothers stood as one man in all the periods of stress or normalcy and it was his statesmanship which contributed to the mastery of the situation and controlled and kept his not uncommonly meek soldier brothers in a state of unequivocal and contented loyalty.

But within ten days of his arrival from England his equanimity was suddenly disturbed by the revelation made by his second brother Bam Bahadur then acting in his place that Prince Upendra, the king's brother, had hatched up a conspiracy to dislodge the Rana family from their position of vantage and the whole scheme was scheduled to be put into operation with his own and Badrinarsinha's co-operation. Then Jung Bahadur felt that he had but one lacuna in his consolidated structure, which as the opportunity presented itself was to be now rectified. He at once set himself on the task of removing the Prince and his associates from the field, which he had not done so far for not being able to detect such rebellious tendencies in the Prince as were

revealed at that time. Although he had also to part with his brother Badrinarsinha, his satisfaction was that the resultant situation was quite satisfactory. He had succeeded in crippling another leg of the Royal family just at the time when even with one leg lame it was desiring to move on a crusade.

The plot had failed because the conspirators wanted to complete the task with the acting Premier on their side, which was a fatal mistake they committed foreshadowing failure the moment it was conceived. Badri Narsinha's grievances can be understood as he happened to be the last on the line, and his aspiration to stage a coup was natural. But Bam with his chance coming immediately next and the formidable position he had attained as the confidant of his elder brother was the least desirable person from the point of view of the plotters. Even for his interest a conspiracy on Jung's life was the last thing he could afford to do. The conspirators committed another blunder in postponing the seizure of power till Jung's return to Kathmandu. Perhaps they had unduly banked on the co-operation of Bam Bahadur who had been asked not to hand over charges of administration to his brother on his return and continue in that state throughout his life. But this programme provided ample scope for Jung Bahadur to put up resistance even by throwing the weight of his immense prestige and popularity. It is possible that only on Bam's suggestion the scheme was detailed to be consummated after Jung's return. Bam Bahadur, however, instead of obliging his associates, proceeded to betray them just in the nick of time and turn the

scale against the Prince and his co-plotters. The account says that Jung Bahadur's presence acted so overwhelmingly on the mind of the acting Premier that the latter was forced to make a clean breast of everything in fulfilment of his pledge of loyalty. Pro-Jung narratives attribute the confession to a mental break down sustained by Bam Bahadur. But another version makes out a case for a calculated betrayal saying that Bam was bent on betraying and for that purpose was waiting for his brother's arrival. The plot was given out as an attempt at restoration of royal power with Upendra Vikram on the throne and his associates as commanders on the Pre-Kot massacre level. Had Bam acted according as the royal personage wished, the history of the Rana family would have come to an end. But he had saved the family and the over-all effect of Jung's victory over the opponents was to endow his regime with all proof stability and himself with unusual self-confidence and courage. After the banishment of the Prince and General Badrinarsinha, the last bulwark of anti-Rana opposition, had fallen to the ground.

According to Dr. Wright, the Residency Surgeon, who had succeeded Dr. Oldfield in 1865, the following gives the exact nature of the position of Jung Bahadur as the *de facto* ruler of Nepal: "Jung Bahadur has been the undisputed ruler of the country. The old king is a prisoner in the palace. The present king is kept under strictest surveillance and not allowed to exercise any power whatever. The Heir-apparent is also kept in a state of obscurity, being never permitted to take part in any public business or even to appear in the

Durbar to which the British Resident is invited. In fact, one may live for years in Nepal without either seeing or hearing of the king." This observation is as true of today as it was of a century earlier.

Jung Bahadur belonged to a clan of Khasa Kshatriyas, but as soon as he proclaimed himself the Maharaja of Lamjung, a principality in the western Nepal, he elevated his status, called himself a Rajput by falsely connecting his lineage to the Chittor stock, and inter-married with the king's family—he had given his two daughters in marriage to the Crown Prince, and himself had wooed the hands of a distant cousin of the king. Since then the family of Jung Bahadur has been known as the Rana family of Nepal. Today his grand nephew passes as the Maharaja of Nepal.

Such is the start of the Rana family. No body can refuse to admit the duplicity and dishonesty with which Rana Jung Bahadur proceeded to play the game. In fact the history of the Kot massacre by which he waded to power is a record of the outrageous and immoral nature of the origin of the Rana regime. Frankly speaking it has been resting solely on an edifice of mischievous devices the Ranas are consistently practising.

THE FATE OF THE KING

The Sanad by which the King signed away his absolute powers to the Rana family made him a ruler all but in name. After being so totally replaced in all the spheres of royal life he passed as a figure head more as a relic of monarchy than as a monarch in person.

About the king of Nepal it is quite impossible to say which function he retains. He is certainly taken to appear in religious ceremonies, but there he has to line himself up with the lifeless images of deities, which is equally expressive of the impotent nature of royalty he held. Quite in contrast stands the hereditary premier with the title of Maharaja who makes himself felt in all aspects of social intercourse by wielding real power. The amazing part of the story is that he is being allowed to exist, which, if not a burden in other ways, is surely a financial encumbrance on the exclusively personal rule of the family. He could have been easily dispensed with and the Rana Premier would not have encountered much difficulty to replace him. The present anomalous position of the king may be explained by attributing a desire on the part of Jung Bahadur not to molest the personality of the king as far as practicable. Perhaps he also thought that it would provoke public revolt as the king was looked upon as the incarnation of the God Vishnu. Another consideration which might have weighed with him was that by reducing the king to a position of a non-functioning puppet he attained the objective aimed at. All forces working, the king since 1846 has been completely eclipsed. He is not even a king of the type of a constitutional monarch as the king of England. For all practical purposes his existence is anomalous. The middle man is the single *de jure* and *de facto* force controlling the destiny of the eight million Nepalese, who, today, not only overshadows the throne but also emaciates the people with the weapon of his most irresponsible and cruel rule.

With the loss of the power of the king his collaterals, the Chautarias, also got themselves denuded of all privileges. They were suffered to live in Kathmandu only as a too infirm and depending class, otherwise the like of those suspected to be troublesome had no chance to profit by that sufferance. In fact, for a long time their lot has been to pass life in the plains of the Terai. Even the nearest collaterals not excluding his brothers are forced to share this mishap. The Rana family's rise to power had sealed for all times the fate of the king's family which was now a family dethroned and in actuality disgraced.

The morning of the 15th September, 1846, also saw the Rana family in a superb position of vantage and without a rival in the field. In the Kot massacre had fallen all the adult members of the aristocracy, which meant the capture and control of the court by the Rana family without a challenge. A year later when Jung Bahadur passed a decree concentrating the power, privilege and prestige of the state in the Rana family and made it an exclusive concern of his, there was no other family or person to question his claim, all being resigned to accept the result in total submissiveness. Thence forward the Nepalese aristocracy meant the Rana family and none else.

Previously while the king ran the administration no one family monopolised the services. Although in practice the king appointed the ministers from amongst the favourites belonging to the Thapa, Basnait, Panday or the Royal family these four constituted the aristo-

cracy before 1846, there was no legal bar to or any kind of pressure on his discretion to selecting them from outside these families. Jung Bahadur, however, changed the whole texture of administration by endowing his family with royal prerogatives, which meant filling up the posts by them alone on hereditary rights in order of succession. This was an insurmountable barrier to those who were unprivileged and pushed further brought about their ejection from comparatively minor posts also, which, with the increase in number of the Rana family, came to be occupied by them on the same basis. The change of 1846 so far as the aristocracy was concerned was to declass them and merge them with the plebian, while it raised the Rana family to the enviable position of Royalty which not even the king's family vied.

Those who laud the establishment into power of the Rana family as heralding an era of peace forget the fact that the Rana Family had introduced a grave like tranquility in the realm, while putting an end to the capricious rule of the autocratic king. Whatever might have been the disadvantages of the internally fighting court, the very feature of it characterised by flexibility guaranteed a flow of life which the following regime stopped by making it rigid. The price which Kathmandu paid for the so-called reign of order was certainly too dear.

The same people again never care to think that the event contributed mainly to a shift of emphasis rather than stress basical change in that it was a case

of fractional minority holding power in subjugation of the minority of the same character, and the change did, in no way, affect the mass of life outside the four corners of the Court compound. It is absurd and mischievous at that to say that Jung Bahadur gave to Nepal the blessings of a stable and strong rule free from internal disturbances.

VICTORY FOR BRITISH DIPLOMACY

Jung Bahadur's success in the Nepal Durbar was a triumph for British diplomacy. Thereafter they had nothing to be apprehensive about developments in Nepal. Their opponents, the erstwhile anti-British Pandays, Thapas and Chautarias were totally eliminated and with Jung Bahadur at the helm of affairs Nepal was rendered safe for the British. It is said that Jung Bahadur entered into a secret pact with the then British Governor General renouncing the previous policy of distrust. Henceforth the Nepal Government became not only the faithful ally of the British Imperialists, but began to function as a collaborator in the act of subjugating the Indian Sub-continent. Some clauses of the treaty of 1835 had already placed Nepal in a subordinate position with the British as regards foreign affairs. Its ruler could not seek external contact without the permission of the British. This process was completed by Jung Bahadur who now definitely allied himself with the British, and willingly allowed himself to be dictated by them even in matters of internal administration.

The Pandays and Thapas had got never tired of conspiring against the British and the whole history between 1816-43 is replete with instances of deals and efforts at conspiratorial manœuvring. Nepal at the time indulged in conspiracies with several Princes in India and abroad to make the rapidly growing British influence infructuous. In 1840, certain border skirmishes were deliberately provoked to take advantage of the situation arising out of Anglo-Sikh disputes. The British dared not open war with Nepal at that time and Lord Ellenborough's proposal to invade the Terai was turned down as impracticable and inopportune. At another place the British had exploited the fear which Ranjit Singh had felt on account of the Gorkha aggression in the early decade of the century. Under their influence the Sikh Ruler had even gone to the extent of handing over the Nepalese conspirator General Mathabar Thapa to the British.

Ranjung Panday who was entrusted with the sole charge of political affairs during the fateful period was no friend of the British. To his credit he could unite all the rival parties in his country on the issue of fighting the Imperialist intruders. It was he who had largely influenced the policy to send out agents in foreign courts for negotiating a united front to meet the British challenge. So long as he remained in power the British Government in India had no peace of mind.

But the Pandays were not destined to control the destiny of the country for long. No sooner Lord Ellenborough could read their design on various information

reaching him than he applied himself to his best capacity to bring about a fall of the Panday Ministry raising even personal issues for that purpose, which was the usual game the British played in such contingencies. The old rivalry which divided the two families of the Pandays and the Thapas was exploited and British support was pledged to the party in opposition. It so happened that the elder Queen who was the main stay behind the Panday Ministry died of poisoning, and the British could thus witness an automatic collapse of the agency which they dreaded. Ranjung Panday was immediately after dismissed to be replaced by a coalition of the Chautarias and the Brahman Preceptor much to the satisfaction of the Company's Government.

It, however, failed to serve the purpose that the British had in view. The Pandays continued to be in influential position though not holding the reins of power. The Thapas, too, did not put up any hopeful attitude, for although they were divided from the Pandays on personal issues, they were least inclined to make a deal with the British at the cost of their country's interest. Dr. Oldfield writes how after the withdrawal of the Oliver's Brigade the same kinds of disturbances were renewed, and on more than one occasion the Nepal Durbar did not hesitate to cause annoyance to the British authorities. This did not subside with Mathabar Thapa's return, which is expressive of the fact that the British were equally shunned by the Thapas. The British might have been very much pleased when Jung Bahadur later on appeared in the scene as the man to favour British alliance to the

complete reversal of the old policy of distrust. In 1846 accordingly both the Pandays and the Thapas were dispensed with in favour of Jung Bahadur who had pledged his loyalty to them.

If one could call Jung's accession to power as a triumph for British diplomacy it may not be far from the correct assessment of facts, for as we said above, it was British diplomacy which had helped him to carry the day.

Jung's friendship was an asset which was assiduously utilised by the British. During the ensuing period when the British fought some decisive battles Jung Bahadur's policy of detachment, which kept Nepal away from the main current of political events in India was a great factor facilitating British conquest. The British could easily deal with the Sikhs in 1848 now that Nepal had been totally sterilised. Not only that Jung Bahadur kept his country neutral in the Anglo-Sikh wars, but he also offered himself to join the British expedition with eight battalions of Gorkhas, which, however, the British refused for want of that much confidence in his sincerity so as to invite him to India with a contingent of troops, which they had not tested so far. During the ten years which followed, Jung Bahadur had given ample proof of his loyalty by acting on British counsel in all matters of common interest and so in the Mutiny when he proved the best friend of the British by personally leading an attack on the rebels, they had felt justified in trusting him to march to India at the head of the eight thousand

Gorkha troops on that occasion.

According to Dr. Oldfield Jung Bahadur always behaved in a manner to draw British attention to himself and to convince them of his friendly intentions. By being looked upon as their friend he thought his own position at Kathmandu may be strengthened. It was, therefore, the fault of the British themselves that they did not trust him to come to their help earlier in their Punjab wars.

This developed in course of time to an attitude of servility, and though he did not formally accept British suzerainty by way of treaty provisions he unabashedly went near to it to call himself in private conversations the most loyal servant of the British Queen. His threat of resignation and retirement over Ramsay affairs, he had complained to the British that the Resident Ramsay was not courteous to him, provides a clear proof of the fact that he always owed allegiance to them and regarded them as the ultimate repository of power. It was true to say that by helping Jung Bahadur to capture power the British had successfully brought to materialisation the fifty-year-old ambition of theirs, which was to place Nepal in a position to move at their bidding.

For the first time in the history of Nepal the Prime Minister received British titles and insignias, and the first of them knighted him. This was probably to annoint him in the order of British aristocracy, and virtually to mark the dependent status of the Nepal autocracy which thence forward leaned on their patro-

nage By making a sea voyage with the single purpose of personally paying homage to the British throne, Jung Bahadur had also betrayed his weakness to over zealously act the part of a British protected loyal princeling. To one who views the undercurrent of motive in his remiss conduct in breaking caste rigidity involved in sea voyage which was a taboo at that time and for which no other prince was prepared, the ordinary explanation which capitalises the fact of bold initiative on his part does not appear acceptable. His boldness was inspired by enthusiasm to overdo his loyal self, his conduct in undertaking the prohibited sea voyage only showed that he would not hesitate to disregard the most sanctimonious injunction of the society if the same has to be done in the performance of his duty towards the British Monarch. Whatever might have been the conduct of the Indian princes in other respects, this must be admitted to their credit that as far as practicable all of them with few exceptions shunned the British, and the strict observance of caste rigidity had enabled them to achieve the purpose without provoking the wrath of the ruling race. It is not a fact that the Nepalese were immune from the touch of such a feeling. In Nepal this feeling died out only during the time of Chandra Shumsher. Caste rigidity is not a virtue, but in those days it was mixed up with an attitude of distrust and hate as far as the Europeans were concerned, which all well-meaning and aggrieved persons felt without exception.

When a man who looses in private life in his coun-

try behaves the cruelest task master in respect of enforcing caste rigidity, and shows open hostility to the system as only to suit his convenience, there is much to doubt the much vaunted progressive views of his, which had only taken him to the feet of the Imperialist mistress

CHAPTER III

RECORD OF HUNDRED YEARS

(1846—1946)

JUNG BAHADUR'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Since Jung Bahadur took in his hands the reins of administration the exploitation of the people has gradually intensified, his nephews four of them who succeeded to his post one after the other accentuating the condition by worse form of exaction. Jung Bahadur who is often eloquently described as the hero of our country was, really speaking, a man of selfish disposition and unscrupulous conduct notwithstanding his tactful, energetic, indomitable courage and patient bearing, who always placed his own interest above anything else, struck a blow at public welfare to further his own licentiousness, in his time the very standard of public safety and administrative morality was hopelessly sunk down. From 1846 to 1876 in a long span of thirty years Jung achieved little for his country, though much for himself and for his relatives. To him

is credited the various reforms in Nepal undertaken in those days, for instance sati prohibition, modification of law and softening of the laws of punishment, but what in this field he did and who can say that these alone would testify to his sense of patriotism and love of the people, he rashly undid in other directions more specially in various centres of administration where the most hideous muddle was the result of his absolutely selfish rule. Jung Bahadur from the very beginning was abominably bent upon to thwart out our national interest. He established what is called a family Raj, an irresponsible oligarchy which is in its ideal and sentiment so coloured by personal whims and prejudices that the administration has since then worn a mean appearance. A total monopolisation of all services of state accompanied by despicable dishonesty in appropriation of public revenue and later acquirement of a private right over its disbursement by a family oligarchy is the gift of Jung Bahadur's rule. since whose time the door to all ambition so far open to any member of the public, by which anybody, though not solely on the ground of merit as in modern system was enjoying advantages to get himself to the highest post because of the monolithic type of power concentration, was for ever closed—restrains imposed on individuality and self development being an unbreakable fetter which has ultimately reduced the common inhabitant of Nepal to a citizen of weak, cowardly and mean disposition. Outside Nepal his contribution to foreign policy brought to India as a whole a stronger iron chain of slavery, the British consolidation simultaneously with

his own being the fruitful result of his interference on their side in the Mutiny, in which case he showed so much unpatriotic and selfish zeal to defend the interest of the foreigners that he tarnished the fair name of his country by allowing the persuing British army to enter the Nepalese territory and capture the fugitive rebels, the traditional integrity of territory which was so gloriously nourished by the Thapas and Pandays wantonly suffered to be violated, no base selfish motive would surpass this particular action on the part of Jung Bahadur who by stooping to such inhumanly base commitment in favour of a foreign power hoped to secure british guardianship for his family against all future contingency. He has certainly forfeited all the praises of historians conferred on him for his personal bravery by this unpatriotic and hideous action. British historians have produced accounts much coloured by their own selfish motives, a desire to acknowledge the help finding expression in high tone of praise which has no like for exaggeration and distortion of actuality by which this unscrupulous person is made a patriot, a hero and a reformer and despite his selfish designs a servant of the people. But the honours so far bestowed on him during his life or posthumously have no validity to rest on. As far as acts of personal bravery are concerned that lay in certain desperate manifestation of romantic adventure and risk-taking. Jung Bahadur might be best remembered by his own family for he raised it from a humble position to the most coveted and feared Royalty, while otherwise the common populace of Nepal have sufficient

reason to curse him, because of the sorry plight he landed them in to suit his own convenience.

Jung Bahadur was bitterly hated by other court personages for his pro-British sentiments. His biographer and son Padma Jung. Rana tells us that many murmured and still more advocated a policy of strict neutrality when the question of sending assistance to the British in the Mutiny came up for consideration in a meeting of the courtiers Jung Bahadur had to choose the course on his own responsibility fearing constantly the possibility of revolt in his personnel of the Expeditionary Force. According to Padma Jung one party actually took action against the Premier, and was well on the way to plot on his life. The following is an extract from the Biography—"There was a party in the State that was opposed to the British Alliance, and so when rumours of Jung Bahadur's preparations to march to India got abroad among the people a band of ruffians many of whom were Basnaitis, formed a conspiracy to assassinate him on his way to the plains. To cloak their murderous intentions they offered themselves for service as volunteers, well knowing that thus they could at once creep into the Minister's confidence. The whole plot was unravelled to Jung Bahadur by one of their own members, in consequence of which several arrests and executions were made. The intimate association developed with the British rulers constituted one of the two aspects of the same policy adopted by Jung Bahadur and followed by his grand nephew today to perpetuate his selfish rule in Nepal although conditions have totally altered.

In spite of the fact that Jung Bahadur tamely allowed the pursuing British army to enter the Nepalese Terai and hound out the 3000 Indian rebel refugees, an English author waxes eloquent over his non-compliance of the British demand for the surrender of Nana Sahib. But even that act of his was not without a tinge of servility so strong a trait in Jung's British protected rule, because although he would not hand over Nana Sahib to the custody of the British Resident he dared not say so defiantly but took cover behind the apparent disappearance of the person from Nepal pleading inability to secure him, which certainly was not a thing to redound to his credit as the Prime Minister of an independent country. He had also acted with a selfish purpose when he hid facts of Nana Sahib's wandering in the hills of Nepal from the British. It is to be noted that as soon as Nana Sahib entered Nepal he delivered in order to relieve himself of his young wife Kashi Bai and all the valuable jewels he took there into the hands of Jung Bahadur who pocketed gradually every piece of it on various pretexts throwing to the wind all considerations about the safe custody of the articles entrusted to him. These jewels then famous as Naulakhias still adorn the head-dress of the Maharaja Prime Minister and many of them are living in treasure boxes of the Rana Nobility. It is obvious that Nana Sahib had secured asylum in return to the price of the jewels he made over to the Prime Minister. There is yet another factor to evoke contempt of Jung's conduct. A popular belief still persists that Jung had contracted clandestine relationship with the young wife of the Indian refugee,

who was separated from her husband as soon as they stepped into Nepal. Possibly this relationship weighed with him when Jung Bahadur repeatedly feigned ignorance of Nana's presence in his domain. There is a strong ground to suspect that Jung Bahadur was intimate with young Kashi Bai. Unlike the Sikh queen who was housed in an unknown locality of the city far from the palace, the Maharashtra lady was given shelter in a house on the outskirts of Jung's habitation within the very precincts and it was known to all at the time that the Prime Minister used to visit her every now and then obviously for immoral purposes. This fact renders the story believable. That he could not resist the temptation to cohabit with a Brahman lady, so strictly forbidden by the Hindu religion, provides another instance of the way he behaved unscrupulously in matters his self interest demanded. Such a conduct and opportunity facilitated the same to fruition.

His exploits in the Mutiny earned for Nepal as a whole the ill feeling of the Indian people who were cruelly treated at his hands while he was raiding the rebel dens to avenge the embarrassment inflicted on his British allies. Lucknow is still full of the bitter memories of those days when it was brutally mauled by the Gorkha soldiers under orders of their Prime Minister. Wherever they went they had spread depredation and devastation by indiscriminate acts of loot and plunder known only in Medieval ages. All this was done to smoothen the path of the East India

Company which had embarked on a course of suppression of all the revolting elements in India. In the nick of time Jung Bahadur threw himself whole heartedly on the side of the British, and his participation in the crushing of the rebellion had added extraordinary weight to turn the scale in their favour.

In 1859 Nepal was rewarded with the restoration of the entire portion of the Terai low lands lying between the rivers Kali and Rapti, which was snatched by the British in 1815 as a result of Gorkha defeat in the war of that year.

This was certainly a glorious achievement, and flatterers have waxed eloquent of the national services expressed in the reward Jung received from his British Patrons. To this is added his so called victory over Tibet, which at the present time has come in as a basis enabling his grand nephew to have claimed a status of independence for his Government. It has been given out that because Jung waged a war with Tibet in 1856, Nepal was invariably enjoying freedom even after 1846, to which period limitations imposed by the treaty of 1815 were said to be not applicable. The aforesaid war, however, is not in the real sense of the term a full fledged war, but constituted in all its characteristics a border incident suffered to be raged by the East India Company on account of their pre-occupation in the pre-mutiny tension in India. By no standards it could be called a war. There was neither a deep inroad into Tibetan territory, nor large scale fights involving pitched battles of the armies.

The Nepalese records speak of an army of 14000 men to have taken up the field, but they claim no occupation of Tibetan territory. Kuti and Kerong were certainly captured, but their location has not been strictly in Tibetan domain and they had formed a part and parcel of Nepalese territory before 1792. The much boasted war of 1856 did not, at least, know of the Tibetan troops in action, and unlike the incident of 1792 did not provoke Chinese intervention. It also did not take a long time to settle points of dispute between the two Governments, which would have assumed a complexity and proportion of a protracting negotiation. If conclusion can be hazarded, it should not put a seal of war on the incident of 1856, which was definitely a border dispute one of the series Tibet and Nepal fought from times immemorial.

Indeed the advantages secured by Nepal over Tibet as a result of the new treaty throw a camouflage over the real form of the so-called War of 1856. These were rights of extra-territoriality, annual indemnity of Rs. 10,000, immunity from any kind of Tibetan levy to be enjoyed by the Gorkha Nationals and establishment of a Nepalese officer in Lhasa to look after Nepalese commercial and political interests. Had there not been the mighty British patron spreading his tentacles over either slopes of the Himalayas the concessions Nepal secured through the treaty of 1856 would have been classed as a substantial achievement. But under conditions of tutelage Jung kept Nepal as a semi-colony of the British capitalists, these were more to the advantage of the foreign power. Fifty years later when

the real test of the Nepalese position came, it was found that the situation was completely dominated by Delhi, which dictated its guidance to the Nepalese Prime Minister and under cover of the treaty with Nepal, the British Government sent a military expedition which, by force, achieved the desired isolation of the Potala from the Pekingese warlords. Jung Bahadur can certainly claim credit for paving the way of the Delhi Government, which was to culminate in the final installation of a British Agent in Tibet to act sentinel to British Imperialist interests in that part of Asia.

One factor connected with the incident cannot be brushed off from our reminiscences. It is Nepal's acknowledgement of respect to Chinese Emperor in the provision of the treaty. How Jung could reconcile this acknowledgement with the independent status of his country is a paradox. Probably Jung had no illusion about his position as a vassal of the British Emperor and he had only obeyed the convention in putting his signature to the clause binding him to China. It is also possible that this was done without knowledge of the Delhi authorities who had no time to look into such trivialities during the fateful days of the Mutiny.

This is all about Jung Bahadur. The record is certainly not of the variant inspiring confidence in the system he laid the foundation of. It is a record of self-aggrandisement and self-enrichment immorally and unscrupulously fulfilled. Not a straw was raised to benefit the people. We do not hear of a school or of a hospital to have been established in his time nor of any

factory set up nor of a single mile of road built nor of the administrative system bettered a whit. Jung Bahadur's record is totally barren in that respect, the chapter is replete with instances of murders and plottings and of innocent and valuable lives killed and maimed. Jung Bahadur, truly speaking, enjoyed a blood-bath, but he was not spared a glory that goes to achievements in gifts and cultures.

All the Rana administrators have faithfully followed Jung Bahadur and as they stood loyal to the British they similarly looked upon the administration of land as their own private concern, brooking no interference and criticism from elsewhere and always developing a greedy selfishness, to further which they have cruelly kept the country in barbarous surroundings. One may judge the achievements of the Ranas by the condition of the people in general, which is so regularly deteriorating day by day that the only inevitable result of misrule and tyranny, the ever accompanying poverty and degradation, is glaringly manifest. The Ranas have ruled for nearly hundred years but during this time they have furthered their own interest, the public till 1890 had neither a school nor a hospital and those that are since then established, there are ten High Schools in Nepal and one public hospital up-to-date as will come to notice later, are so meagrely equipped with that they are fitted to pass on as exhibited records than proper institutions for dissemination of knowledge and for provision of medical reliefs. Present day Nepal is no whit better than what it was when Jung ruled. It is still wearing a desolate

and barbarous appearance except that a number of stately eye-dazzling palaces have been capped over the fertile valley of Kathmandu in striking contrast and if these can pass as a century's progress, there are these to expand as long as Rana feudalism dwells in Nepal.

Jung Bahadur died in the Terai on 25th Feby. 1876 His death at a place far from the capital could have in ordinary circumstances caused disturbances over the question of succession. But then there was the Sanad of 1846 and his own decree as to the order of succession from brother to brother, which prevented any untoward incident following his death. Still it can be accurately said that the palace did not enjoy peace and tranquility for a long time to come once the powerful hand was withdrawn, although the immediate crisis had been averted by the timely action of Dhir Shumsher. Not only the king often raised his head to bring about the downfall of the Rana family, but there appeared definite signs of dissention in the family itself between sons of Jung Bahadur and Dhir Shumsher. These were ranged against each other even while Jung Bahadur was living and the able and farseeing Dhir Shumsher, the youngest brother of Jung Bahadur, was keeping his sons alert against the danger from the other side. It appeared that the family of Jung Bahadur would collapse under the heavy guilt he perpetrated and the end was not far in sight.

Jung Bahadur in his turn had envisaged the possibility of his sons being overcome by the superior tact and zeal of Dhir's sons. It was because he thought

that Dhir might take advantage of the chaotic condition in the palace occurring in the wake of his death, Jung had hastened to call him by his bedside while he lay seriously ill in Patherghatta in February 1876. Dhir in his turn was loth to leave the capital for fear of being over-powered by the other section and as he reached the Terai only to find Jung dead, he managed to send a secret letter to the King warning him against Jung's sons, which though delivered to Rana Udip, the man now to succeed, did not very luckily fall into the hands of his nephews. Hardly had Jung's sons collected themselves after the shocking news was served to them, the King had accepted Rana Udip as the Prime Minister to succeed Jung Bahadur fulfilling Dhir Shumsher's ardent wishes expressed in the letter. But it is not to be supposed that the King had any special liking for Dhir. Rana Udip's claim was supported because he happened to be the lawful heir. The immediate crisis was thus averted by the prompt action of the King but the feud gradually assumed an inevitably alarming proportion because of an easy going man succeeding Jung Bahadur. Rana Udip did not possess the command and strength of personality which characterised his brother. He was always guided by external influences, and Dhir, the cleverest of the surviving brothers, wielded the greatest single influence over him till he died in 1883. His imbecility gave scope for the warring groups to free themselves from the usual restraint they suffered in the earlier reign. To Dhir and his sons it was the most opportune moment to try their luck and from the very start they were looking

forward for pretexts and provocations, so that they might get a propitious atmosphere to sweep away the opponents in a whirlwind disaster.

It was sheer chance that the occasion came after nine years. The symptoms of the coming tragic event were making themselves felt through each phase of the regime concerned. As time passed on these became more and more prominent and the final show down appeared to be only a matter of time. The only question, however, was as to the party rising to a height to prove itself equal to the occasion.

This must be said to the credit of Dhir's sons that they proved in the tussle the superior of the contestants. Their tact and diplomacy, perseverance and zeal, placed them in advantageously better position compared to the other party which not only lacked these qualities but was also torn asunder by internal quarrel. Dhir's sons all along behaved in a manner to create a sense of security in the minds of the opponents by an attitude of submission and pampering. No cause was given for offence and they showed themselves to be totally agreeable to the arrangement in the order of succession as it stood then, which, as age and relationship determined, went against their own aspiration.

This was in conformity with the needs of the strategy they had in view and this policy continued till the last hour. Jung's sons had not even a faint suspicion of the stealthy progress secured by the other group and when the scheme of conspiracy was put into action they were simply overwhelmed.

Much of it was attributed to the tact of Dhir. As long as Dhir lived, the problem before his group was to build up a network of defence. Because of Rana Udip's imbecility Dhir had gained an upper hand in the affairs of the state and this gave him an advantage over his nephews to consolidate his own position, which he profitably utilised. He was the next legal successor to the exalted office and so a policy of offence was out of question, at least any attempt to establish his legal title was not needed. The only thing needed was only to be on guard against any possible secret manoeuvre of the rival group, and that he would never abandon. He had also spared no pains to train his sons to an art of conspiracy and machination and most of all to a habit of thinking that if they allowed Jung's group to have ascendancy their fate was doomed. By subsequent actions the sons had also given proof of their ability and wisdom and Dhir was confident of the ultimate victory on their accounts. All the time he thought that it would be easy for him to oust his opponents only when he held the reins of administration. Probably he had also no courage to actually disturb the arrangement of succession at the time of his elder brother, and this was the reason the issue was not forced in his life time.



THE PLOT OF 1881

His defensive measure lay, therefore, mainly in various dexterous ways he tried to calumniate his nephews with a view to secure their exile on cooked up charges. It is wrong to say that Dhir Shumsher did not entertain the idea of upsetting the arrangement made by Jung Bahadur as to the order of succession. What seems near to the fact is that while he dared not touch the premiership at the time the elder Rana Udip was alive, he was always careful to exploit any situation as it came to exterminate Jung's issues in favour of his own. We have already seen how earlier he acted so as to hide at the first moment the news of the death of Jung Bahadur. This was an intentional action which betrayed no sort of distrustful attitude towards his nephews. But his machination to get Jagat Jung exiled to India on a false charge of having claimed premiership by invoking the right of primogeniture surpasses all such evil deeds of envy committed by an uncle against the claimant nephew. Dhir's conduct from beginning to end had not been free from malice and ill-feeling towards them. It so happened that at the time the charges were framed Jagat Jung was in India otherwise he would have been mortally dealt with to the satisfaction of the uncle who was so eager to seize the opportunity in order to effect ascendancy of his own sons. Although what chance had spared him in 1881 Jagat Jung paid dearly in 1885, yet the story of his collaboration in the conspiracy can be cited as an instance of the uncle's own

manoeuvre against the nephews. One point worth knowing in connection with the order of succession which we have already alluded to is that Jagat Jung came immediately after Dhir, while Bir Shumsher, Dhir's eldest son, came only six names after. Dhir's attempt to bring his son by a back door in order to supersede the legitimate and rightful heir cannot be justified by any canons of law, and his insincere motive on that account so glaringly exhibited in all his dealings is what is alone sufficient to evoke worldwide condemnation.

Although he could not inflict bodily punishment on his nephews Dhir Shumsher had in his lifetime very triumphantly cleared the ground of all the other antagonistic forces likely to give trouble to the Rana family, which was so much favourable to Bir Shumsher at a later stage that he could concentrate his energy on dealing with the one for he had in mind. In December 1881, the history of the Kot massacre was almost repeated with the killing of 55 noblemen, amongst whom were some of the very important members of the Thapa, Basnait and Khawas families. The whole incident gave a finishing touch to the process of extirpation which Rana Jung Bahadur had incited in 1846. Those involved in the massacre of 1881 were all the remnants of the rival families of barons; Col. Bikram Sinha Thapa, son of Mathabar, Col. Dhirman Basnait, Col. Uttardhoj, son of Gagan Sinha, Captain Sangram Sinha Bista, and others equally important in lineage, so that the removal of these from the field of action left the Rana family absolutely without a rival. The conspiracy of 1881

unlike similar subversive activities preceding or following it represented the first and last concerted effort of the kind on the part of the non-Rana elements of nobility made to dislodge it from power. According to a reliable authority the conspirators had in mind the idea to bring about a general massacre of all the members of the Rana family without exception, who were to be invited to a dinner party arranged in their honour on the day of Magha Sakranti. It was an opportune occasion which they had chosen, for the two topmost persons of the Rana family, the Prime Minister and the C-in-C. were away from the capital. In the nick of time, however, the party of conspiracy had split itself into two on certain personal questions and Col. Uttardhoj, one of the dissidents, wantonly betrayed them to the Ranas. In the orgy of mass slaughter which ensued not a single of the conspirators was spared, and the last drama of extirpation was thus successfully played. Fortunately for the rulers of the Rana family the stage was prepared by the very people whom fate afterwards had played into their hands.

One of those notables who escaped death was a Brahman Subba Homnath who, along with his brother Subba Tankanath and nine other compatriots of his caste, was deprived of the sacred thread and exiled to India, where afterwards, he joined the forces of Ranbir Jung in 1888. In that year a military expedition to march into Nepalese territory was organised in Banaras with arms obtained from French India. The party raided some four districts of West Nepal on the border, looted treasuries, freed prisoners from the jails and

enlisted them in the force and advanced to the interior. But they had to yield before the onslaught of the superior enemy. The leaders again escaped to British India

On both the occasions the conspirators had contemplated capture of power on behalf of the King putting forward the plea of royal restoration and invalidation of the Sanad executed in favour of the Rana family.

According to Percival Landon whose authority connects the episode of the exile of Jagat Jung, eldest son of Jung Bahadur, with the plot of 1881, the conspirators had in mind only the section of the Rana family other than the line of Jung Bahadur. About Jagat Jung it is said that he only consented to abet the conspiracy so as to exploit the situation to his own advantage and was looking for an opportunity to swoop down upon whichever party seemed winning in the melee.

Although no direct attempt was made to extirpate Jung's sons at the time, the occasion of the trial was utilised to disgrace them by taking advantage of a statement made by the approver who named Jagat Jung to have planned a plot in 1878 along with Prince Narendra and Bamvir Bikram, son of the late Minister Bam Bahadur. This led Dhir to make a thorough investigation of what had transpired in 1878 as soon as he finished dealing with the Plotters of 1881, and although none else of the group could be implicated for want of evidence, the three personages accused by Col. Uttardhoj were tried and punished, Jagat Jang in absentia as he was then living in India. Dhir had tried

his utmost to secure the person of Jagat Jung for trial, as he was repeatedly asked to explain his conduct before the court. However, failing that, Dhir had to satisfy himself by expelling him from the roll. Bamvir Bikram too lost his claim to succession as a penalty and the younger Prince Narendra was later sent to Chunar in British India for internment and custody by the British authorities. Padma Jang saved his life and privileges through the intercession of his sister, the Queen Mother.

A very curious result of the digging up of the forgotten 1878 conspiracy was the reversal of the judgement in regard to the pardon granted to Uttardhoj. As fresh proceedings started in connection with that plot, it was difficult for the other accused to take it lying down. It turned out that Col. Uttardhoj himself was the principal figure in that game. It was he who had incited the Crown Prince, dead during the trial, to rise in revolt against the usurper Rana family. This revelation was made by Sangram Sinha who told the court that the Jung group had not countenanced the suggestion probably because it affected the whole family. The same person opined that because of the uncertain attitude of Jagat Jung, the scheme never proceeded beyond the stage of a talk. Although every thing Sangram Sinha said did not appear logical, it was, however, sufficient to make Dhir to entertain distrust of Uttardhoj's motives. He could not be, therefore, pardoned in the way according to earlier judgment he had been left out. He, too, was dismissed from service

along with some others as the last measure of deterrent punishment.

The plot of 1878 is yet an un-revealed affair. Subba Homnath who had left an eye witness account of the trial of 1881 says in his book that the Crown Prince wanted to overthrow the Rana family with the help of his close associates in 1878. From his it appears that what Sangram Sinha had uttered in a fit of anger against the traitor Uttardhoj was partially true. But the plot does not seem to have advanced very far from the stage of a scheme in contemplation, and it was as immediately thrust into oblivion. Probably it was because Jung's sons discouraged the idea that the scheme had to be dropped. It does not strike as also logical to an intelligent person as to how the Prince thought to include Jung's sons in the Conspiracy when the Rana family itself was to be dealt a blow. Unless the eldest of them was given the bait of Premiership, their allegiance was not expected, The Prince's action is inexplicable.

About Uttardhoj's somersault in 1881 it is explained with reference to the change of leadership from him to Bamvir Bikram who was to be made the Premier in the event of the successful termination of the conspiracy. Bamvir was large-hearted enough to renounce his loyalties to the Rana family, and his sincerity and perseverance won him support of the majority. Col. Uttardhoj-who was the accredited leader since 1878, would not view with equanimity the fact of his own supersession. We saw what a dastardly step this frustrated person took as a result of his

discomfiture. Had he not acted indiscreetly the course of the Nepalese history would have moved in different direction from what it is today.

Simultaneously with the process of removal from scene of these stalwarts, fate was working through the death of the Senior members of the Royal family as if to purge the background of all the handicaps in the way of the successful termination of Bir's efforts and to complete the preliminaries. The most troublesome member, the Crown Prince, had died in 1878, and his death was followed by that of his father immediately after. The forlorn figure of Rajendra Bikram Shah who had till then borne calmly all the calamities and sufferings to his person and throne gave into the inconsolable grief at the sad demise of his son and grandson. These three deaths came as a heaven sent boon to that section of the Rana family, which emerged victorious in 1885. These had left the entire field in the sole possession of that section. Even if one of them was living Dhir's sons would not have found the ground so easy of success. There is a doubt about the turn the coup d'etat took in 1885 if one of them had been there to stand sentinel. With the six year old infant on the throne there was not much to worry from the Palace and as Bir had ensured his defence by means of his amour with the Regent Queen, every thing seemed within an ace of accomplishment long before the actual operation started. Events had moved with such a force and turn that all the possible opponents of Bir were being virtually sterilised. The second Prince Narendra Bikram Shah who was the only remnant thorn

had gone mad while in internment in Chunar fort. Bamvir Vikram was so severely affected by the heat of the plains that he succumbed to it in the very first year of his Indian habitat.

The Crown Prince and his brother are remembered with pride till today as the sworn enemies of the Rana family. Indeed, never the Ranas encountered such a deep contempt as from these royal figures. The younger Prince's angry outbursts against the Ranas even while in a state of madness when he was mostly free to roam about are proverbs today in Kathmandu. The Crown Prince never for a moment forgot in his life time that he had to avenge the insult that Jung Bahadur heaped on his family. The legend goes that every morning he got up, he swore vengeance on his usurpers, and each time he left his Palace he vowed to return with the chopped up heads of the Rana Prime Minister. But he was not destined to play his part as death carried him away at a very young age leaving the duty to his younger brother who could scarcely retain his mental balance in the trying period following his incarceration at Chunar. The latter was also one of the men hounded by Bir to enter the British legation where admittance was refused.

As we observed earlier Dhir in his own discretion had refrained from precipitating the crisis. The death of Dhir in 1888 after a prolonged illness, however, brought the matter to the fore and his sons could no longer view the problem with equanimity. Dhir was the last of the seven brothers and with his death the first

generation of the Rana family had ended. Now the premiership would devolve on the second generation of sons. But here Jung's three sons, Jagat Jung, Jit Jung, and Ranbir Jung topped the list. By no stretch of logic and reasoning Dhir's sons, the eldest of whom Bir stood seventh in the list could establish their title to immediate succession in these circumstances. And once Jagat Jung was allowed un-hampered succession their own chances receded back and the initiative of attack would pass on to him. Besides, the alternative to a swift action might mean their own forced dismissal, even ruthless extermination. Naturally, therefore, Dhir's sons felt determined to take a chance before Rana Udip's death, which meant a prompt and swift seizure of power from the uncle himself.

To the other party the event that followed was a complete surprise because they had not even imagined that the blow would come so unexpectedly and at a vital point in the very person of the uncle with his assassination. It had found them in a state of total unpreparedness, which contributed to the solution of the conflict in favour of the aggressors.

The crisis matured with Jagat Jung's arrival at Kathmandu. This man was reported to be a favourite of the Maharaja and his wife. It was strongly rumoured then that being childless they had secretly nursed a desire to retire from public life leaving the administration to the lawful heir who happened to be no other than Jagat Jung then expelled from the roll. His recall augured evil for his opponents. It had pointed to a

sign that Rana Udip was trying to push his own favourite up. Even otherwise his arrival should have gone to reinforce the Anti-Dhir Camp and discourage unfriendly activity of that group.

Jagat Jung was recalled in the early month of 1884, but his recall instead of helping to consolidate his rank tended to create disunion, and his own brother Jit Jung resented his come over. Kedar Narshinha, son of Badri Narsinha, did not also take kindly to the unexpected appearance of Jagat Jung in the scene. Had these people acted in concert and prudence, Bir might not have met with the success he achieved in 1885. But he had already scented internecine bickering in the opposite camp and this knowledge more than anything else guided him to the appointed task. It is quite unjust and untrue to say that Dhir's sons had acted in all promptness as they were themselves threatened. The quarrel was definitely provoked by Bir and his brothers who seemed in all appearance to have been acting as on a gamble. But it was nevertheless true that Jagat Jung's recall precipitated the issue, because Dhir's sons felt rightly or wrongly that if they failed to act at that hour they would not gain the opportune moment again.

THE COUP D'ETAT OF 1885

Bir Shumsher had made a thorough preparation to seize power before he had his uncle dead by a gunshot. He was to go to Rawalpindi to participate in the All India Military Tournament, but he had postponed his departure, and was wilefully keeping the

regiments assigned to him in a state of preparedness designed to overpower his opponents. Usually the regiments put under a person who was not the Premier were not provided with arms as long as they were within the confines of the valley, but Bir Shumsher had obtained arms for his troops in contravention of that rule by the special permission of Rana Udip whose confidence he had already won by promises of loyalty and devotion. Rana Udip could not read the mind of his nephew when he allowed him to stay, and completely allured by his smiles he went to the extent of ignoring the warning given by Rana Bir, late Jung's son. The midnight preceding the morning when Bir was to start was chosen for the act of murder. Bir Shumsher was waiting for the signal from the Queen Mother's apartment. As she was a party to the conspiracy the half of Bir's work had been completed. The Chief Officer of the Premier's household affairs was also being won over, and along with him the Liaison Officer attached to the British Legation. At about 10 o' clock on 21st November 1885, Khadga Shumsher, a younger brother of Bir Shumsher, who was Director General of Foreign Department, sought interview with the Premier with a forged letter from the British Residency. The Kazi of the Foreign Department had accompanied the Director without any fore-thought of what was to follow. The interview was granted and as pre-arranged Khadga's three younger brothers had also reached there. The Maharaja had retired to his private room almost unguarded. He was expecting some message and was all attention to the visitors. No

sooner the Kazi tore the sealed envelope Khadga Shumsher fired his revolver. The Maharaja was caught unawares and the two more bullet shots from Chandra's weapon hit in his chest finished him forthwith. Bir Shumsher thereafter went to the Palace, and with the five-year old infant king in his lap proclaimed himself the Premier of the land. Jung Bahadur's sons were either rounded up or escaped to the Residency to avoid arrest. They later on obtained safe conduct to British India. Jagat Jung was shot dead in his house.

About three days before his assassination took place Rana Udip had given his unknown adversaries to understand that he intended, to reinstate Jagat Jung who was now to become the C-in-C. But he had then forfeited himself of the right as a result of his alleged complicity in the conspiracy of 1881. From the garbled version of the story emanating from Bir's adherents it has been given out that this reinstatement was to come as the death blow to the aspiration of the Dhir Group who would not have been leniently dealt with, as they surmised for their past acts of machination against the other. But one fails to understand as to how this would have proved correct even if we are to admit that the other party was capable of it as long as the uncle lived, who would have always discouraged and crushed unlawful attempts of the one to oust the other. As we know the whole argument is coloured by a desire to conceal the real motive behind the guilt, which was no other than to gamble on the chance presented with a view to capture power which was not theirs on legal

right of succession. But Rana Udip had also not finally decided to reinstate Jagat Jung and he had assured the opponent group that this would not be done without their willing consent. In the circumstances, it is not possible to accept also the contention advanced by Bir that Rana Udip was a partner identifying himself with the Jagat Group. Rather, by murdering Rana Udip, Bir gave ample proof of the fact that to a Rana born and brought up in an atmosphere of intrigue the idea of self-interest ranked uppermost above all considerations and he does not regard the murder of the innocent uncle and cousins as a crime.

How moral considerations were completely set aside appears also from the story of Bir's illicit connection with the younger queen mother, Jagat Jung's own sister, who facilitated Bir's succession to premiership by readily handing over the Royal Seal to him. As stated earlier she was the active participant in the conspiracy. The lady had not even the consideration of fraternal love before the one cherished of her paramour. The Nepalese anecdotes are full of such instances which throw a mass of light on the many kinds of immoral relationship often entered into between near blood relations as in the case of Bir who had contracted intimacy with his cousin as the Maharani being a daughter of Jung Bhadur was related to him. It is said that even Jung derived much help during the period preceding the Kot massacre from a court lady, whose passionate love for him had persuaded her to reveal to him all palace secrets and movement of high

personages, which gave him clues as to the manœuvre required to meet the contingency.

Those who thought that the Calcutta authorities would intervene in behalf of Jung's son in repayment of services the man rendered to the cause of the British in 1857 were sorely disappointed, for not only the British behaved in a manner to show that they took the change of Government at Kathmandu without the slightest perturbation, but they also afforded definite cause of suspicion about their impartiality in the dispute, as they had denied to the refugees at the Legation the minimum facilities of shelter which was theirs by right on account of the high rank attached to their birth and by provisions of international law. What led the British Government to treat the party of Jung with so much indifference and callousness remains to be cleared up with reference to the documents of the Foreign Department at Delhi, which may reveal many guarded secrets on the subject, but it is rightly guessed that they were acting under the notion that the interest of the British was not safe at the hands of Jagat Jung, who was on more than one occasion reported to have been chafing with no unconcealed sense of frustration at the growing British influence at Kathmandu. It was the time when the British Resident was demanding opening of the country for European development and protesting against the raising of the militia which was, of course, of no paramount consideration.

The price of British patronage granted to Bir was too costly for Nepal to bear. Its structure of theoretical

independence seemed almost crashing under its heavy burden. Nepal's dependence on Delhi so long lying covered under stealthy diplomatic practices became too pronounced to escape casual notice or even hide its glaring manifestation. Since the family bickering enveloped the Kathmandu Durbar, the Calcutta Viceroyalty received an impetus to impose its arbitration, for more often than not with the rancour mounting all of them had a tendency to look to the British, sometimes, for their seal of approval on the fait accompli and at another for active intervention on grounds of justice in behalf of the aggrieved party. Since 1885 again began a practice rigorously demanded for fulfilment by both the parties, which made a Rana Premier to seek confirmation of his succession at the hands of the British Viceroy. This practice had continued till the last day of the British in India which every Prime Minister knocking at the door of the Viceroy as soon as he succeeded to the post. Bir Shumsher initiated this practice with his visit to Calcutta in 1888. But this was not the only binding practice. In this lifetime Bir had to see also the free character of the Nepalese army dissolve under pressure. He not only allowed free recruitment to the British inside Nepal but at the same time rendered his own army an appendage of the Indian Armed Force. In 1892 the British Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army inspected for the first time the Kathmandu regiments, and this occasion was followed by similar inspection at the end of the fifth year, which became the fore-runner of a well-established practice of a

regular septennial inspection by one of the High British Officers of the Indian Army. Nepal now parted with the last trace of its independent existence in the face of these gullible practices.

There was also a trouble in regard to free recruitment of Nepal Gorkhas for the colonial army in the Nepalese territory, which was always opposed so long as Rana Udip was in control of affairs. Probably Bir appeared to the British the best guarantee against any possible reversal of the policy of absolute subservience enunciated by Jung Bahadur, as he was brought up in the best tradition of loyalty to the British fostered by his father who had outbid even Jung Bahadur in this task. To the credit of Bir it might be said that he was all along indulgent to the needs of the Calcutta Government and the hopes reposed in him by the British had been amply fulfilled, thence forward Nepal was prawn inextricably close into the vortex of the British Empire as an integral factor in the colonial organisation.

This event of Rana Udip's murder by his nephews clearly shows that the army had lost its power, initiative and independence it possessed before, Jung Bahadur having made the leadership of it hereditary in the hands of his family, so that it was not in a position to judge the issue on merits. In the circumstances thus determined he, who had the command of munition, stock and the king as captive carried the day before any body else Jung Bahadur himself had profited by this infirmity of the army at the time when his brother Badrinarsinha rose against him in 1851-52

just after he came from England. The army was incited to pledge support to the rebel leader mainly to condemn Jung's laxity so deliberately committed in course of his European tour on questions of caste, but it was impotently neutral in the nick of time to take side with the party of its favour, and Jung Bahadur by a cunning device succeeded in quelling the revolt and banishing his brother to Allahabad.

Chandra Shumsher, on later occasion, derived similar advantage under the same situation and he achieved it even while his brother Deva Shumsher had gained much of public sympathy by his progressive views and reform schemes. a very rare instance of unselfishness to be found in a member of the Rana family but which became a strong ground to turn his near relatives against him and finally brought his forcible dismissal against the wishes of the people.

With Bir Shumsher begins a new line of ruling stock altogether. The list of successors to the post of the Premier as it stood at the end of the outgoing regime was completely recast to exclude at that all the members of the Rana family except the legitimate male issues of the late Dhir Shumsher. Thus the descendants of the six brothers out of the seven lost their privileges which henceforth formed the monopoly of the seventh and last progeny. Jung Bahadur's pack of hereditary dignitaries was not only reshuffled, but diminished in size to enlarge again with the natural growth in due course of time. In 1885, the Shumshers had replaced the Jungs, and drove them out of the

scene, not one of them being allowed to live in the valley with the claim to Premiership.

The arrangement made by Bir stands till today with only a little modification. Just as Jung called his arrangement as the rule of 'seven brothers' Bir styled his own as the rule of 'seventeen brothers.' The ten legitimate and seven illegitimate sons of Dhir Shumsher were now to rule Nepal in the most absolute manner possible. All key-posts were occupied by them. The first was already the Premier and Maharaja. The second Khadga now assumed the second highest role, that of the Commander-in-Chief of the army, while the third Rana Shumsher became the Senior Commanding General with the three more following : Deva, Chandra and Bhima, in the remaining sections of the Military Command. Other filled the posts less important than these. The grab was in its entirety, not a sop went to their adversary. Now the country and its administration had been rendered a private concern of the seventeen brothers.

The main hand instrumental to the success of Bir Shumsher was Khadga Shumsher, but he was too ambitious and two years later plotted in collaboration with Chandra Shumsher to overthrow Bir himself. The plotters had arranged an entertainment and dinner, to which Bir was invited with the idea of trapping him in a camouflaged ditch. Bir Shumsher was to have reached the place at four in the afternoon on a particular day, but it so turned out that he forgot completely about the appointment. The partisans had become restive as the zero hour arrived without the

intended victim and to mend the situation even though it was the eleventh hour Chandra Shumsher was deputed to prevail on Bir to attend the gathering. It is said that Bir had remained ignorant of the plot till the very last moment and he was about to accompany Chandra Shumsher on his reminder, when he was pulled up to his extreme astonishment by his faithful attendant, Col. Fauz Sinha, who had by that time hurried to warn the Premier against the consequences of his abiding by Chandra's requests. Fauz Sinha had got the scent of the conspiracy through an informer whom he had sent to watch the festivity his master was to attend.

Fauz Sinha advised his master to detain Chandra Shumsher who on being apprehended made a clean breast of everything the party had planned to get rid of Bir Shumsher. Khadga Shumsher strove to avert arrest but an army raid carried in the nick of time frustrated his attempt and the very next hour he was despatched to Palpa under police custody. Chandra Shumsher was let off after due admonition and on taking an oath to stand ever loyal by his eldest brother.

On being forcibly ejected out of the coveted field Khadga was heard remarking, "If only had I known of your intention to stick to power I would not have killed my uncle with my own hand."

The account of his rule will not be complete without reference to his fourth brother Deva Shumsher born of his step mother, who was a staunch and loyal colleague in all his acts of omission and commission.

This man was a single example of broad-mindedness in the otherwise narrow and intriguy atmosphere of Kathmandu where vulgarism, immorality, die-hard conservatism and snobbery dominated the scene. As the C-in-C Deva influenced the decision of his brother, and knowable sources have attributed the opening of the High School, the Sanskrit Library and the tap water system and building of the various roadways in the regime of Bir Shumsher to the zeal and benevolent spirit of this man who was so solicitous of the welfare of the people.

Because of his unorthodox views Bir also was successful in promoting some of his illegitimate sons to the roll of succession, which was a departure from the traditional arrangement by which an illegitimate issue was not admitted to the fold of lawful successors.

It was Deva who by his ready consent and encouragement to this proposal had helped Bir to overcome the opposition from Chandra and other brothers.

A very important feature of development in the social life at Kathmandu seen at the end of Bir's rule was the very enslaved condition of the people, which reflected the consummation of the process of subjugation started in 1846 by the founder of the Rana dynasty. As the Rana family came to occupy the sole vantage ground of power and its prestige obtained under pressure of circumstances mounted high, it could easily arrogate to itself since that time the overawed majesty of the monarch and even stretched its hand to a claim on divinity, which continues till today. Since Bir's time individual members of the Rana family came

to pass as personages of respectability superior to every one else in the realm and obtained respect and obeisance from the populace being addressed as 'Highness' or 'Excellency' or 'Honour.' By law they had received recognition of their superior status and immunity from many legal restrictions and usages, and the gulf between them and the general people including the very highest non-Rana widened with the latter looked down in treatment as an underdog. The territory and people of Nepal had passed doubtlessly into the private possession of the Rana family.

The factor which contributed utmost to the above position was the sinking into background of the king and his being overshadowed by the Rana family because of his minority for all the time Bir carried the administration. The practice of securing formal assent of the King by means of his palm prints died as a matter of strict observance as soon as death snatched away the two aged kings during the Prime Ministership of Rana Uday. When Bir absorbed powers he had not to tackle a serious problem and the king's assent was automatic as he was just a six-year old infant. Since then under cover of guardianship in a few years' time the ruling members of the Rana family completed their hold of the country, and started a precedent which dispensed even with the practice above-mentioned. The position was such as to sterilise the Throne in all aspects of its existence.

We conclude the account of Bir's rule with an interesting story. Just as Jung had married two of his

daughters to the Crown Prince and had contrived to secure his own blood flowing in the veins of the Royal puppet, the contemporary of Bir was a grandson of Jung Bahadur, Bir also aspired for that end and gave two of his daughters in marriage to the minor on his lap, who, however, had little love for the Rana girls as both of them were issues of Bir by a low caste concubine. At the time the proposal was put forth there was vehement opposition from certain quarters but Bir had silenced them by raising the girls to the legitimate status along with the sons. Bir's desire could not be fulfilled in spite of best efforts because no child was born to his daughters, but some of the incidents connected with the process of fulfilment are too interesting to be left out here. It is said that Bir had inculcated drinking habit in the King in order to turn his attention towards the Rana Princesses who had been tutored to cater to his wants without the slightest opposition. His drinking habit was a closed door affair, and he could not openly ask for liquor from any other sources. He had in these circumstances naturally to submit himself to the mercy of his younger queens who commanded a never ending supply of his most essential requisite. This had compelled him to live separate from his first wife whom he loved intensely, because she could not fulfil his needs. The story runs that the King continued to pass his days in this fashion till the very last hour of Bir's life, after which he was rescued by Chandra Shumsher to give his attention solely to the wife of his love. Bir's daughters were unlucky enough to remain barren, but for that

their father was not to be blamed. Fate had cheated them. The poignancy of their frustrated ambition was further heightened by the eldest queen bearing issues soon as the king joined her. The child born to this lady in 1907 is now the King of Nepal in his forty-fourth year.

Bir Shumsher had warned his brother Deva Shumsher against the unprincipled and cunning group led by Chandra Shumsher. According to a reliable authority Chandra Shumsher was an active member of the conspiratorial section under Khadga Shumsher. It was he who was entrusted with the task of bringing the Premier to the festivity, and a timely warning by Col. Fauj Sinha, the faithful attendant of the latter, had only saved him from falling into the trap. Though Chandra Shumsher was spared the fate of his brother, Bir, had lost confidence in him and the latter was always kept at bay while the former held the reins of administration. But Deva as a man of kind disposition neglected the warning of Bir Shumsher as soon as he succeeded to the Premier's Gadi on March 5, 1901, fallen vacant by the former's death. He gave an opportunity while himself being inalert to Chandra Shumsher to cook his game. By the time his democratic sentiments were sufficiently exposed to the courtiers Deva Shumsher had found himself unpopular with his nephews, particularly Bir's sons, as they had been worked up to harbour feelings of resentment against their uncle also on certain family affairs, and it was Chandra Shumsher who had created the division. He played a double game. He could alienate Deva

Shumsher from Gehendra Shumsher, the eldest son of Bir, by delineating him to the man's credulity as a person of untrustworthy character, and too much ambitious to be accommodated in the palace without menace to the security of his exalted post. Before Gehendra and in Deva's back he feigned to be equally critical of Deva's action, when the latter acting solely under his, Chandra's, suggestion had asked the former to go to Palpa. Fateh Shumsher, who, as the Secretary General, was very much devoted to Deva Shumsher, had also been turned against him being worked up with the idea that the Prime Minister had no faith in his integrity.

Deva Shumsher had expressed his desire to proceed with every determination to root out slavery and like social evils on a scheme of national improvement. He had opened a net work of primary schools all over the Kathmandu valley and his scheme envisaged one school for one village at the other end and in the top a first grade college as a step towards the establishment of a University. He occasionally invited suggestions from the public about reforms, and heard their needs and requirements sympathetically. At one time he appealed the people to become bold and offer criticism of the administration. He also wanted to introduce changes in the constitution in order to enable the people to participate in the Government. With the consent of the British Resident, Deva Shumsher had invited some British experts to advise him on that subject. He wanted constitutional advisers from France and Germany as well, and made a request to the Calcutta

authorities, which was refused. He was also seen entertaining a desire to get the King sharing a part of administration, as the latter was often being called to participate in important deliberations. And all these were not agreeable to other members of the Rana family. Although the dissenting group did not put up open defiance at that, the matter was secretly taken up and a conspiracy was set on foot to dislodge Deva Shumsher. It is said that Chandra Shumsher had signed an agreement with his accomplices and abettors undertaking to reverse the policy of his brother and pledging himself to the observance of the tradition of conservatism and orthodoxy followed till then by his family in case he was allowed unhampered succession.

Deva Shumsher could not enjoy even a rule period of five months. One day, 26th June 1901, while he was returning after attending a prize distribution ceremony of the only High School at Kathmandu the conspirators persuaded him to go to Gehendra's house where he was told the latter's ailing step-mother to whom Deva was strongly attached fervently desired to see him. Knowing as they did of the relation of affection subsisting between the two, the party was confident of the efficacy of their tricks. Deva naturally could not refuse to go with them when it meant consoling a dear relation. But no sooner he entered the apartment leading to the retiring room of his sister-in-law than he found himself a captive. Two persons who were waiting for him fell on him with all the force and bound him hand and foot. The next morning he was seen off at the British Indian Frontier enroute to

Dhankuta. Thus ended a promising regime which had begun earnestly to tackle the pressing problem of national improvement even in face of criticism which styled his actions as unstatesmanlike and premature.

Chandra Shumsher occupied the fourth position in the order of succession which began with the eldest of Dhir's sons, Bir Shumsher. As Khadga Shumsher was deprived of the right of succession for his complicity in the conspiracy, the Premiership had fallen to Deva Shumsher. Khadga lived to a ripe old age, and Deva wanted to bring him back again at the helm, but Chandra Shumsher, for obvious reasons, had dissuaded him from taking such a line of action, because Khadga's restoration would have removed the chance of his succession to a distant date.

CHANDRA SHUMSHER

The rightful successor to the office of the Premier after Deva Shumsher was Chandra himself. As such the king's approval was duly secured. In cases where as in the present instance there was a successful coup the King had only to confirm the fact accomplished, to approve what was presented to him for approval by the winning party, where might alone determined right. In one particular instance the King was a minor, as when Bir captured power in 1885 and the question of his willing and conscious approval did not arise. But all these had tended to relegate the King to a position of a figure-head also in fact as was envisaged by the

Sanad of 1846. Suba Devi Prasad, an eye-witness of the transaction Chandra made, says that he had some difficulty in securing the palm prints of the King, as the latter had raised objection to the illegality involved. The Suba says that the King's palm-print was forcibly obtained.

After assuming power and consolidating the same during the two years of his early regime, he turned himself against his compatriots in the conspiracy. Fateh Shumsher and Gehendra Shumsher, both of whom, it is said, committed suicide on different occasions after being publicly disowned by the man they supported against Deva Shumsher. Chandra Shumsher had subjected them to indignities and insults by keeping them under strict surveillance and life had become too much unbearable to them to drag further in that state.

In case of Gehendra Shumsher, his death is attributed to poisoning under instigation at the hands of Chandra Shumsher. Gehendra Shumsher was taken to be the genius of the age in Nepal, as he was credited with the invention of certain new models of rifles and field guns now in wide use all over that country. While serving as one of the Secretary Generals in the time of his father this man had also set up a large factory to manufacture gun-powder for use by the personal contingent of the Maharaja. Whatever might have been the feeling he was actuated with, and it was certainly not to use his inventions for political ends that he applied himself to the task, Gehendra had

earned for himself a deep seated secret jealousy from Chandra Shumsher who always apprehended trouble for his person on account of the nephew. It was the fear that the intellectual inventor might overwhelm him with his superior skill and tact, and might even devise scientific means to finish him with that determined Chandra's attitude on the matter of dealing with Gehendra Shumsher. The latter had appeared to him a thorn continuously pricking and as long as Gehendra lived Chandra experienced a feeling of embarrassment and threat and risk to his life. It is quite possible that Chandra had machinated to take his life by poisoning.

As soon as the two potential adversaries were removed from his path Chandra appointed his son, Mohan, to the post of the Secretary General, who continued to function in that capacity till the last moment of the Premier's life. Mohan was a young man hardly about 15, but he could not be dispensed with because another choice would have been disquieting as it happened in the early days of the regime. Unlike his predecessors who invariably trusted one or another brother in that capacity Chandra Shumsher reversed the tradition of appointing a brother to the trusted post of the Secretary General by giving preference to his son. The knowledge of the fate meted out to the previous Prime Ministers was too thorough and frightening to lead him to repeat the tragedy when he was personally concerned.

In 1903, Chandra Shumsher came to Calcutta to

attend Lord Curzon's Durbar, and coincidentally also to pay his respect to the Viceroy as the Prime Minister of Nepal. Much is said of the high honour he received in the Durbar, which was appreciated by the Nepalese on account of the seat he secured along with the representatives of Siam, Japan and Afghanistan, all independent kingdoms. It is not clear from the record whether he was received in Calcutta as the ambassador of an independent country. Such a claim often falsely and unwittingly stretched by his predecessors was rejected by the Government of India who treated any advance from that quarter in terms of a mere complimentary mission. His biographer Percival Landon, however, makes a distinction between the earlier visits and Chandra's attendance at the Delhi Durbar and characterises the latter as an ambassadorial treat. Whatever that be, Chandra seems to have been flatteringly received at Calcutta. But his going back home proved perilous. His exiled brother Deva Shumsher had escaped at about the same time to Banaras from Dhankuta where he was sent after his deposition and there lay in ambush to take revenge on Chandra Shumsher for his past high-handed action. A part of the story we have already narrated in another section of this book. It is said that two grandsons of Jung Bahadur living in exile in Allahabad at the time were also assembled in the conspiracy, and a thorough scheme to dislodge Chandra was prepared in Banaras at the residence of the old rebel Suba Homnath who was the main encouraging factor behind the ex-Premier. The conspiracy, however, did not materialise as Amar

Jung, one of the confidants, reported before hand the whole gist of the talk to Chandra then in Calcutta, who hurried home to successfully cope with the situation. The King was at the time camping near the Indian border on a shooting trip. Chandra immediately shifted him to Kathmandu, and all approaches to the palace were closely guarded. Deva and his accomplices were arrested in British India but were let off on the ground that they had every right to visit the King and this intention itself did not constitute a covert criminal act. Chandra utilised this occasion to terrorise and intimidate to submission his hidden enemies by threatening dire consequences to any act of insubordination and secret manœuvres. No one was, however, apprehended inside Nepal.

In the early phase of his regime he encountered yet one more conspiratorial attempt on his life rendered abortive by his alertness, which was schemed by another brother in exile. Khadga Shumsher, who was living in Palpa, made a secret bid to seize power while trying to overpower him during the interview which he had eagerly and enthusiastically proposed. But his sinister intention could not remain ungauged while he began re-organising the structure of the army unit left to his care as Commissioner of that region. On being sounded to alertness Chandra very cleverly manipulated to transfer the re-organised unit to Kathmandu, where some of the officers made a confession in course of the investigation of the case. Khadga saved himself from further embarrassment by escaping to British India. In 1913, he died after another abortive

attempt to take Chandra's life in Banaras where he had planned to pull the latter from below the water of the Ganges to reach him to the bottom.

In 1910, again the then King, father of the present ruler, had awakened one morning to a sense of duty which demanded to limit the almost unlimited powers of his Prime Minister. A relation of his, Raja Dambar Bahadur Shah, had further encouraged him to persue to curtail the prerogatives of the Rana family with a view to devolve the same to the people. The move was to have the very idea assume the magnitude and gravity of a royal conspiracy, which had a very bright prospect if it were not for the disclosure made by one Guru Durganath who out of sheer cowardice made a confession of guilt before Chandra Shumsher. The parties were ruthlessly crushed, and the very last vestige of resistance collapsed when the next year the King met an accidental death.

Except on some occasions as aforesaid in the period till 1910 Chandra Shumsher had a smooth sailing thereafter till the very last moment of his life. He had within a short time completed the consolidation he began with the grab in 1901. Traditionally there was nothing more to do than to start and complete a process of self-enrichment. Chandra proved a successful hand in the task and his policy served as a beckon light to the members of the family following him. In 1912, the King died leaving his infant son on the throne and this again removed another obstacle from his path. It has so happened that immediately after the Kings

attained age they indulged in secret manœuvres to effect restoration of their previous powerful position. Chandra had to guard himself against the repetition of the move on the part of his contemporary. For this he had deliberately managed to divert the King's mind to channels which surely spoiled him and made him impervious to noble sentiments. Every Nepalese citizen knows to what a sorry plight the King's life is being reduced at present. From the very boyhood he is taught to inculcate debauchery, and lead a life of corruption and vice. He is ensnared in the vicious circle, and the companions provided are wine and women. Chandra Shumsher was the man who thought out this device to sterilise the royal puppet and he came out victorious. With both the father and son he had no occasion to be annoyed. Many are of the opinion that the present King's predecessor died at a very young age, because he was given to excessive drinking and prostitution.

Unlike his predecessor Chandra Shumsher conducted himself very shrewd in his temperament and behaviour with his associates. He believed in the British dictum of the policy known as 'divide and rule', which he himself and that very successfully applied to facilitate his succession to premiership. While himself firmly seated in power he would not overlook dangerous tendencies in others. He played one party against the other, and would not allow any of them to maintain an unbroken ascendancy over the other. He always utilised a lesson from his own experiences and suffered from a sense of distrust from all without exception.

About him it is said that he did not feel unscrupulous even to watch the movement of his wife.

In another field he began his rule with a sweeping reversal of the benevolent administration of his predecessor. He withdrew the entire network of primary schools spread by Deva Shumsher, and, it is said, that no less than 300 of such institutions were very unkindly axed. The very first day of his premiership also saw the re-establishment of the slave system which was abolished in the valley by Deva as an experimental step towards its total extinction. Although the idea of ropeway and the rail-road scheme he had to adopt towards the end of his regime being pressed by external events, yet he had no hesitation to throw all these into cold storage as soon as he came to power. With this record if he is contrasted with Deva Shumsher as an enlightened statesman of character and liberal views, there is some thing to doubt the very correctness of the observation which in all probability flowed out of a zeal to flatter a powerful and rich personality for ulterior gain.

Chandra Shumsher ruled with a rod of iron. Not to speak of his people, he crushed spirit of freedom and initiative even in his own brothers. While he lived not a single of them enjoyed calm of mind. He would not brook any body to have name and fame and be eulogised, and he always exerted himself to discourage learning and cultivation of arts and crafts. Lest those enlisted in the Indian army received the very high reward and acknowledgement for gallantry at the hands

of their officers he had asked his British friends to always do so only on his advice. He had secretly instructed the Indian authorities to restrict the promotion of the Gorkhas in the army to Subedarship. At one time when his son-in-law, the Raja of Bajhang, was being highly spoken of in an Indian periodical and his photo printed in the same, Chandra Shumsher threatened to dismiss him from service and poor fellow, the Raja, had to suffer so many indignities on that account and after sometime fled to India to save his life.

A peep into the work of the Foreign Department at his time will show how Chandra Shumsher had successfully killed the initiative of the various administrative functionaries to centralise the authority in himself. He could not brook the very meek suggestion made by the officers, if it went counter to his own opinion on the subject. The exercise of control was thoroughly all pervasive and in the nature of things strictly personal. There are instances of his wantonly overriding the unanimous decision of a department for only to show that his won opinion was final. In 1906, he had to retrace his steps to save himself from a precarious situation in which he was landed as a result of a hasty move, by which he had assigned ten regiments to the British for their Tibetan expedition. He had not consulted the Foreign Department which happens to be an authoritative body constructed to transact business on matters of foreign relations. Nepal had a treaty relation with Tibet and it enjoined on the parties not to help any other state

attacking any one of them. Chandra Shumsher had acted without knowledge of this treaty, and the Foreign Department when asked to carry out his order suggested reconsideration of his decision in view of the express provision of the treaty against such action. But words had been already sent to the British Viceroy that the troops would be available. It was with a great difficulty that he could afterwards extricate himself from the dilemma, and the British who were then not in need of Nepalese assistance helped him to that by officially declining the offer, which practically closed the incident without giving rise to the contingency when it would have been necessary to despatch the troops. But the departmental official Suba D. P. Sapkota who had dared point him out the undesirability of the step was later on penalised, his entire property was confiscated and he had to leave his country under compulsion.

The same shows how extremely attentive he was to the requirements of the British. He would not afford the slightest ground for them to be displeased with him. In 1907, he turned out one state employee of the Kathmandu municipality, Dr Kartick Prasad of Bihar, about whom Delhi had made enquiries from the Resident as to his personal history and character. Although he would not surrender Indian political offenders he would meet the needs of the British authorities by externing fugitives from his country. In this task he outbid the British agents themselves.

In 1914, the Great War started. The British demanded free recruitment of Gorkha soldiers, to which

Chandra yielded willingly and applied himself heart and soul to encourage it. According to Percival Landon, Chandra offered his help without being asked for by them which indicated his enthusiasm to go to British aid just like a loyal feudatory Prince. This, however, cost Nepal four lakhs of valuable lives besides equally magnificent contribution in the shape of cash money and other war materials. During the war and after there was a large influx of European scholars and visitors which continued since then and many scholars began to be attracted to Kathmandu, it has so happened that all eminent foreigners who come to India do not miss Nepal. Chandra Shumsher was put to a difficult position as to how the inward degredation and exploitation be covered and veiled. He, therefore, made a show of economic and social reforms, though inwardly the very opposite of what he professed reigned supreme in his mind. He built a college (1918), a light railway (1927), a ropeway connecting Bhimphedi with Kathmandu with a mileage of 24 miles a little earlier, a Government Publication Committee (1924), a library (1918) and a military hospital. He had already electrified Kathmandu (1904). But as we have observed that these were meant for a show and in nature of things just good for that. The college is still under-staffed after an existence of 30 years, it has no library and no reading-room with a stock of magazines, no collegiate activities are persued, and only dull and insipid non-political talk by under-paid professors is the rule in the regime. The railway even at the present time runs for fifty-four miles only, and that too in two

separate lines to cover a negligible portion of distance from the Indian border. The library is a closed institution and the hospital a more conglomeration of physicians who, for want of opportunities, are rendered inefficient, even the Ranas do not have confidence in them and come to Calcutta annually for medical purposes to squander an enormous sum of money.

From the nature of the improvements effected in his reign one can deduce that these were not rendered with a desire to efface the backwardness from the face of the country. Such a lofty idea was totally foreign to Chandra's mind and he made it sure while introducing the above-mentioned measures of paltry reforms that only a small portion of the country came under their influence. He was too shrewd not to see the effects of an all round economic improvement of the country on the psychology of the people whose reaction to them would have been certainly to clamour for political reforms as a corollary to the situation that might follow.

Under pressure of the enlightened world opinion Chandra abolished in 1926 the much hated slavery in his country which set free some 60000 persons from vile bondage at a cost of Rs. 37 lakhs which he remitted by emptying the treasury attached to the Temple of God Pasupati. Parallel to this reform Chandra also discontinued another hated practice of forcibly carrying away under arrangement of the palace minor girls for the harem of the Rana potentates. This practice began from the time of Jung Bahadur. Every fifth year

there was a general raid in areas adjacent to the valley, and young girls used to be caught and brought to Kathmandu for disposal and assignment according to the rank of the harem-keeper.

He is also credited with the removal of the corvee, abolition of inter-district toll and tax on fairs, the inevitable result of which was to break the inland trade barrier so long hampering the movements of goods from one part of the country to the other. Yet we know this was a white-wash, because these reforms were meaningless as long as the country was kept deprived of modern industry and trade.

After ten and means of communication years of consolidation Chandra Shumsher had felt so secure of his ground that he even thought of handing over the reins of administration to his eldest son. declare him the acting premier during the period of his retirement and allow the latter to easily effect seizure of power after his death in case he encountered stiff opposition. But that was not destined to be and for various reasons. In the first place the King now of age could not be compelled to give his approval for this bold act. Secondly, he would have then and there antagonised the two living brothers, Bhim and Judha. Thirdly and lastly except the one on whom special favour was shown, he would be recipient of the coveted post, other sons of his were inclined to view this precedence of stressing the right of primogeniture as something in the nature of a barrier against their own ambition, for once Mohan was to secure the august post by right of primo-

geniture, Babar and his brothers had to part with their own claims for good in favour of Mohan's eldest son who will now be placed on immediate roll of succession to follow his father. Chandra Shumsher died without having his wishes fulfilled but even dying he saw that his eldest son would not traverse a long distance but find a short cut to reach the Lion-guarded Palace. As he found a series of names between Juddha and Mohan, and as he found most of them to be those of the illegitimate issues of Bir, he manœuvred to create a gulf between them and the legitimate members of the family by openly stiffening caste rules with emphasis on pure blood, which had a far-reaching effect bearing fruit in 1934, when the illegitimate aspirants were expelled leaving the gap to be filled by Mohan and his brothers. He had carried his paternal sentiment to the extremes. In order to place a son of his as a senior to Juddha's eldest son, he even went to the extent of declaring his birth to have occurred five hours earlier, though in truth it was Bahadur who had seen the light an hour earlier than Kaiser. This falsehood was swallowed by Juddha Shumsher without demur at the time, but the memory of the evil design is so haunting the relationship between Kaiser and Bahadur that the latter has always behaved with a feeling of injury to his person and honour, which threatens to break at times the bond between the Chandra and Juddha groups now in possession of power at Kathmandu.

Another story of his ambition thwarted by fate itself with which he tried to secure the throne for his family is equally interesting. Chandra had married his

third son with the eldest daughter of the King who was, however, without a legitimate issue, and with his gradually failing health kept everybody agitated on the question of succession. Chandra knew that the Nepalese law of succession completely excluded the possibility of a daughter acceding the throne, and there was a distant cousin of the King who legally stood as the heir apparent. But he wanted to exploit the void created by the absence of a son to the King in furtherance of his desire to get the kingship devolved on his son through his princess wife. The matter was actually taken in hand, and protracted negotiation on the subject was carried on to convince the courtiers of the justifiability of the step to be taken, when it was set at rest by the sudden appearance on earth of the baby who is now the King of Nepal.



NEPAL DECLARED INDEPENDENT

In 1923, as a reward for the magnificent contribution the Nepal Government made to the cause of the Allies the British King undertook to revise the treaty of 1815. While the talk on the subject was well ahead on the road to happy culmination, it was felt that the parties should better negotiate a new treaty altogether. On behalf on the Nepal Government the need for declaring Nepal completely independent in unequivocal language was greatly stressed. But the British Government were not willing to withdraw some of the provisions of the earlier treaty particularly those

which limited Nepal's external relation to the British. This, of course, was not the thing sought by Chandra Shumsher for deletion and there arose no occasion for any sort of hitch over this particular matter. A compromise solution brought forward a new treaty, which took into account the urge of the Nepal people for complete independence at least in theory and which on the assent of both was not to affect the declared provisions of the treaty of Sugauli. Thus Nepal got its independence recognised by the British in 1923 though externally it continued to remain fettered under the Britain's Indian Foreign Department in accordance with the provisions of the earlier treaties. It may not be out of place to note here that the Treaty of Sugauli contracted in 1815 had not only denied to Nepal the right to seek external contact without the permission of the British, but had also so bound its discretion in foreign affairs that the ruler could not even employ a foreigner in service without British consent.

According to the Treaty of 1923 a complete change in the designation of the British Resident was also effected, Hence forward he had come to be officially called till 1947 as His Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary. The King of Nepal, who earlier was addressed as His Royal Highness, came now to be addressed as His Majesty, while the Prime Minister had since then been addressed as His Highness the Maharaja of Nepal. It may be casually noted here that the earlier form of address in the case of the Premier read, 'His Excellency the Premier,' which was

also used in the case of all the heads of Governments in foreign countries.

Another agreement and this definitely to the Nepal Ruler's advantage fixed for him an annual contribution of Rs. 10 lakhs in Indian currency to be remitted by the Indian Exchequer. No obligation had been attached to the remittance in the treaty, but it is rightly suspected that the monetary provision was designed to keep Nepal within the orbit of British influence under economic pressure and it was definitely a reward for loyal services rendered to the cause of the Empire.

The Prime Minister was further lucky enough to find himself honoured by more British titles for all what he did to win the war for them, which according to the British was done not out of obligation but out of good will and sympathy. Soon after the termination of the war he was promoted to the rank of a full Honorary General in the British Army. A little later he received G. C. V. O. and G. C. M. G. from the British King. All these came to him as everybody knows in payment of the price of blood which two lakh sons of Nepal shed in the battle fields. The Ranas are used to prize these titles as best treasures falling to them as a token of British friendship and the Maharaja Prime Minister always takes them to heart and does not leave them and is offended when in correspondence he is not mentioned as a Sir Shumsher Jung Rana, G. C. S. I., G. C. V. O., etc. But one fails to agree with him to have taken these titles as a token of British friendship,

when we know that any other citizen of an independent state would not even touch them with a pair of tongs not to speak of trying to proudly display them as the Rana Prime Minister does. To a man who was calling himself a Marshall in his country, Chandra Shumsher had curiously arrogated to himself that high sounding military rank, these British granted titles were unbecoming. These represented a token of favour accruing from a Royal master to his dependants. These were the iron chains binding a person to ensure his loyalty. It was not strange that Chandra Shumsher the more profusely decorated was appearing the more chained.

During Chandra's reign the question of Chinese suzerainty over Nepal also came to lapse on account of the democratic revolution in China, which had thrown such disputable issues into the background on account of Chinese pre-occupation with her own internal affairs. Although as of practice Nepal seemed to ignore the Treaty of 1792 which had placed the Gorkha Kingdom in line with Tibet in position of satellites in relations to China the custom initiated that year of sending every twelfth year a goodwill mission with Nepalese presents to the Chinese Emperor had continued till 1900. How the British had interpreted this custom before 1911 is not sufficiently known, but in that year when Chinese High Commissioner at Lhasa raised the question of Nepal's vassalage under the old treaty the British came forward to oppose the move of China to claim Nepal as her dependency. On the advice of the Delhi authorities Chandra Shumsher also refused to send the

twelve yearly deputation to Peking, which was due to leave Kathmandu early next year, China and Nepal thus cut adrift from each other. Because the former could not persue the matter in earnestness as she did in case of Tibet by exercising her right of interference when there was refusal to accept the China claimed suzerainly, the Treaty of 1792 got further automatically lapsed. But China had not by that time repudiated the treaty of 1792, and though the real implication of the clauses had been lost with the Chinese in the din of the revolution it was difficult to say if she would reconcile to the idea of unilateral repudiation at the time the knowledge will drive home to her. For the time being, however, Chandra Shumsher appeared to have scored a victory on that question, and Nepal formally and finally proclaimed itself free from China. As a result again today the entire history of Sino-Nepalese relations is pushed into oblivion to render the issue incongruous and out of sorts with the main course of Asian history.

Mao Tse Tung's recent broadcast from China pledging his support to the liberation movement in Tibet on the ground that it forms part of China is likely to raise that question once again. But Nepal geographically situated to have location on this side of the Himalayas has no immediate physical contact with China as Tibet has. Considered from geographical standpoint, therefore, Nepal is more Indian than Asian. Any speculation to connect Nepal with the aspiration of New China is similarly fantastic. Actually speaking the

suzerainty exercised by China over Nepal since 1782 was only nominal, because the dependant status falling to Nepal's lot after the signing of the treaty with China did never stand in the way of its following an independent line of action in external matters as well, and here too geography played the decisive part. This was further modified by the commitments Nepals undertook to respect according to the provisions of the Treaty of Sugauli contracted with the British in 1815. As a matter of fact China had ceased to be a factor in Nepal as soon as her exhausted army withdrew to Tibet in the spring of 1792. The British were the natural successor in that line having emerged overwhelmingly dominant since 1816 even if the fact of Chinese suzerainty over Nepal were to be taken into account.

It would be relevant at this stage to assess the political status of Nepal in terms of independence as obtained before August 1947 during the hours of British tutelage. Recently the British delegate to the Security Council observed in reply to Ukranian allegation that the clauses (6-7) of the Treaty of 1815 restricting Nepal's foreign relations had lapsed with the signing of the new pact of 1923, which did away with all the factors limiting Nepal's freedom. It is strange that this interpretation was not given to the latter treaty before 1947. Indeed the treaty of 1923 was worded to throw a mask over the real import and spirit of the clauses binding Nepal to Britain. But a scrutinising eye will not fail to notice the chain that shackled Nepal to Britain's arms. As its geographical location has

determined, Nepal in circumstances of its being surrounded on three sides by Indian territories cannot in the nature of things maintain extensive external relation with foreign powers without reference to the Government at Delhi. With Tibet as there is no intermediary power in between the two countries, Nepal may enter into exclusive relationship. But apart from the fact that even Tibet had been for a long time put under British sphere of influence in the international context, the third article of the aforesaid treaty specially enjoins on the Nepal Government to intimate to the British every stage of negotiation Nepal carries with the northern neighbour. Of course, in theory the obligation is made to rest on both the parties but practically speaking it fetters Nepal's discretion as to its relations with Tibet. But what looks as a transparent case of camouflage is the attempt to insert in the preamble a phrase which confirms all the previous engagements. Nepal could not have any kind of contact with foreign powers without the express consent of the British Government in accordance with the meaning of one such engagements. As matters stood before 1947, the contention that Nepal was allowed unfettered discretion to manage its foreign affairs does not hold ground. In all certainty the position obtaining was that as long as the British stayed in India the almighty Empire cast a shadow over Nepal, which rendered its position secondary little better than what was fated to the first class Indian Princes.

Leaving aside the treaty stipulations there were also other factors which would not testify to Nepal's

independent status in relation to the British. Time and again the British authorities had declared that Nepal came in the orbit of their protection and they would not remain complacent as to the situation obtaining on the other side of the Nepal border. By the Simla convention of 1914 this protective custody of Nepal assumed by Britain received the seal of approval by China and Russia, and the dependency for the satellite became more pronounced. This indirect hegemony exercised by Great Britain over Nepal as a part of arrangement with the other Powers was kept independent of treaty with Nepal, but nevertheless its practical effect was to limit Nepal's sovereignty in matters of external affairs, which no amount of reasoning can otherwise upset.

In support of the argument to establish the fact of sovereignty the Ranas are trying to make capital of the war which Nepal waged against Tibet in 1856. The right to wage wars or enter into alliance with another Power is only enjoyed by a sovereign state. But the point to be cleared here does not arise in regard to the matter in principle, but to the fact as such whether there was actually a war involved in this instance so that with reference to this particular issue the degree and extent of sovereignty enjoyed by the parties may be determined.

If it is proved that the so-called war was only a large scale border dispute, then the whole thesis will founder. And there is every reason to believe that the incident of 1856 was an enlarged border skirmish that

was suffered to be engaged by the British, because of their pre-occupation in the Mutiny. That thence-forward the occasion for a war with Tibet did not arise, and when once it arose it was amicably settled through British intervention shows that Nepal enjoyed a free hand only in 1856. It was not permitted to exercise that right after that year, which again confirms its dependent status. If the act was not to be interpreted as a flagrant breach of international law, Nepal did not enjoy independence as long as the British ruled India. Facts belie the assertion to the contrary.

His Highness Maharaja Chandra Shumsher had added another feather to his cap. But his achievement judged from popular point of view was nothing but one more camouflage to hide the filthy state of affairs at Kathmandu under the autocratic regime, where a particular family denied the people their due human rights keeping them in eternal bondage. The sort of independence acknowledged by an external power had only secured for them the right to avert interference with the act of exploitation and misrule the family so freely indulged in to pursue its selfish end.

Chandra Shumsher had a long rule, twenty-nine years of peaceful and happy rule, when the last wish of his and his sons was fulfilled, he bequeathing to his sons individually while dying, three crores of rupees in cash besides a good many shares in Indian concerns he deemed to acquire in the same period as also very many medieval types of castles which he built and equipped with best furnitures. For seven sons seven castles were

built, and kept at their disposal with equipment of comfort, costliest furniture included, almost all of which came from Europe at a huge cost. Previously the annual income of Nepal was much less than what was sufficient for such luxurious appropriation, but Chandra had recourse to increasing land tax which in his time reached two crores of rupees. He had also earned a lot during the war by investing money in war hands and in risky operations in stock exchange business. The public, however, were pitifully neglected, all the questions of their improvement receded to the background before the self-interest of the Ranas, no amenities of civic life were made available. In his regime till 1918 even admission to the only High English School at Kathmandu was made by his special permission.

During these years the people were exploited, fleeced and almost ruined beyond redemption. All possible methods of exaction were brought in force to achieve that end and its over all result was to enrich the Rana family at the cost of the people who had to groan and chafe under the high heels of medieval tyranny. But his doing, his contribution to enhancing the malady had exceeded the limits. He had half emptied the state treasury and transferred every pie of it, and his earnings amounting to nearly 30 crores of rupees, to foreign banks to be deposited in his name. This was, of course, determined by lack of security in the prevailing atmosphere in Kathmandu where coups and plots were very common and to the formation of which Chandra and his brothers had contributed not a little.

But before Chandra Shumsher all past events stood as pointers, and he solved his own difficulty by sending the entire cash assets away from the clutches of the possible rivals. He was not the sole example. His path was toed by many others of affluence and a custom began to deposit earnings in Indian and foreign banks. Even those who needed no secure background for keeping them within frontiers of Nepal were compelled to seek out let for investment in India, because Nepal was no field economically advanced to that end. Yet it were the rulers who were denying to the country even the elementary condition of economic development. In a country where the ruler is used to treat the administration as his private concern, and he dreads the minimum change in the structure for fear of losing his hold, this could not be anything else. But the same backwardness and insecurity engendered by the absolutely irresponsible nature of the regime had been responsible for the draining away of a large amount of cash property from within Nepal to different channels that deprived the country of a legitimate source of building its unlike Bir Shumsher who kept his earning in hard cash, gold and ornaments besides landed property. Chandra had found in the advanced condition of the Indian economy an open field for operations which was certainly non-existent in the fine of his predecessor prosperity.

Chandra Shumsher's rule stands as a climax of his family's prestige, power and wealth. He had successfully defeated the plan of his predecessor who desired so ardently to associate his people with the administra-

tion. The plea put forth to oppose dissemination of democratic ideas was the unpreparedness of the people to receive them and while the rulers of the Rana family have consistently denied the opportunity to the people to prepare themselves, they withheld political rights without shame just for that. Chandra had provided the clue, which his reactionary forebears have picked up to their advantage. In his time the people were taught to regard themselves as no more than slaves of the Rana family. He had thoroughly subjugated the humanity in them crushing by all the force in his command the very remnant of the spirit of resistance to his absolute powers. The domination was so devastating and all pervasive that of all the Premiers during the turbulent year of medieval chaos and intrigues extending for nearly a hundred and eighty years since 1770 Chandra Shumsher's was the lonely instance of a natural death.

BHIM SHUMSHER

Bhim Shumsher installed in the month of November 1929 began his reign by a sweeping withdrawal of cash deposits from the state treasury of Nepal. During his rule of thirty-four months he could amass a sum of Rs. 6 crores. This is no mean earning for the Prime Minister of a poor country like Nepal and that too within a short time. To Bhim Shumsher's credit also no measure of public reforms is attributed, the policy of Jung Bahadur being pursued without the slightest deviation.

In 1930, Bhim Shumsher following his brother Bir enrolled some of his illegitimate sons to the line of succession, which had to be confirmed by oath from other members of the Rana family. Towards the close of his reign Bhim Shumsher also introduced some three hundred lakh pieces of alloyed coins of silver obviously to cater to the newly acquired royalty of his sons as a sequel to their promotion and enrolment.

In the early days of Bhim Shumsher's rule the Nepalese-Tibetan dispute which had flared up during the close of the last reign was honourably and without incidents settled. Though both Tibet and Nepal had everything in common to call themselves as British dependencies, they were sometimes miscarried by a false sense of national prestige to attempt to fight out each other over petty affairs. In 1928, a flare up of this sort carrying the matter a step further than what generally happens during the cold war occurred between them, and both sides were prepared to resort to military measures forgetting in the meantime to realise that an independent decision on questions of this type was beyond the powers of both circumscribed as the two countries were in imperialistic bondage. The dispute was reported to have arisen as a result of maltreatment the Lhasa Government meted out to a male Nepalese subject of Nepalese-Tibetan parentage. According to the previous treaty all such male children of such parentage receive Nepalese nationality. The Nepal Government felt that the maltreatment offered to the subject was a sufficient cause for filing a complaint and call for an explanation. This, however, did not proceed

out of a desire to avenge the maltreatment, for the Prime Minister had never actually cared till then to give thought to the welfare of such persons of his nationality both in Tibet and Nepal, who are even now perishing of starvation and undergoing almost beastly existence. According to some the actual cause was the refusal of the Tibetan Lamas to abide by certain clauses of the treaty of 1856, which had imposed iniquitous obligations on the Tibetan Government. It is said that they resented particularly the privileges of extra-territoriality and of immunity from tax burdens enjoyed by Nepalese citizens in their domain. It seemed that they had decided unilaterally to abrogate those clauses. But the Court was divided on the main issue, and many who knew the comparatively better strength of Nepal counselled patience and discouraged any idea of provoking the Nepalese. At the time the conflict arose, those who supported a policy of friendship with Nepal had, however, lost influence in the Potala. They had the misfortune to be condemned and victimised by their opponents on the stand they were taking in regard to Nepal. Their leader had taken shelter in the Nepalese Legation, but was forcibly taken back and beheaded after a summary trial. My information is that Chandra Shumsher had only moved in protest against the violation of the Legation sanctuary by the Tibetans in acting to secure the person of the refugee Kazi.

But his protest had little effect on the policy of the Potala which was definitely preparing for a show down determined to break the old treaty. The Tibetan

Government was engaging itself in reinforcing its military garrison, and was reported to have resorted to gun running into monasteries, and arming to teeth their hitherto docile monks. At any other time this action of the Tibetan Lama would have met with prompt declaration of war on him by the Nepalese whose strength was very much superior in arms and men to that of the opponent howsoever well prepared he might have thought of himself at that excited moment.

But Chandra Shumsher exhibited utmost caution even to the extent of evoking distrust in the might of his Government by his own agent in Lhasa, who had given up all hopes of action by the master in Kathmandu as the heat of the situation intensified. It was obvious that Chandra Shumsher was not free to determine his line of action, and he was waiting for instruction from some undefined quarters. There was no doubt that the British authorities were restraining his hands in an attempt to act as intermediary in the conflict.

All the arms in the hands of the Tibetans came from British trading concerns, and through passage allowed by India. It was a riddle that the British who were stressing the need of an amicable settlement of the dispute through their own mediation were actively helping one party in preparing itself for an engagement. Probably it was to strike a balance that they had to add weight to the lighter and less equipped of the two; the Lhasa Government, or it was just to show that

they were as much friendly to Lhasa as to Kathmandu to whom they regularly supplied modern weapons. British help alone had encouraged the Tibetans to pick up a quarrel with the Nepalese, and maintain a tough attitude towards all questions of settlement. But the same revealed that the British held the strings in their hands equally tightly in Lhasa as in Kathmandu.

Why the British encouraged the activity of the Tibetans, which aimed at their own independence and extrication out of all the external shackles? The answer lies in the diplomatic manoeuvre of the day the British eagerly pursued to counteract the growing influence of the Chinese Republic which so soon as consolidated was sure to claim the Tibetan part of the earlier Empire. Unless they were assured of the subservient and friendly attitude of the Nanking Government then just established the British would take every precaution to save Tibet for themselves against the Chinese. This time they could not invoke the simla agreement of 1914 according to which Tibet was allotted to Britain as her sphere of influence, because one or the other two signatories Tsarist Russia had ceased to exist. The British, therefore, boosted the independence of the Tibetans not however knowing that its entire brunt was to fall, as it fell immediately after, on the Nepalese at Lasha enjoying very many privileges as against the Tibetan nationals. But that could not have been avoided having let loose the antithetical forces in that direction. The dispute with Nepal was, however, secondary compared to the larger

question of independence from the Chinese rule that was the crux of this revivalist movement of the Lamaic country. But the British had no intention to accentuate the Nepal-Tibet differences and when a flare up was noticed, and after some heat their purpose was nearer fulfilment they applied themselves to the task of conciliation.

This British Government put their good offices in bringing settlement of the dispute and both parties standing where they were, were helped to hush up their differences, so that in the end each of them realised that the previous heat was of no result for both sides. Next March a formal agreement was signed at Kathmandu to end the tension, and peaceful relation was restored. The Nepalese had, however, found some of their former privileges curtailed and the Tibetans grown more sensitive to ideas of self-respect.

To Bhim Shumsher is attributed a desire to exile the sons of Chandra Shumsher in order to facilitate the succession of those whom he and his brother Bir had elevated to the roll. It transpires that the sons of Chandra Shumsher led by Mohan Shumsher, the present Prime Minister, had resented the action of their uncle in enrolling his illegitimate sons in the list of successors to premiership. One of Bhim's sons, Hiranya Shumsher, had been the major cause of disturbing the entire structure as he according to his age came to be placed before Babar Shumsher who was now well on the way to commanding generalship. Because of the resentment they felt Chandra's sons were dreaded by the uncle,

and he wanted to remove them physically from the arena. What prevented him from carrying out his intention into practice is still an unrevealed affair. From the way the nephews were treated, which was very much distrustful of them and their movements, one has no reason to discount the possibility of a plot in the making in behalf of Bhim's coterie. It is often said that had Bhim lived for another four months he would have successfully solved the problem by doing away with the other party altogether. But this was spared for his own sons who were exiled to India in 1934.

Bhim suddenly died, and the threat to the party in opposition was automatically removed. There is also a mysterious tinge in the episode of Bhim's death, which came as surprisingly enough to create doubts about his being dead under normal conditions. If certain interested sources are to be believed he died of poisoning at the hands of an unknown person. He was reported ill, and it is probable that the poison was administered through medicine. This is corroborated by the fact that his son Rama Shumsher, the then Secretary General, had for a while refused to hand over the crown to the next incumbent as he said, he suspected a foul game in the tragic occurrence.

Soon after his death the next successor Juddha Shumsher assumed premiership. Two years after the country was violently shaken by earth-quake. The Rana rulers selfishly looked after their own hearth and home and the people were pitifully neglected. Even

the provision of a Relief Fund of Rs. 36 lakhs was very inadequately and unjustly made so as to benefit only the few members of the Rana family, and other favourites who had been the principal recipients of the loan. It is a matter of common knowledge in Nepal that while the poor sufferers were not to receive each more than Rs. 500, several members of the Rana family got each Rs. 20 to 50 thousand as relief money. When the debt was cancelled in September 1936 it was found that out of 30 lakhs distributed, Rs. 25 lakhs had gone to the pocket of the Ranas, and their hangers-on.

In 1934 March, there was a purge in the ruling family, all those illegitimate issues of the Rana family pushed to the roll of succession by Bir Shumsher and Bhim Shumsher were expelled and exiled outside the valley. The whole scheme had been in preparation since 1933, when Bahadur Shumsher, the Premier's son, had been to Delhi to consult and secure the assent of the Political Department. With the assent of the British authorities the purge was carried out thoroughly and at the point of revolver many were forced to leave the country. Amongst those exiled were the topmost four successors including the then Commander-in-Chief, General Rudra Shumsher, who is now posted as the Principal Officer of the District Headquarter in Palpa. (West-Nepal) A fact of considerable significance relating this events is that the public was a mere spectator and so was the King in all these deals.

At the time the expulsion took place most of

those who actually could think of resistance were staying away out of the Capital being on duty assigned to them as a part of a pre-meditated affair which the victims could not scent. Two of them Generals, Tej and Pratap, sons of the late Maharaja Bir Shumsher, were recouping their health in Puri and Dargeeling (India). Others who would not have taken it lying down were not there, so that the stage set for the act was made safe and without any possible risk of interruption. General Rudra was not a person of courage to try to question the legality of the step, but even he saw that it was too late to make any attempt in that direction at that time when his side was already thin. It is said that all those who were to be exiled were summoned one evening to Singha Durbar where they were huddled in a room and preemptorially told to resign their claim to the Premiership or else face bullet shots. It was what the Maharaja wanted they were told and no other reason was given which testified to the lightness and ease with which the party in power had proceeded confident of their consummate skill on the course of action. It did not trouble their conscience to violate the sacred vow taken with hands dipped into the water of the River Bagmati years back and thus the five senior most claimants to the highest posts of the kingdom found themselves as much suddenly and unexpectedly thrown out as they had been earlier promoted to the rule.

To many who had closely studied the Palace the coup of March 1934 was inevitable. They had only

wondered that this did not occur during Chandra's life time. But then the issue had not sharpened on account of the eldest illegitimate successor General Rudra being far away on the Roll. With Dharma Shumsher's death in 1933, however, when he had to be promoted to the post of the C.in-C. as the next incumbent to the post of the Prime Minister, the gravity of the step taken some four decades back threatened to overwhelm the palace. Now it was no longer possible to postpone consideration of the same and the end of the chapter seemed near. After Bhim's death Rudra and his brothers also were, in no doubt, as to the fate awaiting them and at the same time suffered under no illusion as to their strength. If another source is to be believed they had themselves raised the question at a secret meeting with Juddha Shumsher, and had asked for permit to leave Nepal. Why Juddha thought it proper to give them a false sense of security by fresh promises to honour the sanctity of past pledges is inexplicable. Perhaps he did it not to annoy them with unpleasant ideas of the impending misfortune awaiting them. Some say that Juddha was personally not in favour of the scheme of purge and he had only to yield to pressure from Chandra's sons. Whatever that may be, when the news of the purge spread, it had brought no surprise, and the people took it as a most common event of life.

Yet the coup of 1934 differs very much from similar purges carried in the past and one special feature of it was that not a single life was taken, and no farthing of the property belonging to the victims

was touched. Besides this, the victims also were provided with Jagirs, and each able-bodied of them was assigned an administrative headship in some divisional quarters of the kingdom. Those that were left to enjoy power had to devise ways and means to bind the sufferers by ties of common interest with the family and adequate provision for a life of ease and comfort was the best means to that end. Because, they have to look for pensions and for the annual income of the estates yet retained by them in their homeland the exiled Ranas even in a sullen mood have by a majority shown unparalleled patience not to be aroused by desires of vengeance or act under temptation of a restored royalty. This is certainly a proof of the sagacity and farsightedness of those who thought not to break the link by injudicious act of confiscation and pauperisation of the victims concerned.

In May 1934, a new agreement was signed with the British, which paved the way for the establishment of the Nepalese legation in London. Bahadur Shumsher, the Premier's eldest son, was sent there as the first Nepalese Minister.

Then the war came, and Juddha proclaimed himself as a staunch supporter of the British Government and surprisingly without declaring war on the Axis Powers. Since then some twenty thousand men of the Nepal Army had joined war-fields. Some four lacs of hillmen from the interior were recruited into the Indian army independently by agencies in the frontier. Joining the colours is an obligation which

every able-bodied Pahari had to meet and any evasion or attempt at evasion was severely punished. Most of the Nepal regiments were stationed in Assam, a few in N.-W. F. Province and some were sent to Egypt and Iran. The expense was borne in its entirety by the Government of India.

The Nepal Government always instructed its men and officers to be loyal to every Britisher in India. If one showed contempt or even suppressed disgust with a deliberate sense of inferiority complex, he was mercilessly court-martialled. For example, in 1941, in the month of March a Subedar of a Regiment stationed at Ludhiana was hanged for the offence of exchanging hot words with a British Captain. The Subedar had earlier requested the Captain to increase the ration of milk for his contingent, but the Captain did not only spurn the request but also scolded him vehemently using filthy language, which was not tolerated by the Subedar's sense of self-respect and he too likewise paid him back in the same coin. The matter was reported to the Premier in Nepal and the Subedar was called back to Kathmandu for trial. Ordinarily an offence committed in British India should have been punished here, but how in this particular case the British Government surrendered him is a painful surprise. But most of all the subsequent action of the Nepal Government in hanging the Subedar went against all tenets of justice and against British prestige and professions of democratic ideals.

When the war was on, and his attention deeply en-

gaged in activities connected with the despatch of troops to India, Juddha faced an unprecedented situation in his country which arose as a result of the emergence for the first time in history of an underground agitation conducted in the name of democracy to demand freedom and emancipation from the clutches of the Rana family. Nothing absorbed his attention so much and seized him with fear as much as this agitation against his autocratic rule which started in curious co-incidence with the war itself, and because of its unprecedented nature and form presented a vexing problem for his entire machinery of administration to cope with.

We shall deal with this incident a little later. At this place it is necessary even at the risk of being misunderstood as diversion to bring to memory all the antecedents which directly inspired the movement aforesaid. For let it be remembered that the democratic struggle in Nepal has a history going back to 30 years and in order to assess correctly the position in 1940 the stock taking of the happenings of the period between these years is more than essential. The aforesaid agitation was not born of a vacuum. It grew out of a process of making set in motion and developed through a lengthy period of suffering and a live consciousness generated by the same. Unless the formative episodes are dealt with in full and elaborately the form and content of the movements following will be far from bearing the character of a correct appraisal. In the following paragraphs we enumerate the main incidents and forces impelling the same, so that an idea of the background not only of the agitation referred to, but

also of the entire revolutionary period coming after is obtained in their clear perspective.

I hope the reader will not take this digression as an abrupt end of the narrative we had taken in hand. In reality, the matter now following is not even a digression, but may be taken as the principal part of the narrative itself for the period between 1937-1945. We shall see that they have filled up a gap otherwise left out and the same one set up as the continuation of the process started in the previous regimes will appear to form an important link in one and the single chain.

The reader also will take note of the many happenings brought in here, which should have ordinarily found place in previous sections along with the chronological data dealing with the various reigns coming before Juddha Shumsher. We have to disjoin these from their respective chronicles in order to present a connected story of the democratic struggle, which, from our view, deserves to be dealt separately under a new caption.

CHAPTER IV

POPULAR AWAKENING AND STIRS

EFFECTS OF THE FIRST WAR

Stray cases of protests and revolts against the heavy chain of the clumsy Rana Raj were visible since the end of the First World War as the Nepalese drew closer to India by means of new cultural and social

contacts forged during the period. A large number of youngmen came to the plains for education, and still a greater number for employment. Those Gorkha Officers of the Indian Army who had returned with a wealth of experience acquired in the European and Asian battlefields constituted another new element in the populace to imbibe resurgent spirit of resistance against tyranny. The Nepalese were now brought face to face with a superior people and with that consciousness naturally they cursed their condition of backwardness. The showy meagre economic improvements effected by Chandra Shumsher were also not without desirable results in this direction. These helped to facilitate movements of the people from and back to Nepal, which encouraged further contacts. Although the rulers had spared no pains to shut out external influences by all sorts of restrictive orders as to the entry of newspapers and books, anything containing pictures of Indian political leaders were confiscated, but at the same time it was natural for the people in the circumstances of contact with awakened India to experience new ideas and be alive to a sense of backwardness. The very lowest strata of the Nepalese populace was not touched by these influences, as it was too much immersed in economic troubles to think of something higher, but that particular section which had knowledge and time to see the surging tide of revolt in India was startled out of benumbing depravity and slumber, to which the Rana autocrats had up till now deliberately enforced almost all of them in spite of worldwide revolutionary up-surge to enlightenment.

It may not be out of place to note down here that with each stride taken by the Nationalist movement in India, our people have felt the more hopeful about their own emancipation, and though the persons spurred on to action formed comparatively a tiny minority, the manifestation of the spirit of resistance to autocratic rule was potentially such as to forebode its mounting from strength to strength under a more favourable condition.

As the people had and have been consistently denied human life there was and is a widespread resentment in all those that have grown to consciousness. This is the impelling force behind the democratic upsurge in Nepal where up till a very late period the nature of resistance had been largely conspiratorial and personal in the content. Those who had suffered at one time or another at the hands of the Rana family were the persons to take up cudgels, and it would look that they had done so being actuated by motives of retaliation but except where the action concerned the disgruntled members of the Rana family that their motive had been sincere and they worked for all classes of people though with hazy ideas of the future no body can doubt. As circumstances would have it the very background for a movement of the type to have been in operation with the inspirational drive of class conscious democracy had not yet been prepared, and, therefore, personal issues played the part in determining and shaping the course of action.

The long series of plots and conspiracies we have just cited is what confirms the above. These were confined to the aristocratic and middle class families and mainly to such of them as had axes to grind against the regime. These were actuated by an urge to retaliate in some cases and in others by intolerant disposition at the sight of the heinous crime committed by the Rana rulers on their relations. Those sections of the nobility who were denied the legal and political privileges were the natural spear-heads of revolt against the one family rule, so that a real democratic agitation was thus far lacking.

Just as they have been resisting the formation of a middle class by adopting a medieval policy of administration, the Ranas have consistently withheld facilities of modern industrialisation and education for fear that these may generate a tendency in the people to know their own predicament and be urged on to action to redress the same. This is the reason that the resistance movement till very late could not over-step the boundary determined by the conspiratorial nobility. The same speaks for the delayed participation of the common people in the emancipatory struggle.

But as soon as contact with India increased, this phase of resistance underwent a change. It was now definitely a movement run in the line of the Congress in India deriving its sustenance and guidance from each successive stage of its fight against the mighty Empire which was so long propping up feudalism in Nepal for its military interest. The growth of

democratic forces in India and their gradual passage to the final victory over reactionary western Imperialism have exercised a great influence on the political situation of the country and have helped to create a psychological transformation enabling the people to shed off fear complex.

Yet before the War the very backwardness of the country had stood in the way of a truly democratic political agitation. As dictated by circumstances where the right of association is not existent, the agitation had naturally to pass through underground channels even if the extent of its influence was larger and now definitely covered the lower middle class. Also the fact of wide-spread poverty amongst the general people had been the cause of discouragement to all such activities as tend to court the displeasure of the rulers. The tragedy of the situation will be clear from the fact that it has not as yet allowed some of our conscious people to extricate themselves from the clutches of the Rana family. The attendant result is also reflected in the paucity of able and cultured men in the vanguard of the present political struggle, which in its turn is in its infancy.

India had provided as she is doing now a ground for many fugitive offenders, and her soil had been used many a time for conspiratorial preparation. The immunity from direct action on the part of the Rulers enjoyed by a worker while in India has always attracted agitators to her and the nearness of the country, and geographical contiguity is equally a strong factor to

cause it to be used as a jumping board for the same sort of action conducted by the rebels. In the absence of civil liberties in Nepal it was only natural that we sought India's hospitality to give expression to our feeling of resentment at the unhappy state of affairs prevailing under the autocratic Ranas. This fact more than anything else has enabled the Nepalese democratic struggle to assume wider proportions and dimension in proportion as the Government of India allowed the enjoyment of that hospitality and restrictions did not curtail freedom of agitation.

So while underground activities have been the natural course of action inside Nepal, the facility of a platform and forum had been offered on India's soil, though these had been withdrawn as soon as the British felt the anti-Rana activities menacing their relations with Nepal or as soon as their attention drawn to this side of the question.

Naturally, therefore, the first demand for civil liberty and responsible Government for Nepal was made from India and this was through the columns of the Nepalese weekly 'Gorkhali' found in British India during the early years of the First World War by the commendable efforts of Subba Devi Prasad Sapkota.

Thus the importance of democratic India to Nepalese liberation movement is obviously greater than what would appear to an ordinary reader of political history.

The Swadeshi movement in the early decade of this century had wrought its influence on the Nepalese. In Nepal itself some people were profoundly affected

by the new ideas of political progress that were then spreading all over India. In the absence of a propitious environment even for the minimum of political activity, this automatically took the course of cultural regeneration, and formation of secretly run political clubs and societies. A religious reformation movement inside Nepal on the line of Aryasamaj was nipped in the bud in 1909 when its leader Madhavaraj Joshi was caned at a Durbar and exiled to meet the end of stern justice. But in India the emigrant Nepalese inspired by the message of hope then ringing throughout the country could not but give vent to his feeling of resentment against the very sorry state of affairs in his homeland. Notwithstanding the fear of British censorship, they had succeeded in starting a weekly paper from Banaras, as referred to earlier, which for six years conducted an unremitting campaign of publicity against the autocratic rule of the Rana family. Indeed at no period of Rana domination the rulers were so much exasperated as at the time when Subba Debi Prasad, the editor of the 'Gorkhali', had taken up cudgels against them on behalf of his people. The 'Gorkhali' vehemently criticised the one family rule, which had denied human existence to the Nepalese. It published tales of cruelties and torture to which the people were subjected without mercy. Subba Debi Prasad with his intimate knowledge of Foreign Department had applied himself in the task with zeal and earnestness, and the 'Gorkhali' he made a terror to the Rana Premier until it was finally suppressed by the British Indian authorities in 1922.

In 1927—28 this thread was again caught by Thakore Chandan Sinha, who started the All India Gorkha League, at Dehradun, and founded another weekly paper called 'Gorkha Sansar' His activities, however, came to a stop not with much achievement after a short career as a result of betrayal practised by his associates who walked into the Rana's parlour.

This was the story which belongs to British India. In the same period Nepal was witnessing a vigorous campaign of repression under that astute yet evil intentioned conservative Prime Minister, the Maharaja Chandra Shumsher. Any sympathy for sentiments expressed in the Banaras Weekly he would instantly challenge wrecking dire vengeance and many a honest and good natured persons fell a prey to his ever zealous eye. At one time he sent to jail some half a dozen harmless educated people for scribing a few lines in praise of the comparatively superior method of native agriculture.

About this unhappy event it is said that it has no parallel for the treatment it received at the hands of the autocrats. The book was a very harmless document, but more than that the publishers had brought it out after securing the approval of the Censor Department whose head at the time was the Premier's trusted son Kaiser Shumsher. It is inconceivable that the objectionable lines had escaped his notice, as the book was passed only after a close scrutiny. The truth of the matter however was that the Premier could not tolerate outside suggestion for a policy of development,

and made a scape goat of the authors. The lines in question can by no stretch of imagination be regarded malicious or villifying against the Government of the day. Its authors were without exception loyal servants of the Rana family, all of them then office-holders in Government concerns, who were far from harbouring any rebel sentiments. It is said that the press proof of the composition was read by no less a man than the preceptor of the Premier's son, Guru Durganath. Any interpretation as to the seditious nature of the writing is, therefore, inadmissible. We have to view it as just another record of high-handedness perpetrated by the Rana autocrat to terrorise his people. Chandra Shumsher was so vehement in his denunciation of the authors of the book that he inhumanly caused the editor, Kharidar Krishnanath, to die in prison without medical treatment and released the rest after five years of detention when he had felt that the accused had learnt an unforgettable lesson.

In December 1928, a poet was in similar circumstances confined in jail as he wrote some words in one of his poems which smacked of giving inspiration to people to think along democratic lines. A young enthusiast in 1929 was thrashed by the Premier for keeping a photo of Gandhiji in his bed room. Instances may be multiplied. Twenty collegians were fined each Rs. 100 in 1930 for proposing to open up a public library at their own cost. Its sponsor Dharmaraj Thoplia had to pass two years inside the prison.

Next year the word 'Democracy' uttered by some

youngmen in company cost four of them penal servitude for life. The story was till recently a secret as such tales of horror perpetrated by the Ranas are. It now appears that one Khadgaman Sinha, who was then a school student in Bihar, was one day talking to his three associates about the civil disobedience movement going on in India at that time. He casually brought to bear his personal knowledge of the Indian Freedom Movement on the desirability of a parallel movement to be launched in Nepal to make room for a parliamentary system of Government in place of the prevailing oligarchic regime. It was only a schematic planning as far as the talk then went and Khadgaman had only hinted the desirability of such action without any forethought to carry out the same seriously so soon into practice. The audience had listened him with all ears, and they had dispersed to hear him for the second time in greater number. But the day following one of them out of sheer enthusiasm confessed in confidence the gist of talk they had indulged to the Maharaja's son-in-law who happened to be his blood relation, and this was what brought the calamity. The four youngmen were immediately after arrested, and subjected to third degree methods of torture on suspicion of conspiracy, which was not to be proved as in reality the accused were not even guilty of sedition in practice. But the Rana Premier refused to release them, as he said they had committed a crime by holding a comradesly talk about democracy and its application to Nepalese political conditions. All the four of them, therefore, were sent to prison with a sentence of life imprisonment which

does not show a tendency to complete in spite of Khadgaman's eighteen years in Kathmandu jail. Two of his comrades ex-captain Khadgaman, who was a retired official and Maina Bahadur died unable to cope with the harsh life they were forced to live, and the remaining fourth Ranganath Sharma came to his father in British India having been banished from his country after three years of imprisonment.

A little later another so-called plot was unearthed through an accomplice who confessed to the authorities about a plan hatched up to overthrow the Government of Bhim Shumsher by violence. It was declared that the persons involved were carrying out certain experiments with explosive materials and they had collected arms for the purpose. It appeared that one of the Prime Minister's own grandsons figured in the trial when the case was finally brought to hearing. As a punishment some five people were given ten years R. I. and the prince was house interned. All these were released after nearly two years of detention.

The nature of treatment meted out to the accused in this case was a strange contrast to the punishment in parallel cases in the past, which never came short of death sentence or life imprisonment. Probably the back-ground in this instance did not permit the award of capital punishment. Those in the know of things admit the innocence of the accused, and according to them even the Maharaja was convinced of the false nature of charges brought against them. Heavy punishment at the circumstances was ruled out, but the

accused could not also be let off as that act would clearly establish the vagary of the Governmental machine prosecuting them. One often hears of a deep seated jealousy between the two lines of Bhim Shumsher's sons to have been the sole factor for arrest and subsequent conviction of these men. It is quite possible that these youngmen were only the victims of family quarrel. But the event is important for us in that the authorities could not even tolerate the gathering of some youngsters in private places, even though they had assembled for an entirely innocent purpose. It transpired that the accused were caught while playing a game of billiards in the prince's courtyard.

These represent only a few anecdotes out of a lengthy narrative illustrating the highhanded and cruel activity of the Rana autocrats and these can be multiplied. But these are sufficient to give one the idea that the democratic struggle in Nepal is not so young as is believed by persons outside that country. Whatever may be the nature of the action called for on behalf of the Government, and at times these were quite trivial, it has to be admitted that the period in question had not passed in a vacuum. The democratic agitation which had begun with the laudable efforts of Debi Prasad Sapkota had continued right up to the year 1940 though at times not without long breaks and intervals. The incidents above referred to are assuredly the many links with one and principal chain of the revolutionary upsurge which connected 1916 and 1949. They can be correctly termed as a fore-runner to the agitation of 1940, which itself formed a preliminary

stage of the process to start a decade later with the forces released in full swing after India secured her independence. Even when some of them appear to have been solely based on cooked-up charges the indelible mark left by the suffering and sacrifices of the victims concerned has not been without effect on the general trend of events in the direction. Their value cannot be minimised and a historian cannot afford to overlook them. We have, therefore, to view the whole history of the period as a particular stage of the revolutionary struggle and not merely as unconnected series of individual incidents. It is true that the content and form of the struggle have gradually expanded, but in the circumstances obtaining in Nepal till the very last hour of 1946, its character had remained unchanged, which all the more raises the importance of the pioneer work put in by the patriots preceding that year. If we remember the past and the hardship involved in the struggle, which was without parallel, the faith and courage of those who even mildly fought the medieval autocracy are things to be proud of, and one can say without the least hesitation that the present movement draws its sustenance from the glorious chapter of the history which we have just recounted.

Let us now come to the Praja Parishad Movement.

THE PRAJA PARISHAD

One should not be surprised when we have called it a movement, because even if the outward cloth of it was lacking the atmosphere its aftermath created bore the impress as it had left the people more enlightened.

In Nepal under conditions developed and worked assiduously in the regime of Chandra Shumsher and his two successors such combination was out of question, for this would have been discovered at its inception, as there according to practice no two people can unite for a single purpose and such attempts are ruthlessly traced out through wide-spread espionage. In British India, although legally the Praja Parishad could not function, the comparatively congenial atmosphere was at least conducive to periodical meetings which continued without any interference, as, of course, the whole thing was done without knowledge of the third party. The Parja Parishad was constituted in August 1938. Two incidents preceding it were seized upon as basis for propaganda. In the beginning of 1937, a B. Sc. graduate (Agri.) Shankar Prasad had his property confiscated rather than serve ignominiously under the Ranas. He was a Government scholar and the Rana Premier wanted him to serve the state in his (Rana's) term and offered Rs. 75 p. m In any other case he would have accepted the remuneration, but here he hoped more, because his services were not for the public and because the Ranas gave more for their illiterate flatterers. His defiance led to the confiscation of his property as aforesaid and ultimately to his flight from the Capital, after which he came to India, and utilised his time in organising anti-Rana publicity from Banaras. In February 1938, a Nepalese gentleman Pt. Shukraraj Shastri was interned for having met Gandhiji at Calcutta and having dared tell him frankly that Nepal was in need of political and social reforms. Closely following these

two was the outrage committed by the Rana nobility on the honour of women several of whom were being forcibly carried away for immoral purposes. These three incidents were the basis on which the Parishad was to ventilate the grievances of the people. Now the problem was with regard to a medium through which these things would receive publicity. The Praja Parishad workers were economically unable to finance their own paper, so they made approach to nationalist papers in India. It pains us to note that many of the so-called Nationalist papers turned deaf ear to their entreaties for assistance, some were afraid of the sequel to such publication at the hands of the British Government, while more would affect distrust though they inwardly were convinced of the veracity and purity of the cause and still a good many of them were critical in view of their being bribed by the Ranas. In time, however, Mr. Benipuri offered the pages of the weekly 'Janata' and luckily the situation was saved. The 'Janata' published the first article in June (20th) 1938 and then followed a series of them till 1940, when it was finally suspended for other reasons.

The nature of contents in the articles appearing in the 'Janata, were certainly vehemently critical, sometimes too personal. But where the whole affair of a Government is conducted for personal benefits, this could not have been avoided. In the heat of strained feeling the Praja Parishad workers would not have used any other language. Notwithstanding this factor, some people condemned the move of the Praja Parishad from a sheer language view and threatened to withdraw their

sympathy, which, however, had actually never come. Other critics came from the ranks of mercenary flatterers of the Ranas. We have also come to know that certain prominent Congressmen of Bihar tried to bribe Benipuri on behalf of the Ranas, but to that he would not yield and, therefore, the work proceeded in right earnest.

The Praja Parishad workers never gave out themselves during these two years of propaganda work. It was also the proper procedure, for had they appeared publicly, the police machinery of Nepal might have crushed the move in its very bud. By keeping themselves incognito, the agitational work of the Parishad could be conducted uninterfered with by them in Nepal. The Ranas tried to trace out the persons concerned with the article in the 'Janata' but to no effect. Bribery was unavailing. Janata's editor was approached many a time and was offered a big sum on conditions of his disclosure. Thanks, however, to his integrity and character no corruption of this nature would touch him. The Ranas then had the office of the 'Janata' searched through the Government of India. Thrice it was searched, but no such incriminating matter was available as was likely to give the clue to the authorship of the article. Beyond proscribing some three issues of the 'Janata' the Government of India could do nothing. In the meantime the 'Janata' published very serious matters, even the palace secrets were unearthed. The Rana's wit was puzzled. The Praja Parishad rose in public esteem, the 'Janata' was widely read by the Nepalese both in British India and in Nepal where it

was smuggled. By 1940 April, a considerable number of solid souls which included amongst others, students, teachers, poets, artists and many other youths, were, feeling the huge for freedom and indirectly sympathised with the agitation.

The propaganda in the 'Janata' created a stir in Nepal. 'Oh ! the truth was there' was the common cry. The Indian leaders were, however, little moved, for the 'Janata' was ill-favoured by the Congress. But the movement had the support of the Congress Socialist Party of Bihar, whose members individually pledged their support to the right cause. Attempts to win sympathy of some orthodox Congressmen failed, as these had been always against agitation in the States. Unfortunately many parties in India were at that time critical of the British Government alone. Their attitude towards the States was one of indifference and sometimes even of encouragement to the autocratic tyranny of the rulers. The Hindu Mahasabha's policy towards Nepal had been always marked with indifference towards the condition of the people. In the name of Hindudom an intolerably unjust regime was praised. The Ranas took advantage of this Mahasabhaite praise, and produced it as a ground for their popularity in India, though every thinking person there knew what havoc they were playing in their country. At that time too they were emboldened with the idea that they received a strong support from the Indians. Instead of listening to the demands of their subjects, instead of trying to respond to their feeling, the Ranas tightened their grip over them, intimidated the people and

warned them against falling into the Janata's way. But in all surety one purpose was served by propaganda through the 'Janata.' The Earthquake Relief Debt of Rs. 29 lakhs was cancelled, but unfortunately the people were least benefitted as was already mentioned.

While Patna was becoming the venue of the anti-Rana agitation through its press, and the Nepal Government had been casting its watchful eyes of vengeance on many promising youngmen reading in the colleges there, Shukraraj Shastri had prepared himself to defy the hateful ban on religious lectures. One evening, in December 1938 he openly gave a learned discourse on Bhagvad Gita in Kathmandu, for which he was arrested and convicted to 6 years R. I. It is said that the Gita Satyagraha initiated by Shukraraj proved a lonely venture, because the associates who were to follow him according to schedule lost courage to act as soon as the nature of consequences drove clear to them.

Towards the end of 1939 some Nepalese youngmen attempted to see certain prominent Congress leaders in Banaras in order to acquaint them with our problems, but for want of time they could not afford to listen to the Nepalese in detail and at length an instance of the indifference with which the political leaders of India treated Nepal. Again on the eve of the Ramgarh Congress the Nepalese, through one Indian leader, had tried to bring the question of Nepal before the Congress but without any success. It was really astonishing that the Congress did not at all concern itself with the tragic conditions of Nepal, while it passed

resolutions on affairs in Spain and China, though the Nepalese seem to be very hard hit and were the people to deserve their sympathy and perhaps who alone were likely to be helped if a move by the Congress was made in this direction, for whatever the Congress might do or say on questions of Spain and China that had very little acceptance abroad. In the absence of attention by the leaders, Nepal could not appear in the agenda, and their efforts bore no fruit as also many interested leftist leaders were arrested a month before and the 'Janata' had ceased its publication.

The Praja Parishad, thereafter, transferred its centre from Patna to Kathmandu. One remarkable character of the activities was its association with the young King of Nepal, who was generally regarded as the inspirer of the movement. His patronage was a great source of financial strength to those in the field, while his readiness to transfer all powers in the hands of the people was a great inspiration to all the workers. The King is, at present, nearly forty-six years of age and very much solicitous of the welfare of his people.

It may be again noted here that as soon as the King comes of age, he has been found dreaming of restoration and action against the usurper Rana family.

Leaflets were distributed thrice all over the country from July to September (1940) demanding political reforms for the people. A warning was given to the Ranas to end their evil ways lest a belated awakening be detrimental to their safety. The people were asked to be alive to the situation and understand

their problem. In the last pamphlet an open Satyagraha was announced. It has been often said that the leaflets were declarations to revolt, and the Praja Parishad workers indirectly incited the people to violent actions. To the Ranas who demur to a word of suggestion from a commoner, every attempt to bring about public consciousness seems attended with violence, even Gandhiji's Satyagraha was violence and he was looked upon as a monster. But judged by neutral observers the language in the leaflets was not so immoderate as it was made out.

After the second pamphlet was distributed, the Ranas offered a prize of Rs. 5,000 for the discovery of the existence of the Praja Parishad. For two months the award hung on the notice board, but no approver and no tracer came out. To the organisation this was a great credit, for it was unexpected that at its infancy the Praja Parishad commanded such faithfulness and loyalty of its members, where betrayal was ruled out, more so in view of the Praja Parishad being mainly manned by young men who could not claim maturity and experience of old age. But youth is always an embodiment of truth and honour and the Nepalese youth, though circumstantially the very opposite was not the exception.

The leaflets attracted increasingly popular interest in the activities of the Praja Parishad, the all round result of which was that the people of the Nepal valley were awakened from slumber. Everywhere, in bedside and street corners, their talk centred on the Praja

Parishad and its activities. The Ranas had forfeited the confidence of the people by various sins of omission and commission and now came to be regarded as tyrants who crushed their rights. A rumour was afloat that the Praja Parishad would covertly attempt to overthrow the regime by violence. It was difficult to say what truth lay in this rumour, for the Praja Parishad was underground. But the rumour was sufficient to keep the Ranas on the alert. Although they never dreaded public revolt, for that was impossible under the circumstances, they suspected that the Praja Parishad was attracting some recalcitrant members of the Rana family. Besides, there was H. M. associated, which they had strongly suspected from the very outset. This led them to display a mass display of artillery on a particular festive occasion, by which they meant to cow down their opponents.

But all these measures failed to secure the clue as to their whereabouts and to terrorise the patriots into voluntary surrender. Sometime later, as the Praja Parishad workers were not to be discovered, an indiscriminate and large scale arrest took place. All the educated young men suspected of progressive views were brought to concentration camps on mere suspicion. Their houses were searched, walls were demolished and floors were unearthed. In this search they obtained at one place a list containing the names of the Praja Parishad workers. All this was done within a week in the last week of October, 1940. The Ranas were elated with joy to find that the conspiracy had not extended to the aristocracy.

Besides a dozen members of the Praja Parishad, many other young men were arrested. The policy was to intimidate all. Almost all those were arrested, who betrayed the least sign of independent spirit and of an attitude of departure from the usual convention. People who had formed the habit of reading newspapers, people who were suspected to be holding atheistic views, people who talked of Indian politics, people who openly revered Mahatma Gandhi, people who were hesitant at saluting the Rana's children, all fell prey to. There were also those who were likely to shine in life, young and budding poets and dramatists, authors and artists, journalists and writers who were trapped. The very idea of concerted action was to die out. Therefore, even those people were arrested, who in the past in their student life had joined some sort of academic associations in British India. Even a past membership of a recreation club was to be punished. A doctor was severely thrashed on this account. Three youngsters who had tried to control a crowd in a temple on a festive occasion some two years back were imprisoned on the alleged attempt to set up a Seva Samiti. Two athletes who had obtained training in British India were called to prison. All private primary schools, and there were only two, were closed and their staff arrested. A collegian who wrote some lines in his essay in praise of patriotism was also thrown in the cell. He was later released after serving four years in the prison in a very serious condition of illness to die the next morning he joined his father. There were arrests in India also where, however, the British authorities released them

for lack of incriminating evidence. The President of the Praja Parishad, Tanka Prasad, who was then at Banaras, was deceived by false information of the serious illness of his father into coming to the frontier and was kidnapped to the breach of international law from Nepal reached Jaynagar Railway Station. Tanka Prasad is now serving life imprisonment and to his credit, let it be said that he has up till now resisted all temptations and privations, while some of his comrades are out on giving undertaking of good behaviour.

The Ranas sat in judgment upon these persons. The King was brought to trial and was asked to own the crime under threats. He was declared unfit for the throne and there was a proposal to replace him by his eldest son. The latter, however, would not agree, and there was the probability of public revolt on the question of royal dismissal, which caused the Rana clique to change their mind and to ultimately give up this proposal. The King throughout the trial assumed a dignified calmness and did neither protest nor plead guilty. But he was afraid to do anything more in respect of the charge. He did not even interfere or raise his voice of protests against the torture inflicted on his co-workers who were now mercilessly lashed. All sorts of coercion were applied in the presence of the King just to terrify him.

After three months the sentence was delivered. There in British India the Hindi Daily 'Aj' of Banaras in two leaders criticised the Rana Government for its arbitrary action. Otherwise no information was avail-

able. A few people who escaped to the frontier were too cowardly to attempt to give information. Meanwhile tragic events were occurring in all rapidity inside the country. The sentences meted out to the arrested persons were variably as follows ; death for seven, life imprisonment for six, twenty years for five, twelve years for six, and six years for four. Out of the seven sentenced to death three escaped penalty, two being Brahmans, Tanka Prasad and Ram Hari. According to Hindu Law, Brahmans can not be sentenced to death, and one, Suba Dharmanarayan, having been awarded commutation by the mercy of the Prime Minister. The two Brahmans were expelled from caste and had their sacred threads torn off. And the rest were released.

It was heard from reliable sources that Chandra Shumsher's sons led by Mohan Shumsher were mainly instrumental to bring about the severe punishment on the accused political workers. A speech delivered in camera by General Mohan purports to give expression to his hope of an undisturbed rule in the event of a harsh action by the Government. He said that this ensured the Rana rule for another hundred years.

The sentence was carried out in the last week of January, 1940, at a time when the independence week was celebrated in British India. In the early hours of 26th January Shukraraj and Dharma Bhakta were hanged, and after 48 hours the rest two Gangalal and Dasrath Chand were shot dead. One of the hanged Pt. Shukraraj who was earlier convicted of Arya Samajist activity was sentenced to death for trying to propagate the principles

of Swami Dayanand. He was interned as a sequel to having met Gandhiji. His complicity in the activities of the Parishad was doubtful as he was carefully watched by the Nepal Government in prison. In fact, he had denied the guilt in a most dignified and noble manner, though it was not heeded. One of those who were shot dead, Dasarath Chand, happened to be a British subject having been residing in Udaipur for three generations.

Those who were otherwise convicted were thrown into underground cells. They were denied the least amenity of human existence, granted to such prisoners in British India. Some of them are still being kept isolated from each other and for years from their home and relatives. They are given worst kind of shelter and food and treatment spared to even habitual criminals. Thank to God that they are living !

All the four dead bodies were exhibited to the public for twenty-four hours. At the back and in the breast of the dead bodies posters were attached, which warned the public against such actions in future. It was a ghastly sight. People flocked in thousands to witness the scene, but everybody stood in tears. The silent murmur broke through certain breasts and there was a loud cry, some fainted. It seemed as though there was going to be a public revolt. But death : there was a violent jerk. And thus the incident ended. But it left the entire population of Nepal very much aggrieved and totally sullen against the regime.

Before the execution was done a Durbar was held.

The noblemen were invited to give their opinion. None, however, spoke. The Premier in his speech accused those involved of sabotage and violence. Lest it may be taken as a Congressite movement, he brought Gandhiji's name to bear on the decision. About Gandhiji he said, that the Indian leader had condemned the Praja Parishad in set terms and definitely declined to have anything to do with it in view of the Parishad's activities against the only Hindu Ruler *i.e.*, himself.

The agitation died an untimely death, and as a result many are still suffering in prison. A few had escaped to India, but for long were too cowed down by fear of being surrendered to the Ranas to move any further in their quest of relief. At the time the Indian public did not know and probably had felt little active sympathy for our cause. The Napalese who are at present living in British India are mostly of menial class and accordingly were naturally not in a position to take up the thread at that time. Some young exiles were so much overtaken by penury that they had been simply murmuring. Until, therefore, the Japanese War started in Asia nothing much substantial was done except biding time, and be ready to catch the same by the forelock if at all it was presented.

But the Praja Parishad had achieved one unique success, which produced a very salutary effect on the mass of the people seeking to rise against the tyrant rulers. It brought home to them the need of a consolidated fight which was a link in the series of united

effort made so far, but because of the modern method of creating public opinion it adopted was also a healthy departure from the previous line of action. The Praja Parishad for the first time had made an attempt on modern lines to work out the emancipation of the people. Whatever might have been the defects in other respects, it is an undeniable fact that as a political organisation working through a non-conspiratorial channel though with very infancy the Parishad was the pioneer in the field.

The King's association with the activities of the Parishad, if not entirely a new feature of such moves, reflected the growing feeling of oneness which the Ruler under circumstances of common suffering shared by himself entertained as a citizen of his country. By his willingness to abdicate in favour of the people, he had set an example which dispels any doubt about his attitude towards the democratic movement in his country.

In another way the exhibition of dead-bodies which the Rana rulers presented to the people with a view to terrorise them to eternal submission had indirectly produced a contrary result as the cruel act had convulsed them to the lowest depth. The very fact of punishment to say the least was a rude reminder to any one witnessing the scene that all was not well in the system of Government that ruled over them.

1942 AND AFTER

With War tension growing in India with the approach of the battle ground to the border of the Sub-continent, the Government of India thought it necessary to watch the activities of certain Nepalese young men residing in different parts of India and for that purpose created an intelligence machinery attached to the Central Bureau.

During the early phase of the Japanese War, some Gorkha battalions had deserted the British to join the enemy, which increased the alertness of the British Government in India to intensify their watchfulness against recurrence of similar troubles in other theatres of war, more particularly in the Assam-Burma front.

The problem was to keep watch over the movements of those youngmen who were suspected of anti-British nationalist activities. Some of these happened to be connected with the liberation movement in Nepal. From my personal knowledge I can say that there was a secret preparation in progress to effect grouping together of all democratic elements in the emigrant Nepalese in order to take full advantage of the situation then rapidly, but unconsciously emerging out of the threatened invasion to India by the Japanese. As the British sustained defeats after defeats, the more informed of the Nepalese thought that in the event of the British Empire collapsing the Rana family would have to follow suit. This had sent a new wave of enthusiasm and hope amongst a people who even feared

to dream of emancipation. It was not surely a pro-Japanese feeling, but the mere prospect of relief from the burden of a century old oppression had fired their imagination. So a large number of them had joined the Indian Congress when it embarked on the fateful campaign of liberation in August 1942.

The Indian Officers-in-charge of Nepal affairs were given sweeping power, which enabled them to arrest and detain any Nepalese they chose. Indeed they utilised the same in sheer vindictive spirit to please the Ally Ranas of the Empire. Thus a period of harassment and terrorisation followed the constitution of the special intelligence machinery. Although those arrested during early months of the Great Indian Rebellion of 1942 were not many, some 25 arrests were reported, yet the Nepalese residents in U. P., Bihar and Bengal lived in terror of victimisation as long as the tension on account of the war did not ease.

On charge of actively participating in the 1942 Movement the author of this document (D. R. Regmi) was arrested in September of that year along with a few comrades of his at Banaras. This was the beginning of a three year period of suffering which he and his comrades underwent for no other fault of theirs than wishing well of their people. The British authorities were worked up to believe that these persons had hatched up a conspiracy against the Ranas. All sorts of fantastic allegations were made, from those of Japanese association to that of conspiring to overthrow the Government of Nepal and the Gorkha Personnel of

the Indian army against the British. The Rana Premier Juddha Shumsher demanded surrender of the accused after making it sure that extradition was legally possible and two of us, myself and S. P. Upadhyya, another person who was an Inspector of Schools, in Kathmandu, previous to his arrest, were to be handed over to the Nepal Government, which, however, did not materialise due to my serious illness. The British authorities could not certainly extradite a man who was hovering between life and death. We were released only after the Japanese had surrendered to the Allies.

The British Indian C. I. D. had shown unparalleled dishonesty and faithlessness in dealing with us. Their whole device was to deliver us into the hands of the Nepal police. We were denied the most elementary facility of defence, which is provided by law in India. Another dastardly outrage they committed on the right of an accused under surrender orders was the fact of extradition effected in the case of Agni Prasad and his two brothers. These people had been arrested to be used as approvers in our case, which they had refused to be even in the face of persistent threats and cajolery. They were set free at Kathmandu after eight months of detention in the jail. Another person Kharidar K. P. Koirala, who was taken to Kathmandu from Biratanagar in the Nepalese Terai, died a captive towards the end of 1944.

In October 1945, two months before his retirement, Juddha Shumsher opened the prison gate to such of

those political prisoners who gave the Government a satisfactory guarantee of good behaviour. Tanka Prasad, Ramhari, Chuda Prasad and Govind Prasad refused to give undertaking, and found the gate closed for them, and are still being detained.

During the War the people suffered much on account of the highly soaring prices of articles of day-to-day consumption, and even the quota of cloth granted by the Government of India being privately disposed off by the Secretary General for obvious reasons, a large number of them had to go naked. Still the Ruler sat complacent. He could afford to order diversion of grain supply to India at the request of Lord Wavell, but nothing was done to feed his own starving subjects.

In December 1945, Juddha Shumsher having resigned, Padma Shumsher, his nephew, occupied the office and with him the Premiership had descended to the third generation of Jung Bahadur. Padma Shumsher is the eldest and only legitimate son of the late Prime Minister Bhim Shumsher.

Juddha Shumsher's resignation was an unprecedented event in the history of Nepal. No Prime Minister ever tendered resignation voluntarily as he did. It was a unique case almost without a parallel for Nepal. The actual cause that prompted the act of resignation remains still an unrevealed affair. There is, however, nothing to doubt about its character as a resignation tendered without external pressure. It is said that Juddha's mother had made a foreboding that

he would not live to die a natural death if he continued to remain in power upto an advanced age. Precedence was not wanting. It is much probable that superstitious, as he was, Juddha had acted on his mother's warning. During the last few years of his career as the Premier he had not found the job smooth. Discontent inspired by ambition was a too unnoticeable expression in the usually negligent nephews of his. His own sons proved unequal to the great responsibility, because of too many shortcomings that were least wanted of the persons standing as props to the Prime Minister. It was, therefore, natural that he smacked of danger from the deep-seated rivalry that was nurtured in these conditions. By resignation Juddha was fated to be blessed with the quiet that ensured his life, and relieved him of the anxiety and risk that form the eternal company of a Rana Prime Minister.

But the choice of the next incumbent was a matter that worried him for a long time. Padma Shumsher was too exposed for his liberal sentiments to be easily accommodated. Eaves droppers of the Palace even reported that he was on the point of being superseded when Juddha's personal concern for him had turned the situation to his advantage. Juddha gave his verdict in favour of Padma Shumsher on the ground that he was the rightful heir. The arrangement by which his son Bahadur continued to work as the Secretary-General also was retained to provide to Padma a sane and helpful counsel. His insistence on this arrangement is interpreted to have been actuated by a motive to see his own eldest son as the heir to Padma Shumsher.

People say that the latter had to give a solemn pledge to that effect, while Juddha was formally tendering resignation. It was, however, the irony of fate that the future wrought out a course entirely unwilled by the retiring Prime Minister—Bahadur could not act up to the scheme of his father and stick to the job he was allotted.

Kaleidoscopic changes had taken place in India since the middle of 1945. The Congress Ministries were restored within a year of the release of leaders, and on the 2nd of September, 1946, an interim National Government with Congress majority took power from the Viceroy's Executive Council.

The Nepalese exiles in India found themselves in a more propitious atmosphere now that the restriction on their activities exercised by the British authorities could be ignored in view of the real power of Government being vested in the Congress Ministries which did not feel obliged now as did the British to suppress the agitation carried against the Rana rulers. This was reflected immediately after the setting up of the Interim Popular Government at the Centre, when the All India Nepalese Congress was started with the old revolutionary Subba Debi Prasad as its President.

Earlier in the year the Premier Rana Padma had announced his desire to frame a scheme of reforms with a view to associate the people with the administration. He repeated the same at the end of the year and in a convention of Elders called by him to sound popular feeling on the subject he had declared himself in

favour of a full democratic rule to be achieved step by step in stages of regular and gradual devolution.

But this turned out a complete rebuff, as the Premier had equally solicitous under pressure of the reactionery clique to keep intact the privileges of his family, and to say the least, he was not to be permitted to initiate the process of rapid liquidation of the feudal structure centred in his family, which stood totally condemned from a democratic point of view.

In February 1947, he was compelled to stop the innocent activity of some young men who had volunteered to serve the Indian visitors during the Shivaratri festival, and sent to prison four of them — Gopal Rimal, Daman Tuladhar and two others on charge of conducting anti untouchability propaganda in religious congregations. The only thing Padma could do in this respect was to award comparatively lenient punishment.

The reactionery clique under Mohan Shumsher had got alert. Padma's utterances were warning to them that a new era of progress and reforms was dawning on Nepal. This they could not afford to suffer for fear of losing their high stake. His earlier actions in withdrawing Governmental restrictions and floating of industrial enterprises were already being resented. Now it was their unhappy lot to hear democratic ideas preached and lectured from the pulpit of the Lion Guarded Palace. Padma Shumsher always addressed himself as the servant of the people before popular gatherings, which sent a piercing arrow into their hearts as if they had been themselves humbled and

degraded to accept that status. It was no wonder that they brought their influence to bear on him, and pulled his legs as soon as the danger from such a situation seemed to assume a threatening proportion. They could not remain mute when Padma was sowing the seed of destruction of the system that gave them their whole life and sustenance.

Thencefrom January to June 1947 there were a few more incidents in the Nepalese territory, notable from our point of view, which had followed one after the other in an unbroken series since the emergence of the Nepali National Congress at Calcutta.

This was a body founded as a successor to Praja Parishad by efforts of the exiles and absorbed the earlier organisation started from Banaras. Dr. Lohia, of the Indian Socialist Party, was one of the few Indian leaders, who helped the birth and growth of this organisation by offering active sympathy. His statement on Nepal affairs, first of the kind to be made by an Indian leader, depicting a tale of horror and tyranny at the hands of the autocrats issued in early February that year, created sensation in India.

Although the initial composition of the organisation was characterised by numerical paucity and its leadership vested in college students reading in India, it did some work as to propagate democratic ideas amongst a section of the Nepalese emigrants. A few of its members, who happened to be also members of the Indian Socialist Party, had also taken part in the labour strike in the Jute Mill areas in Biratnagar-set up

in the early years of war. This strike was launched by Manmohan Adhikari who was a member of the Communist Party of India. The Purnea (Bihar) Socialist Party, which also intervened of behalf of the labourers in the dispute between the Marwari management and the labour hands on the question of wage increment sent some of its members to assist the Nepalese leaders of the strike. The Biratnagar Mill Area in the Nepal Terai, only a few yards close to the Indian border, has wholly Indian labour population and 50% of Indian capital is invested there. The strike could not be a success as the Government hurled severe measures of repression.

Communist Manmohan Adhikari, Socialists—Koirala, Narshingh Prasad, and a few others—all of them belonging to Indian parties were arrested, and later on released after due admonition. The single communist member and Yuvaraj Adhikari, Tarini and his brother were detained in prison on account of their Nepalese nationality for about two and, a half years.

The aftermath of the strike saw a Satyagraha campaign started next month and continued for a short duration of two fortnights, which threw into prison some thirty people, all of whom are still undergoing indefinite detention.

Individual civil disobedience was confined to a few centres in the Terai where the Satyagrahis entered the forbidden land from the Indian border where they enjoyed absolute freedom of organisation.

In Kathmandu, where since the Praja Parishad

days certain underground youth parties were conducting activities, however, restricted and light, the movement took the shape of processions which on three occasions paraded the streets in defiance of the century old prohibitory orders shouting anti-Rana and pro-Padma Shumsher slogans. Tank Bilas, Amir Bahadur, Tilak Raj Shahi and Puspapal, all members of the underground groups, who had organised the procession, were some of those detained in that connection.

An unusual feature of the procession was the participation by some five girls, who had joined their fellow workers breaking all rules of convention and social barrier.

This was followed by strikes in some Pathsalas and Government hospitals, where, of course, the issue involved had nothing to do with politics.

All through these happenings the Prime Minister by his soft utterance and professions of democratic ideas appeared to have encouraged the agitation. In some cases his intervention was successfully applied to prevent arrest. While this earned for him the reputation of a democrat in the public eye, he grew unpopular with his kinsmen who suspected a foul game in his move attributing his democratic professions to a desire on his part to expose Mohan Shumsher and his brothers to public contempt, as the latter were believed to have opposed his plan of democratic reforms and advised rigorous measures to counteract the anti-Rana agitation then just in start.

It was strongly rumoured that Padma Shumsher

was the sole hand behind the Satyagraha and he was accused in a general meeting of his kinsmen of having used the patriotic youngmen against his rivals.

Let it be noted here that His Highness Padma had to wage a single-handed fight in all these matters. We saw how as soon as he declared himself in favour of constitutional rule, he was subjected to undue pressure to change his intention and break his earlier promises for reforms. The whole aristocracy was taking the side of his cousins who dominated the scene, because of wealth and power. Numerically they were stronger and their resources were immense. In all points of vantage they were safely seated because of hereditary rights, and nothing could be done without their co-operation.

Sometime it is argued that the Prime Minister of Nepal wielding singly the most absolute power has only to give evidence of his weakness if he bows to the inevitability to desist from action on account of opposition. That may be true in other cases but Padma was disadvantageously placed as against the opposition and in no case could use his power to his liking, because that would have meant inviting a family feud, and probably causing bloodshed where his own safety lay exposed.

Padma had tried to counteract the influence of the opposition by reintroducing his own step-brothers of the B & C Sections into the palace. But that was looked upon distrustfully by the other section from the very beginning and it had also put them on guard as

to the likely culmination of the process which they thought may even give the recalled ones permanent ascendancy in the future scheme of things. Had he proceeded cautiously and silently and made a wise selection of his counsellors Padma would have played a very important role as events then pointed to. But he bungled the whole issue by inadvertent pronouncements and by reposing confidence on those who betrayed him at a critical moment.

Some people say that the direct cause of the failure was the deep-seated rivalry between his own son and a C class nephew of his, who, because of high attainments claimed the best attention from the Prime Minister. These two fellows often quarrelled on petty issues and debates became so noisy that they echoed and re-echoed to reverberate in the palace to the hearing of all and sundry so that the most confidential secrets of the group ran very frequently the risk of exposure. But most of all Padma seems to have failed to appease Bahadur Shumsher who having joined the opponent group turned the scale definitely against the Prime Minister. The presence of the same educated nephew absorbing all attention of the Prime Minister seems to have aroused in Bahadur too a feeling that his position was not at all safe in this camp.

It may not be irrelevant to mention here that the same people who betrayed Padma Shumsher are now busy organising a democratic front in India wearing patriotic garb and are fleecing the exiles by fresh promises and playing at this time also on their ambition in a shame-faced manner.

Bahadur Shumsher resigned his job of the Secretary General in June 1947, but resigning he left the Prime Minister completely to the mercy of the group that opposed him at every step. The events that followed were too discouraging to goad him on to further action and when frightened the exiles made exit to India, even that single-handed struggle for political reforms slackened to give in at last to the pressure exercised by the reactionary clique who had their way at the time the Reforms Committee was announced. Without support and encouraging words of counsellors as he then stood Padma had no other course save to allow himself to be guided by them so that his position was no better than that of a shadow Prime Minister. Even that was grudged to him by his opponents after sometime and he had to suffer Mohan Shumsher to act for him when the latter imposed himself on the administration as the real ruler doing as he pleased without reference to the man in the office. And with the title of the Maharaja and Premier retained to adorn himself Padma had found everything else gone out of his hand.

The Maharaja announced the formation of a Reforms Committee in June, and invited two constitutional experts from India Babu Sri Prakash and Dr. Ramanugraha Sinha to advise him on the question of reforms. A special feature of the Committee was the absence of popular representatives in it, all of whose members were the die-hard Ranas, and their staunch henchmen. It bore the stamp of the domination the reactionary clique had attained in the affairs of the

Government, which had then passed out of the hands of the Maharaja.

At the time the Indian experts reached Kathmandu the Maharaja staged a show of municipal election, in the course of which public meetings were allowed as part of the campaign. It was then an open secret that Padma Shumsher had allowed open meetings on his own responsibility against the wishes of his cousins in order to examine the nature and extent of public awakening. But he had felt a great disappointment as public response was very poor.

While the Reforms Committee was sitting in its task of constitution making the Nepalese in India and Nepal observed in response to the call of the Nepali National Congress the Indian Independence Day and the Political Prisoners Day, which had again sent a stir throughout the valley, and then, too, some arrests were made. One of the detenus Tulsimehar Srestha was let off after six months. Since July again the Congress was reconstructed to include some of the very able and sincere patriots who, for some reasons, would not till then associate actively with the inexperienced and irresponsible elements which were so far supposed to guide the movement from within. In July the first election was held, and a new executive was formed.

The First President of the Nepali National Congress launched a novel programme of reconstruction and consolidation with a view to build and strengthen the organisation which was lacking in the much advertised

Nepali National Congress. Under him the Working Committee set up underground branches in the interior of Nepal and also extended its platform to Darjeeling and Assam where a large number of Nepalese emigrants have settled down. The goal was now more sharply defined with a manifesto of the party published, which declared the attainment of a responsible system of Government under the ægis of the King as the immediate objective. The confusion as to the status of Nepal arising out of the regular attendance by some socialist leaders in the deliberation of the Nepali Congress was also cleared up by means of an emphatic denial issued by the President that there was no intention to change Nepal's independent status and the Nepalese democratic movement will, in no case, be led by the non-Nepalese.

The last pronouncement was very essential in view of the growing inroad the S. P. I. made into the ranks of the party with the help of some emigrant socialists who only encouraged partisan spirit by activities conducted and designed to create confidence in Dr. Lohia and S. P. I. rather than in the Nepali Congress and its leadership vested in the Nepalese.

With only a short career behind itself which does not go beyond ten years but one full of tremendous odds and sacrifices, the Nepalese democratic struggle under the present leadership constitutes an embodiment of popular aspiration for emancipation and advancement though its potentialities in the present condition of stalemate born out of so many contrary forces were destined to remain unexploited.

Similarly the review of events and personal sacrifices we have just sketched may not be so thrilling as similar record of revolutionary struggle elsewhere, but there is no doubt that these sufficiently portray the under-current of resistance forces active in the Rana dominated Nepal.

It also shows how from one stage to another since 1846 the year of Rana ascendancy the content of opposition has expanded, and the continuity of democratic upsurge is steadily maintained.

We find in the review that an unbroken record of action against the Rana Raj has been maintained since its very inception, and this was the sure indicator of the political consciousness that has seized a section of the traditionally slumbering populace.

It took about six months for the Reforms Committee to finish its labours, but by the time the reforms were given final shape, it was realised that these had passed through very many stages of delays and obstructions on the intervention of the reactionary group of the Rana family, and it turned out the proverbial case of a rat out of a mountain of labour. The Prime Minister had been repeatedly advised by his friends in and outside Nepal to ignore the threats and entreaties of his diehard brothers, but placed as he was between the devils of his conservative brothers and the dead sea of uncertain popular support he could not exert himself to over-riding the decision the latter had reached as to the nature and extent of political reforms, which were announced in the last week of

January. With all the goodwill at his heart Padma had failed miserably to do anything beneficial for the cause of the people.

THE NEPAL REFORMS : A CRITICAL SURVEY

An enquiry into the scheme of reforms as laid down in the enactment will leave one in no doubt as to the state of affairs coming after its enforcement, which will not be any less different from the present inhuman condition under the absolutist regime of the Rana family. Although the Ruler has expressed pious sentiments in regard to the problems of mass uplift and has talked copiously about their right to moral and material advancement through state aid, sentiments which were also expressed by his predecessors, time and again, there is absolutely no reason to believe that anything substantial could be done in near future to redress the suffering of the people in view of the fact that the present administrative structure which is deriving its authority and sustenance from the prerogatives attached to the Rana family, has undergone little change. The evils which are affecting the main spring of our life are due to the peculiar type of political machinery which functions for the furtherance of the interest of one family at the cost of the whole nation. Unless and until the state machinery ceases to be in the exclusive possession of this family the question of economic and political progress of the country shall ever remain unsolved. In the present Constitutional Act, however, not only terms like

responsible Government and democracy do not find mention but also the special privileges of the Rana family have been duly safe-guarded. In the preamble it is laid down that the order of succession to the High Office of the Prime Minister the Maharaja as also of the King will be governed as hitherto by traditions, customs and usages now prevailing, and the present rule of succession will ever remain immutable. This means that the system of hereditary functionaries rising in succession to the most exalted dignity of the *de facto* ruler of the country has been preserved intact to the advantage of the family in power. In its outer garb the enactment may not appear so objectionable, but if we are to know that in Nepal almost all the high ranks in the Army and Civil departments are occupied by members of the Rana family according to their place in the role of succession, the underlying motive of those who formulated the scheme will not be misunderstood. How cleverly they have manipulated things will be evident from the fact that the Act does not even put a system of responsible Government as a distant goal and thus the hold of the Rana family over the country and its people remains as complete and rigid as before. For the same reason civil liberty said to have been granted to the people loses its meaning. How can there be a state of freedom if the fetters binding the people with various usages and practices which have in the circumstances obtained the validity of Law are not removed? But the Reforms Act does not only tolerate the preservation of the special position of the Rana family in the society, but the same by a

special provision of law definitely protects it, while the people are made to continue to suffer from various disabilities. The same enactment envisages numerous other limitations imposed at the sweet will of the Premier, which will reduce civil liberty to an absurdity. The Act also gives the power to H. H. the Premier to command absolute loyalty of the people to himself and his family under all circumstances.

Thus only a political party whose ideal and aspiration do not in any way run counter to the interest of the Rana family shall be allowed to conduct its activities within the borders of Nepal. The control of administration will be entirely in the hands of the Maharaja Premier as at present and the Ministry to be constituted under the Reforms Act consisting of two popular ministers besides those nominated will be a pure and simple advisory body to assist him in carrying out the day-to-day administration of the realm. But even these two ministers shall be dismissed at his discretion.

The village administration will be carried by Panchayats elected on adult franchise, but the powers delegated to them are confined to the sphere of social services and at the same time they will have always to look to the Rana Premier for financial support.

The Central Legislature has been shaped with a view to make it subservient and play a secondary role to the dictates of the Rana family. While the upper house of 30 senators is entirely a nominated body, the lower chamber is also to contain two nominated

members out of every five, the total number being put between 60 and 70. By nominating the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the lower chamber and the Vice-President of the upper chamber the Maharaja Premier will also control the business of the house. The C-in-C will be the *ex-officio* Chairman of the upper house which will be designated as Rashtra Sabha. Members of the Legislative Assembly have not been given the right of interpellations according as they like. They will not have the sort of freedom of speech which is enjoyed in other countries by their counterparts on the floor of the house. They will have to observe the same rules of restriction on liberty as will obtain outside the house. At the same time the house will not debate anything which will affect the Royal privileges and dignity of the Rana family.

The house and the Ministry shall have no power with regard to the activity of the Finance Department and the Auditor General who will be responsible to the Maharaja Premier will be appointed by him. The budget will be prepared and presented at his discretion.

The worst feature of the scheme is the power it confers on the Maharaja to suspent the operation of the constitution when he thinks it essential for the governance of the country. The clause has been probably adopted at the suggestion of General Mohan Shumsher, who now after the resignation of Maharaja Padma Shumsher, threatens to rule the country without any constitution. A few words more about the proclaimed reforms. It was learnt that before it saw the light

of announcement, the Reforms Act was placed before Winston Churchill, England's War Time Premier, who had advised piecemeal reforms as the only way to delay the triumph of democratic forces in Nepal.

This farce of a constitution was given out with tumultuous uproar as a landmark in the history of modern Nepal to inaugurate a new era of democracy. It was hailed with equal gusto by certain flatterers as a corresponding measure in line with the Montagu Chelmsford Reform, and its sponsors were credited with singular large heartedness for having introduced at the very initial stage with one stroke of pen a revolutionary measure of reforms that had come to be enjoyed by India in so many stages of gradual progress after nearly thirty years of incessant agitation. Moderate opinion in India took it as a compromise solution which had balanced the novel democratic trends of life with the traditional institution of family oligarchy keeping intact the king and the divine ruling family of the Ranas. But the Reforms Act as it finally emerged on the statute book had falsified the most moderate pretence to democracy in an attempt to compromise its principles with the most archaic feudal interests as they thrived under the protective wing of the Rana regime. The enactment as might be clear from the afore delineated analysis was made in a manner so as to enable the medieval rulers to make a show of democratic rule without conceding anything substantial to the demands of the people. It was, no doubt, the work of a highly cunning mind which was bent on continuing the present structure intact, and aimed at window

dressing so far as the real question of democratic administration was concerned, and the draft it worked out bore every stamp of the disinclination on the part of the ruling family to part with their privileges. Hypocrisy could not have gone further and worn a better deceiving mask. The reforms announced did not even envisage a patch work of liberal changes in the direction, while they bore the nomenclature of popular institutions and similar other high sounding usages and practices. They had not altered the feudal structure reared on archaic conditions, outdated and outmoded even to the extent of effecting a one per cent. change, while they had served the purpose of the rulers who will pass as liberal administrators unless fully exposed as to their very reactionary mental frame up and feudal outlook. The Reforms Act in short is a fraud on democracy. Only when one shuts his eyes to the pitiable condition of the country, and the restrictions under which the reforms have to operate, he will not find fault with the rulers who will then applaud their own efforts to have successfully thrown dust into the eyes of such an individual. Truly speaking except the name 'reform' there is nothing pointing to a reformed structure according to the constitution promulgated by the Ranas.

Yet the very name of a constitutional Government howsoever operating within a tight frame-work of calculated restrictions strikes terror in the heart of the Ranas, and the Reforms Act is an eye-sore to the men in power. The fact that a Reforms Act has been placed on the statute book is giving them sufficient headache.

The experts who went to Kathmandu to draft the enactment were often exasperated by the almost frantic intolerance of the Kathmandu snobs who hated the very idea of sitting round a table with popular ministers as envisaged under the Act. A cousin of Padma Shumsher had challenged the courtiers to come forward and claim equal status with him, if they could and he refused to yield an inch on the point of allowing rights of equality to his people. One difficulty baffling solution was posed in course of the proposal to set up village self-government units on the basis of universal franchise. The Rana rulers opposed the system of universal franchise as that would enable the tagrag and bobtail of the society to claim their seats along with the blue blooded men holding reins of administration. This particular provision had to be thrust on the dissentients with an assurance that the enactment incorporated counteracting measures, but petty snobbery was no where in sharp display as in the discussion of the clause incorporating this provision. If only to annul this type of provisions the Rana rulers were surreptitiously attempting to abrogate the enactment and throw it into the scrap heap of the past. That they did fulfil their desire later on reflected the defeat of Padma Shumsher who had proceeded on the course of action against the consent of the diehard cousins. But that it stood in the statute book speaks copiously of the admirable efforts of the Premier and is his triumph. Padma Shumsher can at least enjoy the satisfaction that he gave a written constitution to a country which is being ruled in a medieval fashion.

without any written constitution whatsoever. Padma Shumsher must get credit for introducing ideas of civil liberty, popular ministry, independent courts in the Reforms Act,—all exalted notions belonging to democratic constitution, which though nullified and circumscribed by numerous restrictions of the same Act have stood as factors at the present moment to stir public feeling on the issue of democracy even for reasons of their theoretical existence, because the other party has opposed tooth and nail the implementation of the measures enacted. It could be termed an example of a virtual imposition to have set up these on the drafts which the Maharaja's uncompromising cousins were not able to turn down having once agreed to the proposal. This alone has placed them in an awkward position between two devious attitudes. Today they are finding it extremely difficult to shelve the reform announced only for the reason that they have put in their signatures, and for the fear that they might earn the stigma of a breach of faith.

It was no ordinary concession they were asked to part with when their signatures were applied to a document which talked of certain fine democratic sentiments. Although on a practical view of things they have nothing to lose, but the mere use of words smacking of democratic changes in the country where naked feudalism dwells was enough to embarrass the reactionary clique. So they fumed and fretted. I am reminded of a particular incident in this connection. I have it from a reliable source that Padma Shumsher was actually manhandled by a brother of Mohan

Shumsher during a heated debate on the constitutional draft. The reactionary clique seemed unduly exasperated and was cursing the author of the plan of reforms. It did not rest until it wrested preventive clauses from the Maharaja to nullify his pious intentions. About Padma's calm demeanour throughout these parleys, my information is a testimony and the fact that the man who touched the Maharaja's neck in a fit of rage was not even reprimanded but went scot free, not to speak of being shot dead then and there as was the normal practice, proves not only the unbelievably tolerant attitude of Padma Shumsher, but also testifies to his helpless and almost a prisoner-like position at the time when the Reforms Act was being framed.

There is absolutely little good in the Act as it emerged finally. But worse than that all the retrograde features introduced came through the fact of its implementation at the hands of the new ruler who never made a secret of his prejudice against any measure of democratic reforms. The Act with the present limitations would not have fared bad if Padma had been spared to implement it. What matters most in a type of conditions obtaining as in Nepal is the force of awakening, which was to be encouraged and allowed rapid growth by a systematic use of educative democratic methods, like meetings, newspapers and organisational media of consolidation which are granted by the new constitution. The new stage would have been easily reached if free play had been secured for these methods. The forces they would release with these would have assumed formidable proportions

within a short time, and no amount of suppression was availing to undo the effects.

But this was grudged at the very outset to undermine the foundation of the democratic structure that was likely to be raised, though not on a firm basis, with the inauguration of the reforms as laid down in the Act. It was essential for any degree of democratic progress that the limitations, restraining the advance of this progress, were not illiberally enforced. Padma's continuance as the Prime Minister of Nepal might have perhaps endowed the operation of reforms with such facilities as tended to make it smooth and beneficial as a measure of public welfare, which would guarantee the progress expected. The fate of the Reforms Act was doomed as soon as the Premier who gave the constitution made its aftermath an occasion to quit the scene. By forcing him to resign the die hard Ranas had only stemmed the possibility of the rise of a democratic force from within the constitutional innovations which were sure to produce beneficial results in the event of free and untrammelled operation. Padma's subsequent resignation went a great length to enable the dissenters to put off the implementation of reforms to a date of their own choice, which seems ever to belong to a remote future, so that feudalism uncompromising and triumphant rears as yet its ugly head without shame.

That the rulers had turned deaf-ear to the wishes and entreaties of the people is also evidenced from their policy of not releasing a single political prisoner on that occasion.

These so-called reforms were rejected by the Nepali National Congress through a resolution passed in the Banaras Political Conference (21st and 22nd February 1948) which demanded an interim popular Government and a Constituent Assembly to frame the constitution.

The Prime Minister departed for India after the announcement and it was said that he wanted to apprise the political leaders of India about the situation in Nepal, particularly the differences he had with his cousins. Many on his side went even to the extent of forecasting a bloody feud between the two sections of the Rana family. From February to the day in April when his cousin formally occupied the post of the Premier, all sorts of speculation were rife. While some thought that his return to Kathmandu was impossible, others would not discount the possibility under a hard situation. But during the month he was in Delhi, Padma made it clear that he had no intention to go back.

Meanwhile Mohan had shifted to the official residence of the Premier at Sinha Durbar, and it was certainly unusual as no acting Premier till then had occupied the palace. It looked as if Padma had quitted the scene after an agreement that he would resign. But why he took full two months to tender formal resignation is not easily explicable. Perhaps he clung to the hope till the last moment that his cousin would offer himself to give way for fear of his own wide popularity as a liberal ruler, which was likely to arouse public sentiment in the event of unwilling resignation.

The inside story has not yet come to light, but some believe that he would have caused bloodshed by any change of intention at that hour.

Padma Shumsher resigned during the middle of April 1948, and he sent in his resignation from India. An unconfirmed report emanating from quarters close to him says that he resigned under pressure.

While he ruled he had only exhibited lack of strength in his character which he could not otherwise improve in view of the pressure his opponents brought to bear on him in his almost forlorn condition. He was always wavering in decision, and despite his pious sentiments proved himself to the utter failure. His mild nature was itself a great handicap and towards the end of his regime he was being completely overshadowed by his cousins who would not spare him even elementary duties of the Maharaja Prime Minister.

During his tenure of office Padma Shumsher signed a treaty of friendship and commerce with America reported to contain secret clauses granting rights of exploitation of Nepalese agricultural and mineral resources to American capital.

He also helped to arrive at a settlement with free India for the exchange of diplomatic representatives. Since December last the British Legation in Kathmandu has passed into Indian hands and the Indian Embassy is stationed there. To the British Ambassador's lot has fallen the lonely building on the outskirts of the Legation, which is also only temporarily assigned. It is said that with the Residency transferred to Indian

hands, the British representative has lost much of his lustre and brilliance.

Thus two more Powers recognised Nepal as an independent state, which opened a new chapter in the history of the country. The British withdrawal from India again freed Nepal from the many obligations by which it was tied to Britain which controlled in practice the country's foreign policy until the time she remained the mistress of the Indian subcontinent.

Further at the Asian Conference in April 1947 Nepal participated for the first time in a meeting of the Member States of Asia, from which it had been so far consistently kept isolated by British diplomacy. If the change were to be assessed in right perspective, Nepal has now the irrefutable claim to the honour of an independent State. We can without fear of contradiction say that the country has entered a new era of freedom. Had it not been for the same filthy state of affairs obtaining inside the country Nepal would have found before itself tremendous opportunities and scope to advance on the road to new glory and prosperity. But to our extreme sorrow we find neither the will nor the courage in our rulers to embark on the enterprise which time demands for the uplift of the nation. Padma Shumsher, more than any other ruler, is responsible for not utilising them as he shirked the issue without taking the situation seriously. To those who are used to enslavement for personal interest, it does not matter whether the fetters are removed or maintained and the Rana family does not seem to have

viewed the British withdrawal with anything of an ominous event releasing it from the strangle hold.

Towards the end of his regime the negotiation which had begun in early August of 1947 between the Government of Nepal and the Governments of India and Britain as to the distribution of the Gorkha personnel of the Indian Army was completed with the allotment of eight battalions of them to the British Colonial Force, and retaining of the rest of the thirty-three thousand troops by India. We do not know what part the Nepal Government played in the negotiation. Later in April of this year, however, the Government of India agreed to grant King's Commission to Gorkhas serving in their Regiments, which shows that free India appreciates the services and ability of her warlike neighbours. But it is plain that the Nehru Government had done so in response to the sentiment of the Gorkhas, which was earlier so resentful of the discriminatory policy of the British authorities. I understand from a reliable source that the Rana Rulers gave their tacit acquiescence in what was being proposed by the other parties and never raising their voice, again proving to the hilt that they ever remain unconcerned with the welfare of their countrymen. It may be that the rights the Gorkha nationals secured was obtained for them against the wishes of the autocrats.

As soon as the British withdrew from India the Government of Britain raised the status of its representative to that of an Ambassador. Following the British example the Indian Government too exchanged

representative with Nepal on an Ambassadorial level. America followed suit and its Ambassador in India represents his country in Kathmandu whither he often goes to escape the scorching heat of the Indian plains. Except the Indian Embassy which maintains a huge establishment, these Embassies, of course, have nothing but nominal existence in the capital. About the lonely British figure of the Ambassador it is said that he is often consulted by the Rana autocrats on vital decisions, and for sometime till the middle of this year he was actually guiding the foreign policy of the country. Being acknowledged as a first rate power Nepal certainly found its international status raised up over night. Although, at present, its rulers are conducting their foreign policy on the lines determined by its Geographical unity with India it cannot be said that Nepal retains its previous subordinate position in relation to Delhi even at present, for the situation has so changed of late in its favour that the policy of collaboration with India is said to have been willingly undertaken for mutual advantage and only on the advice of British Government. As India so susceptible about her own rights of sovereignty and territorial integrity is always respectful of the rights of other nations, the proof of which she gave even in the Hyderabad and Kashmir affairs, two of her own feudatory States, Nepal has absolutely no reason to be afraid of encroachment from the southern border, which again has guaranteed its position and security as an independent country to allay apprehension of those who still believe that Nepal has not shaken off its old

camouflaged dependent status. If the autocrats are dependent at all, they are not on India, but on distant London from where they derive guidance and sustenance on major policies of administration.

Again as chance had willed it was Padma Shumsher who had the honour to be the ruler at the time these changes, so meaningful to the country's prestige and power took place.

But the man who put his signatures in all these deals was destined to pass off the scene almost unhonoured, unsung and unwept, for such was the tranquility reigning in Kathmandu at the time Mohan Shumsher declared himself Premier as would never lend weight to his predecessor's reputation as a man of the People. Much as he dreaded the possibility of popular indifference towards himself he had also to come out of Nepal almost unnoticed even the ordinary ceremonial show of a send off was denied to him. Padma was, of course, not at all repentant of what he thought to do for the people, but never before the idea dawned on him so illuminatingly as on the occasion of his departure that his people were not in a position to judge right and wrong as democratically conscious people are temperamentally fitted to do. Such was the end of the regime which had promised democratic reforms to the country and enlivened new hopes and aspiration in the hearts of the people, which were to be thwarted in the next regime with the very fake reforms scrapped and thrown into the cold storage.

With Mohan Shumsher at the office the country

returned to the old state of tranquility and the stir settled down accompanied by a marked tendency to try repressive measures on the part of the new ruler, with which he proceeded to put down the democratic elements. Immediately after his assumption of power he banned the Napali Notional Congress and like organisation in his kingdom, which had expressed themselves to take advantage of the civil liberty said to have been accorded by the January constitution.

General Mohan Shumsher is believed to be a reactionary Pro-British ruler by many politicians in India but the promptitude and readiness with which he agreed to supply the democratic Government of India with the ten battalions of Nepal forces at the latter's request during the Hyderabad crisis have set at rest all doubts about his attitude to free India. Of course his purpose was to gain Indian goodwill and use the same in furtherance of his design to maintain the *status quo* in his country. He had very curiously succeeded in obtaining open assurance from the Indian Ambassador that his country will not forget the friend who has been so helpful to her in times of her distress (Report of an interview with the A. P. I. Raxaul.) He was also decorated with the Honorary Generalship of the Indian Army a little later.

From the very first day of his rule alarmed at the quick awakening of his people owing to circumstances out of his control, Maharaja Mohan Shumsher tirelessly proceeded to put the very spark of revolt out with questionable methods including terrorisation and

indiscriminate arrests. He brought back the days of 1940-41 when persecution was rampant and persons suspected of disloyalty to the premier were heavily punished. He would not take rest until he succeeded in putting back the clock of time and undoing the effects of the liberal but weak administration of his brother. He is opposing tooth and nail the operation of the new constitution, although he has nothing to fear from it except the name but unstatesmanlike he detests the very term rule of law, and does not realise the unwisdom of such steps in the face of world changes particularly Indian and Chinese that will unfailingly send repercussions in Nepal.

He has shown impatience with any form and extent of civil liberty, and stopped, on the very first day of his installation, the activities of the literary society that was started a year back with the support and patronage of his retiring brother.

CHAPTER V

PRESENT RULE

All these certainly constituted not an ominous beginning. One could discern the direction to which the wind was blowing. Now there was no doubt left about the nature of administration which was not to be liberal and leniently loose, but to be definitely suppressive and repressive. Mohan Shumsher proved himself to be the terror the people had earlier believed him to be. He amply showed in course of the one year he

ruled that he could not abandon his conservative views he received as a legacy from his father, the late Chandra Shumsher.

Then he began harping on economic reforms and talked of universities, agricultural improvement and utilisation of industrial resources for the betterment of the people. Although he would not implement the constitution he ordered an inquiry to be made about the possibility of election to the village assemblies in accordance with provisions of the constitution. But he was completely silent as to the enjoyment of civil liberty by the people, because he fears that once that is granted his absolute powers will not remain unchallenged.

In regard to those who raised the question of implementation of civil liberty clause of the constitution his answer was more repression, more rigorous imprisonment and more demoralising measures.

He added insult to injury by passing an ordinance which purported to fix penalty upto death sentence to offences committed in violation of the rules framed to guide the operation of the constitution. This was meant to cast an aspersion on the people who as the ordinance reflected were painted as unfit to conform themselves to the sagacity, peaceful behaviour and orderliness of a democratic procedure of administration.

His hand did not rest there. His stooges were working to disrupt the democratic forces from within and without. At about the same time the Nepali National Congress witnessed a painful split within itself

and without there was another party created calling itself the Nepal Democratic Congress. This represented the consummation of a two year old machination directed to divide and demoralise the democratically conscious elements in the people.

THE CHALLENGE

Thanks to the efforts of certain young men working underground at Kathmandu that this gnawing stal-estate was broken sooner, though it was again chanced to come back. Although the Nepali National Congress had rejected the constitution as a specimen of sham reforms, we could not forget even for a moment that if we were permitted to enjoy the civil liberty as condoned by the constitution even within limits set thereby we should not fail to take advantage of the situation. But to most of us it was a hope against hope as the Ranas appeared in no mood to put into operation more particularly that single part of the constitution and facilitate holding of meetings and face open speeches. Yet we thought that by publicly declaring our readiness to work out the constitution we shall force the hands of the Ranas to implement it and in the event of evasion the same will go to expose the negative aspect of their policy.

It was with that aim in view that the idea of an organisation which later on functioned for a brief period of struggle under the name of the Praja Panchayat was mooted out at Banaras. Gopal Prasad Rimal who had recently come out of prison after a year of detention was entrusted with the task of giving

materialisation to that project. Surya Bahadur, Vijaya Malla, Gopal Dass and Tripurbar Singh joined him at Kathmandu.

The few young people who took the initiative had to labour against heavy odds, and in the choking atmosphere that prevailed at Kathmandu there was nothing but discouragement in store for them. Because no body had dared even demand the limited rights conceded by the constitution, the general opinion about the move was to stress its impracticability. But the undaunted workers girded up their loins to disapprove it and to make it practicable.

The sponsors of the Praja Panchayat stood on three grounds.—

(1) That they had only demanded a Government by law, which was promised by the constitution, and as the constitution was devised and announced by the Rana rulers they had not made demands which, in any way, should go to embarrass the Maharaja.

(2) That they would abide strictly by all the provisions of the constitutional law.

(3) That they had nothing to do with the activities of the Nepal National Congress which has as its objective the immediate establishment of a responsible Government.

When its formation was formally announced on the Desahara Day, 1948, the Praja Panchayat had also emerged to bear the character of a united front of all those who believed in a policy of gradual progress to

be attained step by step on the basis of open political work inside the country and it must be said to the credit of the organisers that they could command the support of a good many adherents of the parties working from India, who, of course, at the time were bewildering with a sense of frustration.

How timely the formation of the body demanding civil liberty of the constitution had proved to be was evidenced by the fact that the Maharaja allowed the meeting to go on uninterrupted. It looked as if he got reconciled himself to the idea of acceding to the demands formulated at the meeting. This attitude of sufference was very stimulating and finding that the Government took no notice of the activity, the sponsors had also launched a mass enrolment programme. But just a week after, all this was stopped and further meetings and processions were banned by a notification of the Police Superintendent. Vijaya Malla, who had made an impressive speech on that occasion before a gathering of 5000 persons, was also arrested.

Political speeches were a novelty for Kathmandu. But they had to be tolerated at the time, because they were conceded by the constitution which the Rana rulers had announced on their own initiative. To stifle the voice then and there when it was for something which they themselves had promised would have only exposed the real motive of the rulers, which was to keep the constitution in cold storage as long as possible. The suddenness which characterised the activity of the political workers had also taken them by surprise.

The police notification sent a wave of resentment all over the country. The Maharaja further enraged the sponsors of the Panchayat by could treating the deputation which had waited on him to explain the people's point of view *vis a vis* the high-handed notification. Feelings ran high. Its logical corollary was the subsequent Satyagraha, as a retaliatory measure against the insulting action of the Government.

A Council of Action with Gopal Prasad Rimal, Surya Bahadur, Dharma Ratna, Nutan Bahadur and Krishna Prasad Rimal was formed with a view to immediately start the campaign. Tripurbar Singh another youth offered himself as the first candidate for the proposed individual Satyagraha.

A judicious action of those who directed the movement was to go underground. The Council of Action would have been rounded up as soon as it began functioning openly and the movement nipped in the bud. Guiding of the movement from underground was a reasonable necessity dictated by the circumstances peculiar to Nepal. The fact of directing the movement from underground showed that these persons did possess knowledge of the conditions and this was no ordinary attainment as all of them were without exceptions young in age and without any previous experience of active leadership.

The plan of the movement, as the first item of the programme, covered individual Satyagraha to be started at Kathmandu and thence in the second stage spread it to the areas outside the valley gradually in propor-

tion as the same gathered momentum. From India a batch of volunteers was despatched to work in the Terai and hill regions to select and prepare individuals for the ensuing occasions.

Very unfortunately the latter part of the plan remained unoperated. The movement came under sabotage from the very beginning. A prominent member of the rival group against whom there was a ban of entry had reached Kathmandu *in cognito*. He used his influence initially to discourage the launching of the movement, and when it was on in spite of him exerted himself to sabotage the efforts of the Council of Action by all sorts of rumour mongering and underhand devices. He and his friends spread lies indiscriminately as it suited them to call the sponsors of the Panchayat sometimes as the agents of the Ranas and at other times as mere novices and to dub the Satyagraha as a child's play. But nothing had proved so harmful to the cause as his subsequent arrest which gave excuse to the autocrats to interpret the movement as a parallel of the Congress campaign, which was earlier declared illegal as soon as the new Prime Minister had come to power.

It may be remembered that at a later stage this person admitted unhesitatingly that he was all along during his underground stay at Kathmandu contacting the Maharaja's second son, General Vijaya Shumsher. To those who were conversant with the mysterious ways of the court his arrest, therefore, was not a surprise.

But the same had led the Government to set in motion the ruthless and cruel machinery of repression and persecution was wide, indiscriminate and rampant, and those members of the Council of Action who were successfully evading arrest till then were compelled to leave the country for fear of capture by the vigilant police, which finally brought about the end of the struggle.

All was quiet in Nepal by the end of December last year. But the quiet had a history of disquietude which had thrown a challenge to the new Prime Minister so notorious for his reactionary views, who was generally believed to be following a policy of acute repression to stem the surging tide of democratic agitation. Before the movement started he had made an impression of being a shrewd despot and many given to pessimism would on no account bequeath practicability to the idea of a Satyagraha directed against such a formidable opponent as the Maharaja. A considerable number of them unwillingly led themselves to subscribe to the notion that as long as Mohan controlled the reins of administration all attempts at starting a campaign of struggle would prove unavailing. But what had happened during November and December last, all that brought to light the courageous examples of open defiance of the tyrannical rule, falsified that sort of pessimism. Mohan Shumsher had not built an impregnable fortress, as no tyrants could and his citadel was open to attack. It was now beyond doubt established that, however thin the strength of the democratic camp at present may be,

such people were not wanting as came forward readily in response to the call of patriotism to resist the aggression of tyranny at a great risk to themselves. The optimism entertained and given currency by the supporters of the present regime that nothing of an activity resembling an open challenge to the privileges of the Rana family can be started in the present conditions is now a partially shaken myth.

The above is rather a lengthy narrative of the episode but it could not be avoided in view of the historical and political importance of the struggle involved, which was undoubtedly the first large scale non-violent movement in Nepal.

The temporary result of his policy has certainly been the apparent cooling down of enthusiasm and spirit of resistance amongst the democratically conscious people. Perhaps this has led General Mohan Shumsher to think that he has succeeded in overcoming the forces of opposition. The aftermath tranquility now reigning in the capital city he ascribes to the repressive measures that he has let loose to crush the movement. That is why he has added one more gagging order as recently as May last to off-set the benefits of the civil liberty clause of the constitution. The sort of liberty that has fallen to the lot of the people according to the order is nothing but a farce, only in name the people will enjoy civil liberty. It has been so limited and qualified that the proclamation declaring that part of the constitution implemented will not bring any relief to the suppressed multitude of Nepal.

According to the newly issued rules meetings can only be held at a place fixed for the purpose by police authorities with their express permission, if and when, an application to this end is made 48 hours earlier which should also specify the subject to be discussed at the meeting and the name and addresses of the speakers and conveners thereof. The same rules further make the organisers and speakers responsible for any untoward disturbances and loss of life and property in course of the meeting which again the police will watch as an observer with powers to interrupt the speakers and stop speeches altogether at their own discretion.

No organisation can function without the previous sanction of the police authorities who will examine before authorising the start of the same the aims and objects, the constitution of the organisation concerned and the *bonafides* of the sponsors of the organisation two months before it started. The police shall also check the accounts and register and bring to an end the activities of an organisation in case these are found unsatisfactory to their tests.

Restrictions on the opening of educational institutions, hospitals, libraries, reading rooms, etc., are equally strict and the respective Government departments have been made the final arbiters on the matter without owing responsibility to any representative body.

The Censor Board will sit as usual in judgment over any publication which will have to pass the scrutiny of the authorities not only in its manuscript form,

according to rules hitherto existing, but also during print in proof stages as the new rule enjoins.

This ordinance has negatived the very basis of a democratic system in rendering the working of the only method of party formation and of platform and propaganda impossible. Against the watchfulness of the autocrats with which they proceeded to tackle the problem of not making the civil liberty clause of the constitution workable, and made themselves felt everywhere in organisational set-up and in the financing and accounting of the same, the democratically conscious section of the people was helpless even to make a flea hop of progress, and none dared go forward with even a shadow of democratic programme. They could not release themselves from the grip of the fear of victimisation which threatened them at every step. By introducing this prohibitory legislation the Ranas have made it clear that they do not tolerate activities designed to inculcate novel ideas of civil liberty and like systems in the hitherto inert people. Then there was the clause of the new ordinance which made the sponsors and speakers responsible for any untoward incidents occurring in course of a meeting. An average Nepalese has no doubt at the moment that the Ranas have set their fate against any kind of constitutional reform, even though modest, and shall pick up any pretext to crush each and every move made in that direction. Would we having seen so much of fright in the people be surprised to find that within the six months of the ordinance not a single meeting has been held, and not a single organisation come into existence. The

obstinate refusal of the Rana autocracy to allow free play even to ordinary democratic activities has been responsible for the deepening of the ingrained fear that haunts a Nepalese citizen today irrespective of the encouragement he might derive from the favourable changes in the Indian and Chinese situation.

The latest situation is very disappointing. The constitution is now thrown into the scrap heap of the past. All talks of elections to village assemblies and of the proposals of judicial reforms have vanished into thin air. All past promises of economic and social reforms have been likewise broken. Their place is now taken by a practical application of a policy of mass terrorisation and intimidation. No one feels safe and sound in Nepal today. People have found themselves in police custody and indefinite term of detention without any valid ground whatsoever and without any semblance of judicial trial.

Rigorous measures towards demoralising the political workers are put in action. The leaders are being bribed and the prisoners maltreated and thrashed and beaten. The bait of release and of life outside the conventional prison walls is being offered to a promise of good behaviour and loyalty, of which many have taken advantage as a few so-called leaders arrested under mysterious circumstances during the course of the movement began to sing a song of praise in acknowledgment of the debt of the redeemer autocrats who had released them and filled their coffers with gold. The Ranas are obviously manipulating to bring into

contempt all those persons who are working for the noble cause of democracy and emancipation. They are busy at showing to the people that the present political life in Kathmandu is irresponsible, corrupt, cowardly and undertaken thoughtlessly and regardless of consequences.

Up-to-date the Prime Minister has yet thrown a feeler of a new comic farce by declaring arrests without warrant revocable and punishable. One fails to understand how the right of arrest with warrant is equated with that of imprisonment not without trial and the warrant issuing authority is not defined, and may include any Tom or Dick of a Police Officer. An Officer called the Auditor with supervisory functions over all the heads of the district administration has been added to each district and he is posed as the popular representative of that area to impersonate the scum of the deserters out of which he is called and pushed up to play the stooge. There is not yet in evidence any distant resemblance of an independent judiciary and the medieval drapery continues to clothe the administrative system. Nepal in the circumstances could not advance an inch from the usual squalor and poverty and its archaic condition of autocratic exploitation.

We have now come to the end of our narrative. However, before we put a full stop the readers are presented with a picture of the men who are managing the affairs of the state in Nepal. They are so important that one could not avoid knowing them, and our discourse is not going to be complete without them either.

The most important amongst the men of Nepal at the helm of affairs today is, of course, Maharaja Mohan Shumsher, the Rana Premier, who rules the country since April' 48. He was born in 1885, the year of a colossal palace Coup, which saw the coming into power of the Shumsher brothers who had then virtually eliminated their cousins from the roll of succession. Mohan has had a long and thorough experience of the Nepalese administrative affairs being in the front rank of politicians since his very boyhood. The first work of responsibility he bore was while he served his father, the late Maharaja Chandra Shumsher as his Secretary General. Except that every post in Nepal is of a character of a farce, and does not mean actual carriage of responsibility, it was thought at the time while he was appointed as the Secretary General that he, being only a lad of sixteen was, the last choice, but in the circumstances this appointment was made he was the only choice as well. His father had usurped power by dislodging the legitimate occupant of the post, who was no other than his own uterous brother. This meant that by virtue of the example he himself set a brother could not be trusted with any post of vital responsibility. So Mohan had to be pushed up, and since then the practice of appointing his own eldest son to the post of Secretary General by the Maharaja has been surely established. For the Nepalese Premier, the brother is the most menacing factor, because as the incoming successor to the august post he is always aspiring for a prompt and speedy succession, and plots and conspiracies on that account are often his main

pursuits unless, of course, he is too much swayed by a feeling of duty or short of self-confidence. The Secretary General is the Key man in direct touch with the Premier and incharge of the entire Government stock of arms and ammunitions, the control of which is vested in the former. Such a vital job could not be entrusted to one who can at any time, utilise the same to fulfil his own ambitions. Naturally, therefore, on a mature consideration this practice of appointing one's trusted man and nobody could be more trustworthy than the son himself in the family set up, got recognition and the brother's case was set aside. Mohan held his post of the Secretary General till 1929 when his father died. Two years in between that date and the date of the installation of the third man, the Maharaja Juddha Shumsher, his youngest uncle, he was being eclipsed by a rival party from amongst the heirs of the Bir Shumsher and Bhim Shumsher lines, the last in direct control of the administrative apparatus under the Premiership of the father. It seemed then that he and his six brothers were to meet the fate of Jung's sons as in 1885, and preparations were actually reported to have been made in all secrecy to repeat the catastrophe of that year, which was averted without incident to the party in opposition by the death of Bhim Shumsher Jung. Mohan is a shrewd man. He combines in him the gift of modern education though not obtained in a public institution and he is not intellectual too, with a thorough knowledge of the Nepalese history and affairs, which he had gained in course of his long career as the Secretary General. He is said to be the author

of the expulsion plan of 1934, according to which some ten members on the roll of succession were very cleverly ousted on grounds of illegitimacy. Mohan's group had obviously retaliated and unlike the opponents succeeded in their task. How far Mohan Shumsher could be accused of unjust dealing one cannot say. But he had achieved his objective with dexterity. It was a tough job to oust these men, for they had acceded to the roll through a process of ablution sanctified by the concurrence of all the legitimate claimants who had dipped their hands into the sacred water of the River Bagmati in pledging their words for that cause. Never were his tact and wit better tried than on his occasion. But he triumphed over all the obstacles and effected a bloodless purge, which promoted him to the exalted post of the Senior Commanding General, only a few steps short of premiership. And the wonder is that he escaped all the opprobrium and the guilt of the performance because everything was done in the name of the ruling uncle Maharaja Juddha. About him keep observers have said that he machinates things in such a way as makes it possible for him to acquit himself of all the sense of responsibility of the work done. But the same pre-supposes that he has to achieve his purpose by underhand means. This explains probably the fact of his weak nerves and at times he shows a habit of sufficiently yielding to pressure for the same reason. Though conservative to the core he is not quite uncompromising in the same way as his temperamental weakness dictates. Today he has come to appear to his people as a diehard conservative wanting to go too

slow in regard to the question of democracy. But it is equally true that he would one day yield to the demands of his people in response to his own habits of mind. Also all his illiberal views on administration are set in quite a strange contrast with his puritanic way of living, it is generally believed that H. H. Mohan is the single example of a life in the Rana family to be free from lusts of wine and women and he is godfearing and all these taken together make him all the more scrupulous in conducting policy of state. It is said that unlike his predecessors who extracted the most out of their unchallenged position of supremacy in new acquisition General Mohan has no desire to add to his already fabulous wealth and, therefore, he does not lay his hand on the state treasury. He, however, cannot be credited with having sincerely helped his country to tide over the difficulties in a spirit of accommodation and having tried to alleviate the suffering of the people of his own accord. He is still busy with farcical performances of parliament making, and of Panchayat elections, though these have been fully exposed and he himself realises that in near future circumstances will compel him to embark on a course of radical reforms. H. H. Mohan's difficulties are that while his temperament does not make him fit the sort of repression needed for withholding the reforms, he himself is moving in the direction where he is likely to be called upon to enforce the most repressive measures in the state. It is certain that this clash of weak nerves and conservative mind in the ruling personality of Mohan Shumsher will create a situation where Ranacracy collapses

like a house of cards.

Mohan Shumsher's ideal in the administration is his father who was as much of a conservative as himself and in his time was responsible for withholding desirable reforms in the country. We can say that much of the anti-Rana feeling as exists at present is due to his very stingy and reactionery policy. Had he moved with the time Nepal would not have been as backward as it is today and likewise his family's reputation gone very high. But he clung to an orthodox selfise policy and we have seen the results. Mohan is treading an equally dangerous path by not paying heed to the writing on the wall of time. The difference in these two personages is only the difference in the ages they lived. Mohan has certainly to take into account all such new developments as have emerged out of the recent world changes more particularly the Indian. But he has not been able to shake off his bias as a faithful follower of Chandra's policy. He would not alter his conception of autocratic rule as long as medieval condition continues, nor he would yield to public opinion on such matters as affect his family's status and power, and himself initiate drastic reforms to change the squalid face of the country. It is true that he has fallen a victim to the environmental habits of a conservative and he singly cannot be blamed for resisting changes, but no one would be surprised if his errors become instrumental in bringing about the downfall of the Rana family. Even admitting that he is willing to change with times and is not allowed to do so by virtue of his having inherited and worked an outmoded

machine of administration, he cannot escape the blame of at least sticking to that machine and of retaining its old parts intact. Of course, Mohan's position as a hereditary prime minister is doomed in the new context and despite all ingenuity and intrigues will not be maintained by any course of action, but he should have rehabilitated himself in the hearts of his people and earned their goodwill in his retiring age by an act of wisdom and statesmanship. If he does not voluntarily hand over powers to his people in response to the call of the age he is indeed a foolish ruler.

Mohan Shumsher derives his strength from two sources. He has unlimited resources in money, and men whom he buys with money. He has also a solid backing of his brothers, all of whom occupy key positions in the administration. The latter aspect of the problem creates distinct relief, because, in any case a Rana premier is much troubled on account of brotherly animosity and has to remain alert all the time to ward off the threat. With Babbar the C.In.C he is reported to be in disagreement on some matters, another rumour goes that Mrigendra Shumsher, Babbar's eldest graduate son, now occupying the post of the Director of Public Instruction, prevails on his father to press for the Maharaja's resignation in order to make room for himself. But both these do not seem even distantly related to facts. They have simply started out of a wrong line of thinking, out of a misconception to attribute all blame to the second man for the sins of the first. Mohan cannot but trust his brothers, the Rana family is too divide to give room further to such

quarrels. It is the solidarity and mutual trust that saved them in critical days and all of them cannot, but be aware of such a strength of unity. There is, however, a deep-seated rivalry between the young elements, the sons of the two stalwarts of the Rana tyranny. Mohan's are in key positions, one a very gentle soul, however, is the Secretary General and another is the Director of Foreign Affairs. This fact is not viewed with for bearance and relief by Mrigendra who is senior to both of them in age. The transfer of Shankar Shumsher, another brother of Mohan, by his step-mother from the post of the Secretary General to that of Ambassador in London is also attributed to a desire on the-part of Mohan to promote his own son to the key-post, which may or may not be true.

Mohan Shumsher became Prime Minister on the retirement of his predecessor Ex-Maharaja Padma Shumsher who is now in Ranchi (Bihar). Another personage Juddha Shumsher who was the first man during the last century to voluntarily resign his post of the Prime Minister is in Dehradun. Both these resignations took place within a short period of nearly two and a half years. A ready inference has been to ascribe the same desire of resignation to Mohan. It is said that he is very much anxious to allow the two aged brothers following him to serve their turn one after the other. After all the hey day of the Rana family is over. Why give any one the opportunity to groan that he was left out of account in the deal ? In the declining years of glory let no one remain sullen that he could not be glorified.

Babbar Shumsher, the present Commander-in-Chief of the Nepalese army, is the next important figure. Together with Kaiser, the senior Commanding General, Mohan and Babbar from the trio of brothers who own and rule over present day Nepal with proprietary rights. These two younger brothers of Mohan are known respectively as men of military proficiency and scholarly attainments. Babbar had served in the First World War at the head of the Nepalese contingents that operated in the Tribal areas of the Frontier Province of India. Kaiser has no record of military assignment and is said to have been engaged in acquiring knowledge from books of history and politics at about the same time. Both these attributes are, however, not in the nature of extra-ordinary attainments and do not deserve profuse adulation and may appear praiseworthy only on the view that they represent a healthy departure from the family tradition of medieval sloth, snobbery, ignorance and mad just. In their temperament both these persons differ a great deal. Babbar is violent, openly rough, aristocratic and reactionary while Kaiser is reported to be mild, sociable and gives the impression of a knowing and cultured person, though he has many other private vices shared in common with family members. There is a common belief in Nepal that Babbar will turn out a pucca fascist once he seizes the reins of administration. Babbar's eldest son General Mrigendra Shumsher prides in calling himself another edition of Churchill for barbarous Nepal.

The fourth man on the roll of succession is General Bahadur Shumsher, son of the Ex-Maharaja Juddha.

He is another rough, violent and primitively aristocratic person often curbed and tamed by Mohan's adroitness and yet sometimes trying to bounce and giving expression of intolerance, insolence and bad manners. He is reactionary to the bone as Babbar is. His one principal is hold on to powers. We are born rulers. We cannot associate with the dregs of the people. Sometimes his harsh and uncompromising attitude on questions all and sundry gives evidence of an ill-tempered and uncultivated mind blindly holding on to old beliefs and usages. But Bahadur has not been able to go the whole hog with Mohan in carrying out his policy of suppression. Several causes have contributed to estrange him from the main ruling clique. First he being only a cousin of Mohan does not find himself totally identified with the interest of the Chandra Group. Secondly, he harbours a deep grudge against Kaiser, because Chandra Shumsher had put him down in the roll below Kaiser even though Bahadur was born an hour earlier. Chandra had given out Kaiser's birth to have taken place five hours earlier while Bahadur's birth was announced to him. Bahadur's father knew the fact thoroughly well, but swallowed it thinking that the issue was a minor one. Today, however, when it has meant a distinct advantage enjoyed by Kaiser over him, Bahadur's feelings have been bitter. But Bahadur Shumsher has lost his ardour. On the political front the changes in Delhi have also become too much for him. Nobody will be surprised if he tenders resignation to escape to the cool region of Bangalore following the example of Krishna Shumsher. Three of Bahadur's uterous brothers are

also on the roll, but they are too servile on their cousins to think of any independent line of action or even to be in a position to assert themselves in times of need except that they represent just another set of bullies. None of them are holding responsible posts.

The Nepalese Ambassador in Delhi, General Sinha Shumsher, is another man of note, but not so important—as the four preceding him on the roll of succession. One factor, however, adds weight to his office. He is a trusted brother of Mohan Shumsher. In the context of political changes in India the Ranas have a reason to attach greater importance to the Indo-Nepalese diplomatic relations than to the Anglo-Nepalese contact. This explains Sinha's accreditation to Delhi and his experiences as a former Minister to London have been duly utilised. Sinha is reported to be of a genial temperament, and though aristocratic and conservative to a degree is not blind to the reality of the situation. Under the direct influence of Jawaharlal Nehru and other Indian democrats he is reported to have shed off to some extent his superiority complex and old prejudices against associating his people with the administration. This may be a mere propaganda, but it will be a pity if he advises his brother to hold on to power at this revolutionary period of the twentieth century. The toun-ado which is rising in the east will sweep them away in no time if they persist in their policy of cruel exploitation and then they will be abhorred.

Mohan Shumsher's youngest uterous brother, General Krishna Shumsher, has resigned his post and

privileges and is already in Bangalore. Before he submitted his resignation he was reported to have been asked to reconsider his intentions and there were exchanges of hot words between the two brothers. After he resigned there was a flood of speculation as to the cause of his resignation. It is probably not his ill-health as has been suggested in certain quarters. He could not think of Premiership to be falling to him in ordinary course when the whole system has been assailed. It is not a far fetched conclusion to attribute to him differences of political views with the ruling clique on the question of reforms. He was definitely in favour of democratising the administration. And his resignation is not a happy sign of things within the Rana family. It certainly reflects a growing panic which not a few important members can avoid.

Now to deal with the institution of the King. We have already mentioned about the King of Nepal, his powers and position which are quite insignificant in the real context. That way he does not deserve elaborate mention at the present juncture. But his place as the ruler has been a source of much confusion to the outsiders, though a source of inspiration to Nepalese freedom fighters. People outside Nepal find it hard to notice a distinction between the two political heads of the country. Both share the title of the Maharaja, though the king is known as Adhiraj in Nepal itself and is quite distinguished. His is the most anomalous position. Not too often at the time of the first two Rana Premiers he had plotted to overthrow the government of the intermediary. Yet he is retained as a de-

jure sovereign without much concern. The only thing the *de facto* rulers do is to sterilise him. Even his potentiality is dreaded. So he is subjected to extraneous demoralising influences, to wiles of courtiers and unhealthy petty coat intrigues. But the Nepalese king has even ceased to represent a legal fiction. He is just a non-entity if any attribute can be given. He has been totally eclipsed by the hereditary Prime Minister.

The King is now a marionette pure and simple much neglected and ignored even as a potentiality. The Rana Premier does not even care to display him on ceremonial occasions. His prisoner-like condition has taken him away from day-to-day festivities of the Nepalese. He has lost contact with the masses of his people who have nearly forgotten him.

The present King H. M. Tribhuvan Vir Vikram Shah is the eighth successor of the King Prithwi Narain Shah. He succeeded his father in 1913 while he was a boy of only six years of age. He had little opportunities for education and cultural attainments being forced to live life of a debauchee from the very early childhood. But today as he has lived to a ripe mature age he is reported to be very much detesting his life and surroundings. At one time in 1940 he was actually encouraging political activities of a democratic nature conducted against the Rana family. Of course, he has his own axes to grind and may even cherish hopes of restoration when we talk of running a responsible government under his aegis. But his pro-people sympathies are patent. He, however, suffers from a

fundamental weakness. He is not daring, and at critical times is prone to submissiveness of the worst order. His courage was sufficiently tested in 1940 while he was put on trial for his complicity in the anti-Rana political movement. But he acquitted himself in the trial with patience dignity. At the present moment when he has been trying to utilise the precious opportunities for a bold action, his very utility as a lawful ruler of the country is being looked up on with trust and take.

THE REFORM ISSUE IN NEPAL AND THE ANTI-COMMUNIST FRONT

Nepal which remained a virtual *terra incognita* till yesterday has at the moment suddenly leapt into the limelight of publicity. The old camp followers of reaction who, in the past, never cared a straw for the welfare of the down-trodden Nepalese are come with eyes, full of tears, and are showing unusual concern for them, so much so that the air is thick with talks of political reforms in the state for which external pressure, particularly that of India, is being evoked. But all these sudden outbursts of attention, all these tears and concerns are manifestations of a fearful mind working at the prospect of being overwhelmed by superior forces of communism which is surging ahead from the North. There is, no doubt, that these people are being compelled by developments in the far east to cast their thought on Nepal. How Nepal will fare in the context? Is it a manifestation of a sincere desire on the part of the

outsiders to uplift the lot of the poor Nepalese or is it a mere crocodile tear shed in a game of power politics and another device to hoodwink the people in furtherance of the imperialist cum feudal interests? All these questions raise issues which should be probed into deeper with wide eyes in all their percussions and repercussions. It becomes us at the hour also to be alert and save the situation from being complicated further, so that the interested parties do not waylay the people and deviate them into the risky path of reconciliation.

Nepal is a country of the Himalayan region on the border of the great Chinese Republic. Apart from its buffer like situation between India and China its importance lies in the fact that it can be used as a spring board for offensive and defensive purposes by either parties. With that characteristic it has the same importance in international politics as Indo-China, Siam, Afghanistan or Iran has for the world powers. It is natural, therefore, that the powers who have been so long directly or indirectly keeping Nepal as a semi-colony under the management and proprietorship of the local autocracy should be alert about its threatened position and developments. The very line of military preparations runs through its territory and to all intents and purposes their interest demands that with an all strong base of regional defence the peace and security of this area is also guaranteed.

The powers cannot afford to see Nepal embroiled in anything which will pave the way for mass uprising.

They know that if the present discontent accentuates and suppression of civil rights continues there will emerge a condition favourable to the rise and growth of communism in their midst. In order to make the ground immune from influences of communism and preventing the situation getting out of their control they are prescribing remedies which though not effective to cure the ills do at the same time create a belief that the rulers have taken upon themselves the task of pursuing a progressive and responsible policy of administration. The good-will thus obtained by the rulers will certainly be used to meet the challenge of communism by corrupting the average citizens of the country.

It is argued that there is already a pressure of communist ideology in Nepal and this is creating a situation wherein people are likely to be drawn into accepting its methods and into working for its ultimate goal. Although the policy of the government in refusing modest reforms is being made responsible for the situation, it is nevertheless true that the advocates of reforms in Nepal shun every sincere and real attempt at improving the very bestial condition of the masses in preaching the need for enlightened despotism in the state.

The main problem for all the reactionary politicians today is to check the rising tide of popular discontent which is engendering the communist upheaval undermining the very basis of property and all its traditional and conventional values and ethics. They are

seeking guarantees to that effect in order to stem the prospect of revolutionary upsurge of the people and all sorts of allies are being propped up and nurtured. These allies cannot be the persons following a naked policy of feudal barbarism, for that way lies the ruin and dilapidation of the vested interests as a result of the commotion it sets forth in the wake of mass uprising. As is clear from pronouncements of the interested persons what they endeavour is to introduce a change so that under a democratic semblance the *status quo* is preserved. Obviously through the adoption of this policy the interested parties want to check the further deterioration and accentuation of poverty and it advocates conciliation towards the demands of the middle class. In that context repression of the reforms movement which is confined to a small section of the lower middle class is also ruled out of order. Naturally the allies are the bourgeois democrats who will share power with the feudal aristocracy without in any way allowing the mass of the people to enjoy civic rights. We cannot forget that all this talk of reforms which means sharing of power jointly by the Rana autocracy and their collaborators will cloud the main issue of popular emancipation in Nepal. Those reforms which come as an antidote to communism will, as our experiences of the past fifty years shows, be in their very nature such as will only prolong life of feudalism with slight alterations in its structure. This is the shape of things to come which in the final analysis emerges in the picture. The very fact that solicitude was borne of an emergency

in the wake of the threatening communist uprising bespeaks its character and design behind the move. It is obviously to fortify the situation so that the democratic movement is easily sabotaged to get itself localised outside the fringe of the class barrier of the propertyless that the reforms are being suggested and the Ranas are asked to work them out for the mutual benefit. According to the authors of the plan the prospect of communism may be combated in the following ways so far as Nepal is concerned :—

(1) By increasing the military and police strength of the present Government of Nepal which being a feudal and reactionary institution is the greatest enemy of communism.

(2) By asking the rulers to appease the vocal sections of the people now clamouring for freedom and liberty, so that they do not reach a point of exhaustion and disappointment to let themselves be influenced by ideas of communism in the event of frustration.

It is as a step towards the second measure that the political reform is being suggested. The problem is to create a vanguard against communist and military measures alone are deemed insufficient to cope with the mounting penetration of this ideology. If the present tone and content of the democratic struggle in Nepal be made subservient to the class interest of the opponent section, the purpose of the feudal cum imperialist reactionaries is fulfilled. A certain writer has gone even to the extent of naming a particular party for a deal to be struck with by the men in saddle in Kath-

mandu. That this deal is not to take into account the overall need for the redemption of the poor plight of the people is clear as appears from his following observation, "It is, however, necessary now to consider the question as to whether the present Government of Nepal is in a position to become impregnable bastion against the tide of communist propaganda, for it is needless to point out that military alliance or understanding alone will not deviate the so-called Red infiltration. The present ruling authority may not be reactionary as it is supposed, but the fact remains that it is not as liberal or democratic as the situation in Nepal demands. In the present set up of the world no government can survive communist propaganda and offensive unless it commands popular support. The existing Ranacracy of Nepal constituted as it is both unpopular and outmoded as the rising of the strength of the Nepal Democratic Congress would indicate."

"The popular movement for democratic reforms had been steadily growing despite official disfavour and repression. There was some talk of constitutional reforms lately and even a constitution was drawn up to satisfy the demand of the Nepal Democratic Congress, but this has been shelved for the present despite popular opposition."

Two things in this observation stand to expose the real motive of the author in expounding and pleading for democracy in Nepal. That it is only an eyewash tactics to conceal his antagonism of popular government is evident from the fact that his stand is anti-communism rather than pro-democracy and pro-people and

whatever he pleads does not issue out of any consideration for reforms for the sake of popular emancipation. We could not have expected a better solution either, for his main objective is to achieve greater measure of agreement and harmony amongst the various sections of vested interests on the issue of fighting communism. He wants the Ranas to fight communism with the so-called liberal Nepal Democratic Congress and the only question to solve for him is to enlist their support on an agreed basis. But by offering the same 1948 constitution as the solution and bringing in the reactionary almost non-existent organisation of the Nepal Democratic Congress as an ally to be wooed in order to work them out, he condemns his own stand *vis a vis* the popular demand for political rights and social and economic amelioration.

If the vocal section of the Nepalese people as represented by me handful of the so-called Nepal Democratic Congress is to be taken into account the boundary of democratic movement can be seen hardly surpassing the group of the disgruntled members of the Rana autocracy and its class of parasites whose ambition is to wreak vengeance and effect restoration through a fake democratic movement. If appeasement of this element is the sole aim then democracy will be meaningless for a vast majority of the Nepalese people. It will only mean sharing of power between the two sections of the Ranas and their flatterers. But it will bring no appreciable changes in the structure of government. Whatever may be the alternative for a refusal to line up in such a set-up the Nepalese people do not

feel enthusiastic about the future evolved on this basis.

Unless there is a thoroughly representative people's government Nepal's ills are not going to be cured. Nothing short of real transfer of power to the people will usher in such a government of the people. But the political leadership represented by the vocal section of the disgruntled reactionaries is at the present time content with the dose of reforms which will give only nominal liberty to the people. The agitation is directed to demand the implementation of fake reforms. It is more or less in the nature of a family quarrel. Its cessation and compromise will not take the people an inch nearer to the goal.

India comes in the picture because of geographical contiguity and her historical and cultural and racial ties with Nepal. As Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru openly declared in his recent statement before the Parliament Nepal is geographically a part of the India sub-continent and anything happening in that region is likely to send its repercussion to all over the territories of India. But are India's fears as to the likely use of Nepalese territory by the communists justified even as a remote possibility? It is not fair to attribute to the Chinese People's Republic a policy of aggression. India's fear can be justified if only communism were to be defined as an expansion of the Russian sphere of influence. I am sure such an unrealistic and fantastic suggestion is not being made. It may be correct to say that a communist Nepal will allow bases of operations for the India communist as we, Nepalese democrats, have been

enjoying all facilities of work in India and let India take her own precautionary measures to counteract this factor but to deny to Nepal to form a government of its choice for fear of producing unfavourable reactions in India is not only denying the Nepalese people their sovereign rights, but also unwise in the larger interest of international democracy. It is hoped that the Indian leaders will always exercise their pressure on Nepal for the welfare of the Nepalese people and not for any advantages for themselves and reactionary forces. Without prejudicing India's high stakes in Nepal let it not be forgotten that a people's Nepal free from the clutches of the reactionary Ranas of either camps will become the surest guarantee against any invasion of India. If Indo-Nepalese friendship were to rest on a solid foundation, there is all the greater need for a common approach to questions of democratic rights and conceptions by the two parties.

This presupposes a sympathetic understanding of the Nepalese situation by the neighbouring countries. Because there is no intermediary class of people in between the aristocracy and the suppressed masses democracy will bear a meaning quite different from that conceived in ordinary condition of middle class dominated society. This makes further the character of our struggle extremely progressive. The Nepales people feel not only the urge for freedom in order to gain civic rights, but at the same time interpret them in terms of substantial economic advantages. In other words liberty for them will not only mean equal opportunities but equal distribution of wealth as well on the

basis of work. Any transfer of power to their hands, if this urge for equalisation of property is to be considered, will preclude all attempts at creating a new complication of the type found in capitalist society which maintains the *status quo* and tightens the grips of forces so far lying dominant in the field. We have simply no mind to fall into a position to face ever new and fresh issues when the old issues are simple enough to handle. The people will certainly use the power they snatch from the feudalists in order that the tentacles are destroyed and no fresh barrier comes to prevent their natural growth into prosperity.

In their quest for real freedom the Nepalese will encounter combined opposition of the world vested interests with which the Rana and allied aristocracy of Nepal is interlinked through its external investment. But the same makes them a staunch enemy of the international capital which is propping up the Nepalese feudal rulers.

Gradualism is a specific feature of a democratic capitalist society. Where feudalism reigns supreme and power is held by an aristocracy under proprietary rights as in Nepal any scheme of gradual transfer of power has simply no place. It does not fit in with such a texture for feudalism faces a total collapse when once it allows a little ground for the anti-feudal forces to operate and, therefore, it is always with a spirit of resistance that all views advocating changes in the structure are considered.

Feudalism does not know liberalism. Liberalisa-

tion will kill it. Either it liberalises or goes or it resists and stays. Any plan drawn to preserve it in a liberalised form is full of deceits and its effect will be to divert the channel of democratic agitation to a wrong end, to an end which will produce exactly the opposite results. It may give a false appearance to pull the fighting spirit of the people into submission to the old order by promises of redemption but it will ultimately mean a betrayal of their interest. We do not mean to invite chaos and disorder but anti-communism is no solution for the Nepalese problem if the *status quo* is to continue and the existing property relations which divides the ruling Ranas from the exploited mass is not to be disrupted for the betterment of the latter. It will strengthen the hands of the feudal oligarchy, weaken the resistance of the people and delay their emancipation. Anti-communism as applied to Nepalese condition will be definitely anti-people and anti-democratic.

It must be admitted that the Nepalese people's fight for liberty is organically connected with the national liberation struggle of the Asiatic people which is equally related to the emancipatory struggle of the exploited classes of the industrial and capitalist countries. We can not remain blind to this aspect of the problem and assist those who are out to exploit our movement for the preservation of their vested interest by raising the bogey of communism, which clouds the main issue of liberation.

Anti-communism comes in the garb of democracy without, however, effecting real changes in the social

structure. On final analysis there is, therefore, no choice between the type of autocracy as it exists and the type it would exist under the form envisaged by the authors of the anti communist plans. One would be the only slightly altered form of the other in a novel dress designed to be able to throw dust into people's eyes as to its real intention. We cannot differentiate the one from the other. If there is a difference it is of appearance only and not of reality. What one wants to achieve by naked force the other achieves by stealthy means under a semblance of democracy. Both have a single aim of perpetuating the slavery of the people. But anti-communism as it comes under a subtle form and with false promise of redemption has more dangerous tendencies and is to be all the more detested and resisted.

Some people are apt to be misled by the fact that the authors of the anti-communist plan have been at the moment the democracies of the west. But we must know that their authorship alone of all the factors makes the idea too dangerous to swallow. Those who control the destiny of these democracies have never made a secret of their reactionary views, and have always shown an uncompromising hostility to anything done towards granting real powers to the people. In their own country the people continue to be as much enslaved and deprived of actual rights and economic advantages as in the colonies and medieval countries. Today when the very institution of property is threatened, they are least expected to base their policy on principles of democracy which means to turn upside down

the very basis of their powers and privileges. Their allies, therefore, today as of yesterday are the reactionary anti-democratic elements. The anti-communist front will certainly include in its fold such interests and regimes as have tended to be actually anti-democratic. Any one acquainted with the trend of foreign policy of the Anglo-American Powers can not have the illusion that they mean otherwise. If they have supported the barbarous rulers of Arabia, there is no reason to suppose that they will have any other policy towards Nepal whose condition does not differ very much from that of medieval looking Arabia. With that they have done in Korea, Indo-China, Iran, Afghanistan and other countries of the East, where tyrants and authoritarian regimes are bolstered up as against the mass of the people struggling for liberty, we cannot but conclude that the Rana rulers or any other reactionary rulers will receive utmost support in their hands. The Ranas or men of their ilk are the best defenders of the social order which functions in conformity to imperialist interests, and the Anglo-American Powers have to preserve them for their own sake.

Anti-Communism is the rallying ground of all the parties of vested interests on an international front, where the autocratic Ranas or their kinsmen will play an important role as the common enemy of progress. As they happen to be the only guarantee against Nepalese democratic forces, the attempt will be to strengthen their hands. Even if they have to be pulled, efforts will be made to replace them by equally reactionary elements, by those who will pursue an anti-people policy of administration.

No reforms will be entertained which will change this fundamental factor. He will be living in a fool's paradise if any one believes in being able to obtain sympathies of the Western Powers for the people's struggle in Nepal. That will be never forthcoming. But at the same time attempts will be made to pass the present Ranacracy or in the alternative a coalition autocracy in a new garb as an embodiment of liberal changes, a factor which is well in evidence. The Nepalese people should be aware of treading on a dangerous path of accepting these in their face-value. Anti-communism in the hands of the feudal cum capitalist class cannot but be an instrument of feudal and imperialist exploitation and a veritable measure to perpetuate and fortify their position in the old social order.

Feudal autocracy and democracy are two incompatibles. They cannot exist together. If democracy were to be interpreted as a compromise then it will have no validity. Anything done as a measure of democratisation without removing the privileges of the aristocratic families will be in the nature of a hoax whose purpose is to hoodwink the people. Because the anti-communist front is designed to bolster up the anti-people forces, it will surely not introduce changes inimical to them. Feudalism will be saved certainly at the cost of the people's rights. The sort of democracy as will exist under anti-communist plans will be a huge mockery.

End in Sight

The autocrats might derive satisfaction at the state of comparatively poor awakening of the people which obviously falls short of the proportion required to effect speedy overthrow of the regime. They may feel relieved of the anxiety to be overwhelmed by the democratic movement by an eye to the apparently disorganised and internally broken democratic camp. They may also feel elated with the thought of what was done in regard to successfully corrupting the few leaders who have now openly started to preach for them. But all this is illusive optimism, and if any one has put undue reliance on these factors there cannot be a worse-misted man. The crisis which Nepalese autocracy wants to avert is gradually gathering momentum in spite of the efforts to turn the same into opposite channel. Whatever might be the present degree and extent of political awakening in the masses and the strength and organisation of the democratic camp, it is undeniable that discontent against the oppressive rule of the Rana family is fast rising which is likely to set in motion a revolt and disorder however unorganised it may appear at the initial stage. It is also becoming increasingly clear that the support attached to the feudal rule is thinning on account of the obnoxious type of exploitation which has benefited a single family at the cost of the populace without any sort of concession to any other group. In the nature of administration which is dominated by one single

family claiming suzerainty on divine rights, where enrichment of a minute fraction had been the one and only accompaniment, it could not be otherwise. But the same has been responsible for antagonising one and all sections of the people without exception in every rank other than those directly connected with the rulers automatically and whose number too is dwindling, and set them against the regime. Even admitting that consciousness touches only a fringe of the people one can safely assert that this consciousness has also accentuated hatred against the Ranas. The overall picture is that one hardly comes across a person of knowledge who in his heart of hearts is not unfavourably disposed to the rulers. The structure of administration they have erected and maintained is so domineering and atrocious and haughty for the people outside the Rana family that not one of them feels happy or secure with the inevitable concomitant that he is made in addition to secretly nurture a grievance and spirit of revenge against the overbearing and insolent behaviour of the rulers drawing sustenance out of a sense of over confidence. The gravity of the situation will be realised from the fact that this state of dis-satisfaction and animosity finds no exception and as matters stand today this has pervaded not only the highly placed non-Rana personages, but also a large number of the influential members of the Rana family, who do not share a community of interest with His Highness Mohan and his brothers, and immediate cousins in whom power and wealth of the state are being concentrated. Probing deeper one marks a widening rift in

the Rana family and there is a definite sign of its being exposed to the full blast of internal disturbance and it is a fact that cracks have appeared. It may be to only embarrass the men in power and not to sincerely help the democratic movement, but it is now an open secret that many members of the Rana family including some on the roll are making a common cause with the exile dissidents to have entered the democratic front. No amount of pampering including a bait to offer them equality of status in matters of dining could wean the exiles away towards him, which again aggravates the situation. The only sustaining aspect of the problem from the official party's point of view is the lack of an ideal prompting these disgruntled elements in the Rana family, which, in reality, does not also tend well for the consolidation and progress of the democratic struggle, but there is no doubt that it is giving a serious headache to the rulers. Who knows that these men now on the war path simply to score the ancient grudge may even for themselves realise the futility of an isolated fight and throw themselves heart and soul into the struggle on the side of democracy? So swift is the change over into the state of opposition even though it might be lying pent-up that the conscious section of the population is experiencing its passion rising high which is restrained only for want of a suitable occasion and consolidated organisation to assume a flare up.

But this is not the only menace threatening the regime. In fact, the machinery of administration itself is too outworn and outdated to stand the pressure of

new forces coming in the wake of a widely popular awakening. The shabby ill-organised and corrupt administration is powerless to cope with the situation that is likely to arise if the people take up cudgels and show determination to fight. Except in the valley the Government is notoriously an entity in name and its existence rests solely on the ignorance of the people whose idea in that line is the tax collecting agency. We know how the entire country outside the valley presents a picture of neglect and apathy totally alien to a civilised Government. Even the work of protecting citizens from lawlessness is pitifully neglected, there being no provision for the maintenance of an agency to safeguard law and order. The administration is so centralised in a single potentate that it has failed to respond to the needs of an extensive territorial administration decision is never the rule, for as the convention obtains at present it is the Maharaja Prime Minister alone who has to direct operations and give instructions for any major or minor contingency in the whole of Nepal. Without reference to him nothing of importance can be decided. But his hands are too full, as is also the inordinate delay involved in making him take a decision owing to absence of communication. Already these shortcomings have begun to overstrain the medieval resources of the Government even though the problem they have to deal with is comparatively less alarming in magnitude. It is certain that it will not be possible to get over a conflagration, however, ill-organised the same may be if they have to meet it with the weapon of defence they now possess. But the

machinery which is theirs is in keeping with the spirit of administration obtaining everywhere under feudalism and the same can be renovated and set straight only under conditions of democracy coming with the end of the family rule, which surely the autocrats will oppose by every means for fear of losing their all. The resultant situation, therefore, is full of disquietitude to the men in saddle at Kathmandu. From even a short point of view their cause is doomed to failure.

After August 1947, when freedom was thrust on them the autocrats found themselves totally unprepared for the new situation. They were as though taken out of the hole to face the eye-dazzling sunlight. They were exposed to full publicity and were really dazzled. This explains the hesitation with which they are moving in the international firmament. They do not get able men to represent the Government in diplomatic relations and talks. Ambassadorship is a high post, and this cannot go to a non-Rana, even if some one was fit for such a job, which is a another headache. There is one man who is accredited to three countries, U. S. A., Britain and France over an area extending to more than four thousand miles. This appears again an absurdity and give little credit to their regime but the Ranas must put up with it. Also participating in regional meetings of the world organisations has become a tough problem as much as it is also unavoidable in view of the independent status. But the Nepalese representative fears to open his mouth in the august gatherings. He is unfamiliar, shy, nervous and

suffers from inferiority complex to the degree that he bullies his own men inside Nepal without mercy.

As the ruler of the medieval state, the Nepalese Prime Minister had no serious problems to tackle. In the nature of things the responsibilities discharged by them were of meagre worth much without risk undertaken merely on the basis of the loyalty they commanded from the illiterate masses. As a matter of fact the administration of Nepal is not a burden on the incumbent. It is a lucrative source of income just like any other investment with the difference that it has also no responsibility, it is all rights and no duties. This character of the administration continues more or less in one and unchangeable pattern till today. But now it has come to be assailed though modestly and slowly. The rise of new problems demanding exercise of greater and more mature wisdom is unnerving the rulers. Like the field of international diplomacy the indigenous popular agitation is another intricacy they are finding almost impossible to unweave. Their antique frame of mind is incapable of understanding the forces at work, and so is their ingenuity to come to their rescue failing to serve the purpose.

The international situation as it emerged after the Second World War influenced Nepal in two ways. The British were forced to relinquish their hold of India, and Nepal was thus cut off from the mooring that kept it aloft in the protection of the empire. As a direct sequel to this, the Nepalese autocracy came to be subjected to a volley of criticism from the Indian soil,

because the ban on such a criticism lapsed forthwith in India and all its vagaries and evil sides were ripped open before the outside world. It is true that its effect inside Nepal is not very much appreciable so as to undermine the regime, but it is nevertheless sufficiently embarrassing. The second effect of the World War closely following the first just noted was to place the Nepalese rulers in an awkward position of intimate geographical relationship with independent democratic India, which they never dreamed to happen in their life time. This has at least given them an inkling of the truth and what it may like to take shape in Nepal under the impact of democratic forces which are surely sending their repercussions.

But the greatest threat to Ranacracy is presented in course of their new relationship with Nehru's Government. The Ranas are used to looking to Britain and America in regard to all questions of importance including their Indian contacts, which, however, Nehru and his associates do not like. There is evidence to believe that the Government of India have given expression of their feeling of resentment against Nepalese foreign policy as pursued consistently by its Prime Minister. Very recently a proposal to make Nepal shape its foreign and defence policy on the lines of the Delhi Government seems again to have failed to obtain Rana's willing acceptance. Even this year's Indo-Nepalese treaty was a failure as far as it left Nepal in a position to deal as it liked with all foreign powers. In addition to being extremely annoyed on this account the Indian leaders are perturbed over the

comparatively weak military strength of the Ranas *vis a vis* the onrush of communist movement in Tibet. They think that an autocratic Government of the type functioning in Nepal is not capable of mobilising all anti-communist elements except those strictly feudal. The Government of India do seem to take very seriously the question of introducing certain democratic changes in the administration of Nepal as a measure to counteract the growth of communist influence and save the vociferous of democratic elements from their blandishments, and here is a real source of conflict between the Ranas and the Indian leaders, more so because the former cannot view with favour any trends likely to affect their absolutism and grounds of vantage in the country. It is very difficult to say where this conflict will lead to and its terms of resolution. But one thing appears very definite and that is the pressure from Delhi applied in Kathmandu for changes. The future of the Rana family will depend on their readiness to co operate with the Government of India, and further obstinacy on their part is likely to create larger complications that will bring surely their downfall.

A new factor shaking them to the core is the recent advance the communists made in China, which again puts Nepal in immediate contiguity with the territory of a Government diametrically opposed to feudalism. Further, there is in Lhasa and other Tibetan centres a scattered community of Nepalese traders who are likely to be indoctrinated with ideas of communism as soon as the Chinese will contact them. Nepal is already bestirred. Active communist infiltration cannot be

discounted in the circumstances that have cropped up in the neighbouring north.

Thus we see that the Ranas' Nepal is threatened from within and without. It is true that these are not going to assert fully within a short period of time and without adequate efforts on the part of the Nepalese people. Perhaps Nepal will have to wait for a revolutionary situation to mature for the duration of the Asian struggle in completion. But in no circumstances it is going to be a very long time. Now Red China poses a new issue. The triumph of the people's cause in that part of Asia just north of Nepal has a very great significance for us. The way the Kathmandu tyrants are shaken to the marrow is an augury from which we cannot shut our eyes. The feudal structure of Nepal faces a violent storm. The situation is gradually developing to that end. Our people do experience a new spur of enthusiasm for their struggle. The Nepalese democratic struggle in these circumstances is bound to make rapid strides, to record a progress which would not have been possible in the old Asian set up. When imperialist structures are cracking in every part of the world, the Nepalese autocrats whose strength rested on these are not going to put up a fight for their existence just for want of support so far propping them up. They are doomed to disappear. Nepal cannot remain feudal when the two countries on its borders enjoy a democratic government of their own.

But there are pitfalls. It is for the people of Nepal to grow sufficiently alert and be on their guard. Inimi-

cal forces are working to sabotage our movement under a false show of sympathy and efforts are being made to buttress reaction as against the democratic elements. Ranaism is likely to appear in a new deceitful garb of democracy propped up by outside reaction particularly American. This is the time to understand the inner current of forces active in that direction. Failure would lead to new complications and the progress so far made may get retarded. It must be our endeavour not to be waylaid by glib slogans of reforms and carry on the struggle whatever be its immediate result.

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APPENDIX I

Treaty of Segowlie, signed on the 2nd day of December 1815.

The following are the four relevant articles determining Nepal's foreign relation.

Article 5th

The Rajah of Nepal renounces for himself, his heirs, and successors, all claim to or connection with the countries lying to the west of the River Kali, and engages never to have any concern with those countries or the inhabitants thereof.

Article 6th

The Rajah of Nepal engages never to molest or disturb the Rajah of Sikkim in the possession of his territories but agrees, if any differences shall arise between the State of Nepal and the Rajah of Sikkim, or the subjects, that such differences shall be referred to the arbitration of the British Governments, by whose award the Rajah of Nepal engages to abide.

Article 7th

The Rajah of Nepal hereby engages never to take or retain in his service any British subject, nor the subject of any European or American State, without the consent of the British Government.

Article 8th

In order to secure and improve the relations of amity and peace hereby established between the two States, it is agreed that accredited Ministers from each shall reside at the court of the other.

APPENDIX II

TEXT OF TREATY OF 1923 BETWEEN NEPAL AND GREAT BRITAIN

Whereas peace and friendship have now existed between the British Government and the Government of Nepal since the signing of the Treaty of Segowlie on the 2nd day of December One thousand Eight Hundred and fifteen, and whereas since that date the Government of Nepal has ever displayed its true friendship for the British Government and the British Government has constantly shown its goodwill towards the Government of Nepal, and whereas the Governments of both the countries are now desirous of still further strengthening and cementing the good relations and friendship which have subsisted between them for more than a century, the two High Contracting Parties having resolved to conclude a new Treaty of Friendship have agreed upon the following Articles :—

Article 1st

There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Governments of Great Britain and Nepal and the two Governments agree mutually to acknowledge and respect each other's independence, both internal and external.

Article 2nd

All previous Treaties, Agreements and Engagements, since and including the Treaty of Segowlie of One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifteen, which have been concluded between the two Governments are hereby confirmed, except so far as they may be altered by the present Treaty.

Article 3rd

As the preservation henceforth of friendly relation with the neighbouring States whose territories adjoin their common frontiers is to the mutual interests of both the High Contracting Parties they hereby agree to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with these States likely to rupture such friendly relations, and each to exert its good offices as far as many be possible to remove such friction and misunderstanding.

Article 4th

Each of the High Contracting Parties will use all such measures as it may deem practicable to prevent its territories being used for purposes inimical to the security of the other.

Article 5th

In view of the long-standing friendship that has subsisted between the British Government and the Government of Nepal, and for the sake of cordial neighbourly relations between them, the British Government agrees that the Nepal Government shall be free

to import from or through British India into Nepal whatever arms, ammunition, machinery, warlike material, or stores may be required or desired for the strength and welfare of Nepal, and that this arrangement shall hold good for this all time as long as the British Government is satisfied that the intentions of the Nepal Government are friendly and that there is no immediate danger to India from such importations. The Nepal Government, on the other hand, agrees that there shall be no export of such arms and ammunitions, etc. across the frontier of Nepal either by the Nepal Government or by private individuals.

If, however, any convention for the regulation of the Arms Traffic, to which the British Government may be a party, shall come into force, the right of importation of arms and ammunition by the Nepal Government shall be subject to the proviso that the Nepal Government shall first become a party to that convention and that such importation shall only be made in accordance with provisions of that convention.

APPENDIX III

TREATY OF PEACE BETWEEN NEPAL AND TIBET, 1856

A

The following is a translation of the Nepalese text. There are three other translations, one from the Tibetan text, one by Sir Charles Bell, and the third by C. U. Aitchison (China), which differ slightly from the Nepalese in some particulars :—

“We, the undermentioned Nobles, Bharadars, and Lamas representing the Gorkha Government and the

Tibetan Government (The Tibetan text here inserts "having assembled together" and Sir Charles Bell "held a Conference.") have mutually settled a Treaty of the following ten Articles, and with Supreme Being as witness we have affixed our seals unto it of our own free-will and choice." (The Tibetan text omits "of our own free-will and choice." Instead it inserts "being satisfied.") The Emperor of China shall continue to be regarded with respect." (Aitchison here has "We further agree that the Emperor of China shall be obeyed by both States as before.") as heretofore. So long as the Governments continue to abide by the terms set forth herein, they shall live in amity like two brothers.

May the Supreme Being not allow that side to prosper which may make war upon the other ; and may the side be exempt from all sin in making war upon the other side which violates the terms contained in this agreement (Treaty)—(Here follow the names and seals of the signatories.)

SCHEDULE OF THE ARTICLES OF THE TREATY

Article I

Tibet shall pay a sum of Rupees ten thousand annually to the Gorkha Government. (The Tibetan text inserts the words "in cash," but Aitchison has the words "as a tribute," and Sir Charles Bell "as a present.")

Article II

Gorkha and Tibet have both been regarding the Emperor of China with respect. (Aitchison here has

“borne allegiance.”) Tibet being merely a country of Monasteries of Lamas and a place for recitation of prayers and practice of religious austerities, should troops of any other Raja invade Tibet in future (The Tibetan text has “should any other Government invade” while Sir Charles Bell says, “if any foreign country attacks.” Gorkha will afford such assistance and protection as it can.

Article III

Tibet shall not levy any taxes (on routes), duties (on merchandise) and rates (of any other kind) leviable by Tibet on the merchants and subjects of the country of Gorkha.

Article IV

Tibet shall return to the Gorkha Government all soldiers held as prisoners and also all officers, soldiers, women and guns (The Tibetan text and Sir Charles Bell both add “servants.”) of Gorkha that were captured and taken during the war, and the Gorkha Government shall return to Tibet all the soldiers of Tibet captured in the war, as also the arms the yaks whatever there may be belonging to the Rayats of Kirong, Kuti, Jhunga, Taklakhar, and Chhewar Gumbha (Aitchison follows the Nepalese text here in the names of place, but the Tibetan has “Purang and Rang Shar” instead of “Taklakhar and Chhewar-Gumbha,” while Sir Charles Bell for the first three has “Kyi-rong, Nya-nang, Dzong-ga” and follows the Tibetan text for the last two. Aitchison renders “Dhyaklang”: (of the Nepalese and Tibetan texts) “Dhakling,” while Sir Charles Bell calls

it "Tarling" and adds another place, "Latse" which is not recorded in any other text) and on the completion of this Treaty the Gorkha troops that are in Taklakhar, Chhewar Gumbha, Kerong, Junga, Kuti Dhyaklang, and upto (Aitchison has "this side of" instead of "upto" while Sir Charles Bell does not mention the Bhairab Langur range at all). Bhairab Langur range shall be withdrawn and the places evacuated.

Article V

Henceforth not a Naikya (Headman, The Tibetan text has "Newar Naikya," which Aitchison has a note added by Col. Ramsay that a Naikie meant a person of inferior rank) but a Bharadar shall be posted by the Gorkha Government at Lhasa.

Article VI

The Gorkha Government (Aitchison adds "with the free consent of the Government of Tibet") will establish its own trade factory (Sir Charles Bell has "will open shop") at Lhasa which will be allowed to trade freely in all kinds of merchandise from gems ornaments to articles of clothing and food.

Article VII

The Gorkha Bharadar at Lhasa shall not try and determine suits and cases amongst subjects and merchants of Tibet ; (Aitchison has "will not interfere in the dispute, etc.") and Tibet shall not try and determine suits and cases amongst Gorkha subjects, merchants, the Kasmeries of Nepal (The Tibetan text

has "Mussalmans" for "Kasmeris," while Sir Charles Bell has "Mohamedans of Kathmandu" Aitchison has "Kashmiris" but omits "of Nepal") residing within the jurisdiction of Lhasa. In the event of dispute between the jurisdiction and merchants of Gorkha and those of Tibet, the Bharadars of both Gorkha and Tibet shall sit together and jointly adjudicate the cases. All incomes [(fines, etc.) (Aitchison has "Amdani")] from such adjudications realised from the subjects and merchants of Tibet shall be taken by Tibet, and those realised from the Gorkha subjects and merchants and Kasmeries shall be taken by Gorkha.

Article VIII

A Gorkha subject who goes to the country of Tibet after committing murder of any person of Gorkha (the other texts all omit "of any person of Gorkha") shall be surrendered by Tibet to Gorkha ; and Tibetan subject who goes to the country of Gorkha after committing murder of any person of Tibet (The other texts all omit "of any person of Tibet") shall be surrendered by Gorkha to Tibet.

Article IX

If the property of Gorkha subjects and merchants be plundered by any person of Tibet, the Bharadars of Tibet shall compel the restoration of such property to the Gorkha subjects and merchants ; should the property be not forthcoming from the plunderer, Tibet shall (the Tibetan text and Sir Charles Bell here insert "after making enquiries" and "after enquiry") compel

him to enter into arrangement for restitution (of such property). The (Tibetan text Sir and Charles Bell add "within an extended time." While Aitchison has "and will be allowed a reasonable time to make it good"), of the property of the Tibetan subjects and merchants. Should the property be not forthcoming from the plunderer, Gorkha shall compel him to enter into an agreement for the restitution (of such property).

Article X

After the completion of the Treaty neither side shall act vindictively against the person or property of the subjects of Tibet who may have joined the Gorkha Durbar during the war, or of the subjects of Gorkha who may have so joined the Tibetan Durbar.

This the third day of Light fortnight of Chaitra in the year of Sumbat 1912.

N. B.—Bharadars are the High Civil or Military Officers under the Government of Nepal or of Tibet.

In this translation "Tibet is used for "Bhote."

