

Political Participation in an Asian Monarchy A Case Study of Nepal

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I. Introduction

To gain a proper perspective of the previous political experiments and the present day Panchayat system of Nepal, it is necessary to analyse in brief the historical and political evolution of the country. The actual modern history of Nepal starts in the year 1951 after the success of the Revolution of 1950–51, which was carried out in alliance between the Nepalese royal house of Shah and progressive political parties under the leadership of the democratic-socialistic Nepali Congress Party against the century-old autocratic regime of the powerful Rana clan. A certain analogy with the Japanese Shogunate system is evident. But unlike in Japan, where the Meiji Restoration led to the end of feudal rule and the contact with the West resulted in an accelerated modernisation of the country, in Nepal, the restoration of the royal prerogatives did not bring about large scale change in the social, economic and political spheres.

However, the modern development of Nepal started, although by fits and starts, after 1951. During the rule of the oligarchic Rana clan (1946–1951), Nepal was hermetically sealed off from the outside world and economically exploited by this clan. The administration — whether at the centre or in the peripherie — served basically this exploitation¹. The political and administrative institutions which had been created during the reign of the Shahs and which were to some degree democratic and progressive were completely superseded by dictatorial para-military institutions.

After the Revolution of 1950–51, the newly-restored Shah royal house and the politicians went through a learning-process. They had carried out a political revolution but had neither the native ability nor experience in government. Moreover, an economic infra-structure and a modern trained civil-service were completely absent. Unlike the other countries of South Asia, Nepal was never a part of the British Raj, and it had, therefore, no imported political and administrative institutions nor had its leaders experience in self-government and parliamentary practice. Whatever the pros and cons of British colonial rule, India, Pakistan, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Burma had indeed the overwhelming advantage of well-oiled economic infra-structures and sophisticated political and administrative machineries. In Nepal, the political leaders had to start from scratch in creating political institutions and modern departments of government. Moreover, a new balance of political roles had to be achieved in the national society.

¹ Regmi, D. R., *A Century of Family Autocracy in Nepal*. Kathmandu, 1958 (1950); Kumar, Satish, *Rana Polity in Nepal*. London, 1967.

At the political level, a coalition government was formed between the Ranas and the leading Nepalese political party, the Nepali Congress, which had a progressive programme comparable to that of the left-wing of the Indian National Congress or the Socialist Party of India. In fact, the Nepalese Revolution was not a complete break with the past or with tradition. According to the achieved results, it would perhaps be more correct to speak of a partial transfer of power. On the other hand, the aims of the Revolution, or of any revolution for that matter, were fundamental in nature, i.e. it aimed at a complete transformation of the political, social and economic conditions in a comparatively short period of time. In other words, the Nepalese Revolution of 1950–51 was only a political revolution, the social and economic revolutions had yet to be achieved².

The Revolution of 1950–51 brought about a complete change in the status and rôle of the king in Nepalese society and politics. During the Rana regime he had been a mere marionette – a powerless prisoner in his own palace. Now he was raised to the level of a powerful and active head of state. King Tribhuvan had placed himself demonstratively on the side of the anti-Rana movement and had, therefore, a very popular following among the Nepalese people. In his historical proclamation from 18th February 1951, he promised the Nepalese people a constitutional, representative and democratic system³. Hereafter, the 18th February has been celebrated as Nepal's National Day, the day on which prajatantra or democracy was introduced. The achievement of the goals of 18th February 1951, has been since then the yearning of all enlightened and educated Nepalese.

At the end of 1951, the Rana-Congress coalition government was dissolved. At the same time, this meant the end of the political – but not the social and economic – function of the Ranas as an elite. The next government was also a coalition – this time between the Congress and independent politicians. Many people set their hopes on this government in expectation that reforms would now be introduced. Instead government malfunctioned and communication and information within the Nepali Congress broke down. The Congress Prime Minister, M. P. Koirala revealed himself as a reactionary and refused to put the party programme into practice. The expulsion of the Premier from his own party led to the fall of the first “commoner's” government in Nepal's history⁴ and generated at the same time a political scandal. The result was that the Nepali Congress was excluded from all governments until the year 1959. The seeds of democracy had been planted in Nepal, but it would be a long time before the tender offshoots showed themselves. The question when the plant would flower into blossoms, was at this stage highly academic.

² Cf. Huntington, Samuel P., *Political Order in Changing Societies*: “A full-scale revolution thus involves the rapid and violent destruction of existing political institutions, the mobilization of new groups into politics, and the creation of new political institutions.” New Haven and London, 1970, p. 266.

³ Devkota, G. B., *Nepal ko Rajnitik Darpan*. (= *A Political Mirror of Nepal*). Kathmandu, 1960, p. 49–52.

⁴ Joshi, B. L. and Rose, L. E., *Democratic Innovations in Nepal*. Berkeley, 1966, p. 98 ff.

II. Political development after 1951

The resulting political situation was highly confused. After 1951 many political parties and organisations had mushroomed into existence for the only reason that the leaders could have a basis and/or following to achieve power, prestige and economic rewards, i.e. through negotiations to gain political office in coalition governments. This peculiar situation arose, because a general election for a constitutional assembly or a legislature had not yet taken place and ministers in the government were still appointed by the king. A number of factors, among them the intrigues of the smaller political parties, the inordinate thirst for power of some politicians, the absence of King Tribhuvan from the political scene because of ill-health and the inability and lack of political acumen of the royal advisers, resulted in the fall of one government after another. The aims of the revolution had long since been buried and forgotten.

After the early death of King Tribhuvan, who earned the epithet 'citizen-king' for his democratic outlook, his son Mahendra ascended the throne. King Mahendra was not in favour of general elections which had been promised by his father. Like many other Nepalese he had observed the political bickering of the inexperienced politicians with growing disgust, and his statements and actions suggested that he was not going to play second fiddle to them. In the meantime, most of the politicians, at least of the bigger parties, through their own political experience, observation of politics in the neighbouring countries and not least through international communication and information, seemed to mature and grow in stature. They had learned the hard way that successive groupings and cliques could not govern, and that a true mandate from the people would be the only solution. Thus King Mahendra, on the one hand, and leading politicians and intellectuals, on the other, came to diametrically opposite conclusions, after an analysis of the same situation. A head-on clash between them was the result.

It is understandable that King Mahendra wanted to defend the newly won royal powers. However, the leading political parties were equally insistent on peoples' rule through elected representatives. Under the leadership of the Nepali Congress, three political parties applied the Gandhian technique of nonviolent civil disobedience, coupled with protests and demonstrations in December 1957 and compelled King Mahendra to capitulate. An interim government under the chairmanship of Subarna Shumsher, a leading figure of the Revolution, appointed a commission to write the constitution (which was then duly proclaimed by King Mahendra) and made arrangements to hold the first general election in Nepal's history (1959).

III. Parliamentary Democracy

It has been said that King Mahendra only agreed to the general elections, because he was convinced that no stable majority would result, and he could, therefore, have free hand in the affairs of government. However, the Nepali Congress was returned to power in the first parliament with an absolute majority (74 seats in a total of 104). Political legitimation for government had been established for the first time. An overwhelming illiterate population had exercised its democratic rights.

The constitution was not very clear about the function of the god-king, who inspite of the political success of the Nepali Congress was still highly revered. In political practice he was in any case pushed into the background – for the time being.

The new Government of B. P. Koirala (not to be mistaken for his half-brother M. P. Koirala) immediately started to put into effect the long needed social and economic reforms. At the political level it was very tolerant of the opposition parties in Parliament: Gorkha Parishad (19 Seats), Communist Party (4 Seats) Praja Parishad (3 Seats), Independents (4 Seats). The Gorkha Parishad which had been formed by the Ranas and their supporters had now evolved into a broad-based party and was now the official opposition in parliament.

Besides its strong internal popular support, the new Congress government enjoyed the well wishes of many foreign governments and political parties. The Congress Party was a member of the Asian Socialist Conference and had observer's status at the Socialist International.

Already the composition of the new government showed its determination to realize the Congress Party's ambitious and progressive aims⁵. The members of the new government represented various regions and many ethnic groups. For the first time a woman became a minister. Some of the reforms which were started without regard to vested interests were, in brief:

- Land-reforms, i.e. the abolition of landed-property and the land-lord system, and the re-distribution of land to real peasants.
- The reorganisation of the central and district administration on efficiency principles.
- A real chance for everyone to enter and rise in the civil service, army and economy, according to education, ability and merit, i.e. recruitment to take place at all social levels and from the different ethnic groups: vertical and horizontal mobility was thereby encouraged.
- A planned national economy according to three principles:
 - a) rapid increase of the per capita and national income,
 - b) modernization and development of the agricultural sector,
 - c) progressive reduction of inequality in income and wealth.
- The reactivation and improvement of the ancient village assemblies or Pan-chayats which had been more or less extirpated during Rana regime. The government's intent was to develop political participation of the people and at the same time to enable their economic mobilisation for development activities⁶. Thus, the government had appointed district development officers to carry out short term development projects at the district level.

The modernization and reform policy of the B. P. Koirala government was, of course, immediately opposed by the established and traditional elites at the centre

⁵ For the politics of the Congress government, see Joshi and Rose, *op. cit.*, ch. 13–18 and Gupta, A., *Politics in Nepal*. Bombay, 1964, ch. 5–7.

⁶ Cf. Nettl, J. P., *Political Mobilization: "... the case of economic development preceeding and causing socio-political change represents the typical historical situation of the West, the case of socio-political change and priorities preceeding and in turn bringing about economic development represents the more recent historical situation of Communist and the current needs of the Third World."* p. 234. London, 1967.

(Kathmandu) and the peripherie (districts), among them the absentee landlords. In the upper house (Senate) of the Nepalese parliament, the 18 royal appointees (in total of 36) followed a policy of opposition for opposition's sake. The prime minister had foreseen this situation a long time back as he remarked: "the transition of the country from a 'feudal autocracy' to a socialistic pattern of society (will) inevitably be accompanied by open and bitter conflicts between the forces of change and those of reaction"⁷.

However, the overwhelming majority of the Nepalese intellectuals were of the opinion that reforms were necessary. In the House of Representatives, the political parties adapted themselves remarkably well to the parliamentary process. The Gorkha Parishad and the Communist Party carried out their opposition rôles very critically but in a fair manner. Consequently, the Nepali Congress Government could accomplish much of its reform programme and carried out a successful foreign policy⁸. Its popularity among the common people rose even higher.

However, dark clouds were already on the horizon. In retrospect, one can conclude that the first, and the only democratically elected government in Nepal's history became too self-satisfied with its (undoubtedly unparalleled) achievements and completely ignored the danger from the reactionary elements of Nepalese society. King Mahendra himself had been observing the growing popularity of the government with distrust and jealousy. He was dissatisfied with his rôle of constitutional monarch — unlike his British counterpart he wanted to reign as well as rule. The Nepali Congress government underestimated the following of the king, who had in the meantime allied himself with the traditional elements of Nepalese society, including the army whose leading officers were from the Rana family.

On the 15th December 1960 King Mahendra carried out a successful coup d'état, at a moment when many members of the government were absent from the capital. Key officers of the army and the police, as well as the secret service were on the King's side, but not the overwhelming majority of the younger officers, civil servants and politically active students. Unfortunately B. P. Koirala, the prime minister, who was then addressing a youth rally, allowed himself to be arrested without any resistance. The king immediately ordered the arrest of other government members and the leaders of other political parties, suspended the constitution and banned all political parties. The Indian premier Nehru described the situation succinctly: "This is a complete reversal of democracy, of the democratic process . . ."⁹

IV. Direct Royal Government

After his coup d'état, king Mahendra built a government comprising his closest followers, including two leading members of the banned Nepali Congress. He himself took over the chairmanship and was, therefore, both head-of-state, as well as, head-of-government. His direct participation in politics no longer freed him

⁷ Cited in Joshi and Rose, op. cit., p. 356.

⁸ For an analysis of Nepal's foreign policy see the author's doctoral thesis: "Die Außenpolitik des Königreichs Nepal und ihre innerstaatlichen Voraussetzungen." Munich, 1972/1973 (Verlag Werner Blasaditsch, Augsburg). For the era of the Nepali Congress, see p. 144—259.

⁹ Asian Recorder (New Delhi), vol. VII, No. 2, Jan. 8—14, 1961, p. 3727.

from a critique of his policies, i.e. he no longer could have his cake and eat it too. Or in terms of constitutional law, he could no longer hide behind the screen of the maxim (borrowed from British constitutional law): "the king can do no wrong!" King Mahendra's political behavior provides a striking contrast to that of Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia, before the proclamation of the Republic.

The leaders and cadres of the political parties who escaped arrest assembled in India and built an united front to oppose the regime of King Mahendra and to reintroduce the democratic experiment in Nepal. This united front under the leadership of General Subarna Shumsher (with the detention of B. P. Koirala, now the leading figure of the Nepali Congress), Bharat Shumsher, formerly opposition leader in the Nepalese parliament and Srivastava of the United Democratic Party had many qualities of a revolutionary exile movement¹⁰.

From their bases in India and pockets of support inside the country, the united front applied guerrilla tactics and propaganda warfare, which were tolerated to a considerable extent from the Indian central government, as well as, the provincial governments of W. Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. King Mahendra's regime was undermined to such an extent, that signs of negotiation with the democratic forces became evident. But at this juncture, the border war between India and China started in the autumn of 1962, which had far reaching repercussions on Nepal's internal and foreign policies. The Sino-Indian war had a stabilizing effect on the royal regime. India which was up to now rather critical of King Mahendra's politics came to an understanding with him and put a complete stop on the political activities of the Nepalese in exile. King Mahendra himself went ahead with plans for a new political system with no concessions to his political opponents. Two years after his take-over of power, King Mahendra proclaimed a new constitution on the 16th December 1962. The era of the "Panchayat System" had begun.

V. The Panchayat System

The Nepalese Panchayat System has to be seen in the light of the theoretical discussion of development. An attempt has to be made to answer the question: "reform or revolution?" But as with most developing nations, reform or revolution are (or should be) only the means to achieve long-term ends. For an overwhelming majority of the developing nations, which were by and large colonies, the process of disintegration of the traditional societal order took place during the period of colonization itself. For these colonies the alternative seemed simple enough; development meant modernization¹¹ and modernization was Westernization; i.e. the introduction of Western techniques and institutions and the assimilation into Western civilization. However, the experience of the developing nations with colonialism and imperialism, before and after independence made the European models of doubtful value.

¹⁰ For the policies and practices of the Nepali Congress in exile, see its organ "Nepal Today", published from Calcutta.

¹¹ See Eisenstadt, S. N., *Modernization: Protest and Change*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966, for a lucid elaboration of this key concept.

Therefore, Nepalese leaders came to the conclusion that it was necessary to choose its own way to a developed national society. Nepalese intellectuals were in favour of economic aid but not in the acceptance of Western European culture. It remains to be seen whether this concept can in fact be realized. On the one hand, it is common knowledge that social and cultural change in the system and the mobilization¹² of the mass of the population (which still is steeped in traditional ways of thinking), are necessary for the economic and political development of the country. Increased political participation is a sine qua non for economic and political development. On the other hand, the leading political decision-makers in Nepal are neither willing nor able to carry out such reforms which would bring about such political participation.

The international aspects of the developmental process gain importance in this situation. When the decision-makers do not solve the problems of development, Nepal will come more and more under the economic and therefore, political dependence of India. At the same time, the increasing hopelessness of the situation could lead to a Communist revolution with the possibility of an annexation by China. In both extreme cases, the independent political existence of Nepal would be sealed, and with it 'an independent path to development' would be ruled out.

For our present purpose, we will not attempt to define political participation in terms of certain independent and dependent variables, such as income, sex, profession, education and place of residence, but rather to describe and analyse the nature of the political process in the special context of the Panchayat system. King Mahendra, its leading advocate conceived of the Panchayat system as an alternative to parliamentary democracy. We will, therefore, try to show to what extent the Panchayat system contains democratic elements, and more important, to what degree it is conducive to the developmental process. As a working definition, political participation can be defined as a combination of the following activities: taking part (as a voter or engaged worker) in local district and national elections, taking part in political meetings and discussions, standing as a candidate in elections, active role in local, district and national institutions.

According to its leading ideologists, the Panchayat System is based upon democracy at the grassroots¹³. The constitution envisages a pyramidal structure¹⁴. At the base are primary units at the village and town level. Every village or group of villages — through the village assembly, and every town — through the urban

¹² For a socio-political analysis of mobilization cf. Nettl, J. P., op. cit.

¹³ See in this connexion the message of the new King Birendra on the National Day (18. 2. 1972): "... the Panchayat system of democracy, being consonant with the popular will and having its roots deeply embedded in the Nepalese social milieu, is not only dynamic but also capable of evolutionary growth and development." Cited in: "Nepal". Embassy Bulletin, Nr. 1/72, vol. VI. Kgl. Nepalesische Botschaft, Bonn-Bad Godesberg.

¹⁴ See Ministry of Law and Justice/His Majesty's Government of Nepal. The Constitution of Nepal. Kathmandu, 1963 and "The First Amendment to the Constitution," Kathmandu, 1967. There are innumerable descriptions of the Panchayat system. For official versions cf. Pradhan, B., Panchayat Democracy in Nepal. New Delhi, 1963 and Ministry of Home-Panchayat, The Panchayat: A Planned Democracy. Kathmandu, 1967. For scholarly studies see Gupta, A., op. cit., Ch. VIII and Joshi and Rose, op. cit., ch. 19–22.

inhabitants, elect their respective village or town panchayat. The panchayat is, therefore, an elected committee or council¹⁵.

At the next level, the district assembly is composed of one elected member from each village panchayat and one-third of the members of each town panchayat in a district. In the whole country there is a total of about 4000 primary units, including 14 town panchayats. The members of each district assembly elects its own executive committee or district panchayat. There is a total of 75 districts in the country, which coincide with the development districts of the national economic plans. Depending on the population of the district, the members of the district panchayat elect delegates to the zonal assemblies. The zonal assemblies from a total of 14 zones or provinces function only as an electoral college, i.e. they elect 90 of the 119 members of the National Panchayat or national legislature. The supreme law-making body is, therefore, elected indirectly.

The village and town panchayats have certain administrative, taxing and judicial powers and have developed to a certain extent as active institutions, which have awakened the interest of the people to participate in the development of the community and attempt to solve community problems independently. However, many factors mostly extraneous, e.g. limited financial resources, the pressure from district and central administrations and the continued corruption and incompetence of officials from the central administration, have prevented further development, i.e. there is stagnation. Similarly, the district institutions cannot develop properly, because the officials from the capital are not cognizant of village and district problems.

As substitutes for political parties, which are officially banned, the so-called mass organisations for farmers, workers, women, veterans and youth were created. These mass organisations (incorrectly called class organisations in the official jargon) nominate a further 15 members to the National Panchayat. The activities of these mass organisations are laid down strictly in their written constitutions and the directives of the central administration. They cannot develop and function independently of state organisations, like trade-unions or farmers' organisations, i.e. "interest articulation" and "interest aggregation"¹⁶ are not allowed.

A serious and undemocratic element of the panchayat system is the favour shown to the educated elite in the election process. In a system where members of the National Panchayat are either indirectly elected or nominated, an exception is made for the university graduates, who directly elect 4 members to the National Panchayat. The King himself nominates up to 15 per cent of the total membership of this national legislature.

The power structure in the political system is, therefore, clear. The ministers in the central government must be members of the national panchayat. However, they are chosen by the king to whom they are responsible and not to the peoples' representatives. Interest-groups and factions are not allowed in the national panchayat, as they would be the nucleus of nascent political parties. The central

¹⁵ For a comparison with the situation of panchayats in Uttar Pradesh, India cf. Kantowsky, Detlev, *Indien. Gesellschaftsstruktur und Politik*. Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt a. M., 1972, S. 25–46.

¹⁶ Cf. Almond's Introduction in Gabriel A. Almond and James C. Coleman, (ed). *The Politics of the Developing Areas*. Princeton, N.J., 1960, S. 33–45.

administration itself cannot function independently, as it is dependent to a great extent on directives from the royal secretariat. Consequently, the advisers and officials of the royal palace have more power and enjoy more prestige than the ministers and other high officials of the central administration. In addition, the work of the government and the central administration is made difficult through frequent changes and removals from office¹⁷.

As a result, the Panchayat System has not functioned as well as its creators and ideologues had hoped. If we consider the developmental process as composed of economic-technological, socio-cultural and political components, then the Panchayat System has made little progress in this regard in the twelve years of its existence.

We can summarize, in brief, the factors which hamper political participation and modernization in Nepal. The participation process is dependent to a large degree on the general education level prevailing in a country¹⁸. In Nepal, education is, in principle, open to all. However, equality of opportunity in education has not been made a reality because of:

- a) transport and communications problems of a mountainous country;
- b) financial difficulties faced by families at the lowest rungs of the social ladder, who have no money for school fees and are dependent on child labour in agriculture or household;
- c) non-existence of schools and/or teachers in the countryside, where 70 per cent of the total population live¹⁹.

The development of the capital city Kathmandu and its environs, as well as other urban areas has been pushed ahead at the disadvantage of rural areas. Specialized and trained personnel, like teachers, medical doctors and engineers are not willing (and have been given no incentive) to work in the rural areas. Even officials and administrators who ceaselessly preach "development" are not willing to work outside the Kathmandu valley. For this reason, two of the chief aims of the Panchayat System, namely the decentralization of the administration and the modernization of the rural areas has remained on paper, although since 1969 the so-called "Back to the Village Campaign" is in full swing.

In spite of political indoctrination, the participation process has remained at a minimum in the rural areas. The socio-political structure of the villages has remained intact to a great extent. The real decisions are still made by the tra-

¹⁷ See Kautsky, John H.: „Der Platz an der Spitze ist in Agrargesellschaften so beschränkt und der Kampf um seine Besetzung so hart, daß die Regierungen einen hohen Grad von Instabilität aufweisen.“ In: „Politik im Stadium der Unterentwicklung und im Stadium der Industrialisierung,“ in: Eisermann, G. (ed.), *Soziologie der Entwicklungsländer*. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1968, p. 45. Orig. in Kautsky H., *Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries*. New York and London, 1962, pp. 13–26.

¹⁸ Cf. Harbis, F. and Myers, C. A.: "Education is the key that unlocks the door to modernization." In: *Education, Manpower and Economic Growth*. New York, 1964, p. 181, cited in Coleman, James S. (ed.), *Education and Political Development*, Princeton, N.J., 1965, p. 3.

¹⁹ Nepal has a population of 11,29 Million after the latest census with a rank of 49 among the sovereign nations of the world; a total area of 140,791 sq. km. (country rank: 84). Fischer *Weltatmanach*, 1973. Frankfurt a. M., 1972, p. 118.

ditional elites — landowners and rich farmers. They have taken over the majority of the posts and functions in the panchayats and mass organisations²⁰.

The monarch has been stylized as the chief bearer of national progress²¹. Under the late King Mahendra the personality cult was extended very far, although he possessed no leadership and especially no charisma²². Modernization in the sense of social change is made very difficult because of the function of the Nepalese king as the protector and head of the Hindu religion — a religion that in its present state acts as a regressive force. At the same time Hinduism acts as a stabilizing factor in the existing socio-economic and political structures. Max Weber's thesis that the caste-system has negative effects on rural development cannot be disproved²³.

The educated elite are politically active as in other developing nations and disillusioned and dissatisfied with the present conditions of the country but because of the prevailing power-structure are quite helpless. The monarch, the palace secretariat, the closest followers, leading defenders of the system, higher officials and army officers represent the apex of power²⁴. These ruling elites are able to direct and control the state apparatus and through it the mass of the people²⁵. Protest has been reduced to a minimum because of the existence problem.

The elimination of political parties from the political system has had a negative effect on the participation progress²⁶. The larger political parties were becoming increasingly sophisticated politically, were organised on broad national lines

²⁰ Cf. Huntington, *op. cit.*, p. 36: "In traditional societies political participation may be widespread at the village level, but at any levels above the village it is limited to a very small group."

²¹ *Ibid.*: "The more vigorously a monarch exercises authority, the more difficult it is to transfer that authority to another institution . . . It is quite natural for him to feel that he is indispensable to the order, unity, and progress of his country, that his subjects would indeed be lost without him." p. 179.

²² See Julian Freund: „Weber describes charisma . . . as the exceptional quality of a person who appears to possess supernatural, superhuman or at the least unaccustomed powers, so that he emerges as a providential, exemplary or extraordinary figure, and for this reason is able to gather disciples or followers around him." In: *The Sociology of Max Weber*. New York, 1969 (1968, French: 1966).

²³ Cf. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. 3 vols. Tübingen, 1921; Werner, A: „Was hemmt den Fortschritt in Indien?" In: *Der Bürger im Staat*, 20. Jhg., H. 1, März, 1970, p. 19 f.

²⁴ Amitai Etzioni suggests a three-fold classification of power: "Power is either coercive (e. g. military forces), utilitarian (e. g. economic sanctions), or persuasive (e. g. propaganda)," in: *The Active Society. A Theory of Societal and Political Processes*. Collier-Macmillan, New York and London, 1968, p. 356. He also differentiates between political and social power: "The capacity to, control the state and other downward political processes" (political power); "the capacity of a societal unit to gain its way in the face of resistance by other societal units," (societal power), p. 670, *op. cit.*

²⁵ Cf. Etzioni's definition of an elite: "A control unit that specializes in the cybernetic functions of knowledge-processing and decision-making and in the application of power." *op. cit.*, p. 113, 668.

²⁶ Cf. Huntington, *op. cit.*, p. 407: "The no-party state is the natural state for a traditional society. As society moderizes, however, the no-party state becomes increasingly the anti-party state . . . The more hostile a government is toward political parties in a modern society, however, the greater the probable future instability of that society."

without an ethnic or regional bias and had contributed to the growing interest and active participation of the people in the political process²⁷. At the present stage there is a gap between the political leaders at the apex and the grass-roots.

In spite of the above mentioned handicaps, it would not be correct to speak of the failure of the Panchayat System. For, under certain conditions, it could evolve into a worthwhile experiment and as a real alternative to parliamentary democracy of the Westminster model. It remains to be seen what dynamism the new and young King Birendra brings into the Nepalese political process, not only in the short run but viewed in the long term of economic, social and political development.

²⁷ See Huntington, op. cit., p. 36: "The most fundamental aspect of political modernization is the participation in politics beyond the village or town level by social groups throughout the society and the development of new political institutions, such as political parties, to organize that participation."

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