

TOPICAL REPORT

Nepalese Political Parties: Developments since the 1991 Elections

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Based on a computer file updated regularly since 1990, this survey does not claim to be analytical but simply records some of the main developments in intra- and inter-party politics up to the recent (November 1994) general election.¹ Information has been drawn principally from the *Nepal Press Digest*, also from "Saptahik Bimarsha", *Spotlight* and other publications and from interviews conducted in Kathmandu. Only brief mention has been made of the pre-1991 history of each party, including its role in the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy, and fuller details will be found in Whelpton 1993 and in POLSAN 1992: 9-53; the latter also provides details of party organisation and attitudes of activists and parliamentarians. Popular perceptions of the parties and their support among different sections of the population are discussed using opinion survey data in Borre *et al.* 1994 and in IIDS 1993, while the issue of malpractice in the 1992 local elections is examined in DREFDEN 1992. Useful analysis of trends since the 1991 general election will be provided by the forthcoming CNAS publication of the proceedings of a June 1994 seminar on "State, Leadership and Politics in Nepal".

A. PARTIES REPRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT NOW AND/OR IN 1991-94

The underlined parties have held seats in the House of Representatives (Pratinidhi Sabha) under their own name. Percentages are of the 7,291,084 total votes cast in 1991 and 7,625,348 in the 1994 election;² in 1991 the turnout was 65.15% and the number of valid votes 6,969,061, and the 1994 figures were 62% and 7,384,277. Parties receiving less than 3% of the popular vote are not officially recognised as national parties and are not automatically entitled to exclusive use of the election symbol they were originally allotted. Where a party's number of seats changed between the two general elections, the new figure has been shown in brackets after the original one. Twelve minor groups contested the 1991 election without winning any seat, securing only 1.18% of valid votes between them, and 19 similar groups obtained 4.03% in 1994. Independent candidates attracted 4.17% of the vote in 1991, and three were elected, all of whom subsequently joined **Congress**. In 1994 the independents' share was 6.18% and seven of them gained seats.

NEPALI CONGRESS PARTY

(1991: 110 (114)³ seats - 37.75%; 1994: 83 seats - 33.38%)

Founded in India as the Nepali National Congress in 1947, **Congress** is the oldest party and, although now out of power, still the one with the largest share of the popular vote. It retains some prestige from its central role in the overthrow of the Rana regime, its victory in the 1959 election and its struggle

against the panchayat regime. The party's president, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, became prime minister in the 1990-91 interim government, which had three other Congress members: Yogprasad Upadhyaya (Home and Communications), Marshal Julum Shakya (Supply, Construction and Transport) and Mahendra Narayan Nidhi (Water Resources and Local Development). This domination of the pre-election government meant that Congress took the major blame for failure to meet the high expectations of April 1990. Although obtaining a clear majority of the 205 seats in May 1991, its prestige was dented by its losing to the **Nepal Communist Party (Unified Marxist-Leninist, abbreviated to UML)** in 4 of the 5 Kathmandu constituencies, including Bhattarai's own defeat by the UML's General Secretary. Marshal Julum Shakya was defeated in Patan-2, and Mahendra Narayan Nidhi (a veteran of the 1959-60 parliament) was the only Congress member of the interim administration to win a seat. Other defeated candidates included the wife and son of Ganesh Man Singh.

Bhattarai resigned the premiership shortly after the results were announced and the party General Secretary, Girija Prasad Koirala, became leader of the parliamentary board and prime minister. The brother of former prime ministers B.P. and M.P. Koirala, Girija Prasad had successfully contested the Tarai seats of Sunsari-1 and Morang-1. After the election he resigned from the Sunsari seat and also from the post of General Secretary. The new, all-Nepali Congress cabinet was as follows (asterisks denote those who had also been members of the 1959-60 parliament):

Girija Prasad KOIRALA	Prime Minister, Defence, Foreign, Finance, Health, Palace Affairs
Basudev RISAL	Water Resources, Communications
*Bal Bahadur RAI	Housing and Physical Planning
*Jagan Nath ACHARYA	Land Reform
*Sheikh IDRIS	Labour, Co-operatives, Social Welfare
Ram Hari JOSHI	Education and Culture, Tourism
Shailaja ACHARYA	Forest, Soil Conservation, Agriculture
Sher Bahadur DEUPA	Home Affairs
Ram Chandra PAUDYAL	Local Development
Dhundi Raj SHASTRI	Industry
Maheshwar Prasad SINGH	General Administration
Chiranjibi WAGLE	Supply
Tara Nath BHAT	Law, Justice, Parliamentary Affairs
Khum Bahadur KHADKA	Works and Transport
Gopal Man SHRESTHA	Commerce

Ram Baran Yadav (Dhanusha-5) and Mahesh Acharya (Congress nominee in the Upper House) were appointed for Health and Finance respectively in July.

A strong anti-communist, Koirala took a firm line against a civil service agitation over pay just after his government came into office, and a number of employees linked to the UML, which had sympathised with the agitation, lost their jobs. Koirala had long been at odds with the more-emollient Bhattarai, and disputes over patronage continued after the election. 'Supreme leader' Ganesh Man Singh, the eldest member of the troika to which B.P. had bequeathed the

party leadership, initially held the ring between them, but in the autumn he accused Koirala of appointing too many Brahmans to high positions and of disregarding the wishes of the party organisation.

At the end of 1991, Koirala dropped six of his original ministers and brought in 13 new ones. Those dismissed, who included Sheikh Idris, veteran of the 1959 parliament, and the party's Assistant General Secretary, Basudev Risal. Both Ganesh Man Singh and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai expressed unhappiness over the reshuffle and the prime minister's failure to consult with them beforehand; a major reason for the dismissals was in fact that Koirala believed these ministers had been taking instructions from Ganesh Man Singh. Ill-feeling was heightened because the ministers were not informed of their dismissal before it was publicly announced. The new Council of Ministers consisted of:

Prime Minister	Girija Prasad KOIRALA	Palace Affairs, Defence, Foreign Affairs
Ministers	Bal Bahadur RAI	Housing and Physical Planning
	Jagan Nath ACHARYA	Land Reform and Management
	Ram Hari JOSHI	Tourism
	Shailaja ACHARYA	Agriculture
	Sher Bahadur DEUPA	Home Affairs
	Ram Chandra PAUDYAL	Local Development
	Maheshwar Prasad SINGH	General Administration, Law & Justice, Parliamentary Affairs
	Khum Bahadur KHADKA	Works and Transport
	Govind Raj JOSHI	Education, Culture, Social Welfare
Ministers of State	Dr. Ram Baran Yadav	Health
	Mahesh Acharya	Finance
	Aishwarya Lal Pradhananga	Commerce and Supply
	Ramkrishna Tamrakar	Industry and Labour
	Bir Mani Dhakal	Forest and Environment
	Bijaya Kumar Gachhedar	Communications
	Laxman Prasad Ghimire	Water resources
Assistant Ministers	Siddha Raj Ojha	Land Reform and Management
	Dinabandhu Aryal	General Administration, Law and Justice, Parliamentary Affairs
	Shiva Raj Joshi	Works and Transport
	Surendra Prasad Chaudhari	Commerce and Supply
	Hasta Bahadur Malla	Education, Culture, Social Welfare

Dilendra Prasad Badu	Housing and Physical Planning
Diwakar Man Sherchan	Industry and Labour

At the Nepali Congress convention (mahadhivesan) held at Jhapa in February 1992, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was unanimously elected president. Ganesh Man, Singh, who had intensified his criticism of the government's record, announced he would withdraw from the leadership of the party but was persuaded to stay on in return for a promise that Bhattarai would resolve his complaints against the government within three months. The convention ended without taking a final decision on proposals by Koirala and his supporters which would have reduced the power of the troika, in particular providing for the election of half the members of the party's Central Committee, a body whose members were all nominated by the party president under the existing constitution. In April 1992, in response to growing violence between the workers of different political parties, Bhattarai made a controversial call for the Congress-affiliated Nepali Students Union to form a 'Peace Army' (Shanti Sena) to help maintain order. The growing Leftist agitation and in particular the violent demonstration and police firing in Kathmandu on 6 April caused Ganesh Man Singh to tone down his criticism of the government, but, when the grace period expired in May, he reiterated his threat to resign if not satisfied after the results of the local elections at the end of the month. In these elections Congress candidates were elected as mayors in 22 of the 36 municipalities and as deputy mayor in 21, whilst gaining 331 (=55.8%) of the seats on the municipal committees and just over 50% of the seats on Village Development Committees. Successes included the victory of Ganesh Man Singh's adopted son Prem Lal Singh in the contest for mayor of Kathmandu. Control of a majority of VDCs subsequently enabled Congress to gain 65% of the seats on the indirectly-elected District Development Committees. There was certainly some misuse of the administration to support Congress candidates, but this was not the decisive factor that some opposition parties claimed. Despite continuing discontent over economic difficulties, the bulk of the electorate appear to have felt that Congress administrations at local level would be in the best position to obtain development finance from the centre. Electors probably also placed the main blame for the recent violence on the various communist groups, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley.

In July the Agriculture Minister, the prime minister's niece Shailaja Acharya, was forced to resign when, without consulting her cabinet colleagues, she admitted to the House of Representatives that there was widespread corruption in her own and other ministries and invited the House to set up a commission of enquiry. Her portfolio was taken over by Local Development Minister Ram Chandra Paudyal.

Tensions within the party continued, including an outburst against the prime minister by Kuber Sharma, a close associate of Bhattarai, and more moderate criticism emanated from general secretary Mahendra Narayan Nidhi, who had been appointed by Bhattarai and was seen as his ally. Bhattarai himself was nevertheless able to act as conciliator and in December 1992 finally set up a 27-member Central Committee:

Mahendra Narayan Nidhi (General Secretary)	Bharat Shumsher
Basudev Risal (Joint General Secretary)	Dhundi Raj Shastri
Khanup Rude Rambabu (Treasurer)	Bhu Bikram Newang
Girija Prasad Koirala (P.M.)	Bal Bahadur K.C.
Mrs. Mangala Devi Singh	Taranath Ranabhat
Sushil Koirala	Mrs. Nona Koirala
Ms. Shailaja Koirala	Bhim Prasad Shrestha
Kuber Sharma	Mani Kumar Lama
Bal Bahadur Rai	Durgadutta Joshi
Sheikh Idris	Siddha Raj Ojha
Nilamber Panthi	Sher Bahadur Deupa
Ram Chandra Poudel	Chiranjibi Wagle
Surya Bhakta Adhikari	Atma Ram Ojha
Ganesh Man Singh (honorary member)	

There was some criticism of the committee's composition, in particular the inclusion of Kuber Sharma and Bharat Shumsher, strong opponents of the prime minister; also, Ranabhat, Shastri, Wagle, Idris and Risal were among the ministers who had been sacked by Girija a year earlier. The Land Reform minister Jagannath Acharya (veteran of the 1959 parliament) and the Transport Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka were reportedly among those resigning in protest from various sub-committees. There was also controversy over whether Bhattarai was entitled to use his powers under the party's 1960 constitution to appoint the committee on his own while amendments provisionally adopted at the Jhapa conference were awaiting ratification by the (still to be elected) General Council (mahasamiti) of the party.

In the same month, the Supreme Court ruled that the government must submit for parliamentary ratification its agreement with India which legitimised India's earlier construction of a dam on Nepalese territory at Tanakpur. While rejecting the government's case that the agreement was merely an 'understanding' which did not require parliamentary ratification the court did not decide whether it was a 'serious' matter requiring approval by two thirds of a joint session of Pratinidhi Sabha and Raj Sabha under clause 126 of the constitution (as most opposition parties had been maintaining), or whether a simple majority in the lower house would suffice. Although Ganesh Man Singh had said several times during autumn that the premier must resign if the government lost the case (and Koirala had countered with the threat to call mid-term elections) the Congress Central Committee opted instead for consultations with other parties. These took place against the background of a vigorous campaign both inside and outside parliament by the UML and three other communist groups (the **United People's Front**, the **Nepal Workers and Peasants Party** and **Masal**), who declared their willingness to discuss the problem with the Congress organisation, but called for Koirala's resignation and boycotted functions which he attended. After inter-party negotiations proved inconclusive, the government appeared ready to table the agreement in the house and to ratify by a simple majority, but was blocked by opposition from Ganesh Man Singh and the Speaker, Daman Nath Dhungana (a Congress M.P.). In April 1993 agreement was finally reached for the treaty to be introduced into parliament during the current session, which

was then about to end, but not to be formally debated until the next. An inter-party committee was to decide in the meantime on its treatment. However, there appeared to be no agreement on whether the committee would have to reach a consensus or whether the Congress majority on it could impose its own solution if necessary.

Internal controversy continued in February 1993, when the party's General Council agreed that the issue of the party's constitution should be referred to a special committee (which would report later to the Central Committee and the next General Council session) rather than be settled by the General Council itself as the Jhapa Convention required. In April, Jagannath Acharya, who had been accused of allowing improper transfers of land to his relatives, resigned as Minister of Land Reform, charging that he had not been allowed to implement real changes, and was replaced by his Assistant Minister, Siddha Raj Ojha. Two days earlier, Ganesh Man Singh had publicly called for a complete recasting or even replacement of the government.

There were violent clashes in late June and early July between the security forces and activists of the UML and six other Leftist Parties in the wake of the controversial deaths of UML leaders Madan Bhandari and Jeevraj Ashrit at Dasdhunga. Heavy flooding in southern Nepal caused a winding down of the movement. Negotiations that had already begun between Congress (represented by Chief Whip Tarini Dutta Chataut, Taranath Ranabhat and Arjun Narsingh K.C.) and the UML led to the signing of an agreement on 17 August. This included a renewed investigation of the Dasdhunga incident, continued discussions on Tanakpur, and the establishment of working parties to examine dismissals of Leftist teachers and civil servants. Leftist leaders maintained that there had also been a secret understanding that the prime minister would soon resign, although they refused to go into specific details until UPF co-ordinator Baburam Bhattarai alleged on 16 September that on 16 August K.P. Bhattarai had promised to remove Girija within one month. Congress leaders did not state categorically whether any such undertaking had been given, but "Punarjagaran", a newspaper normally reflecting the views of Ganesh Man Singh, insisted that it had. In public statements, Ganesh Man Singh himself continued his criticism of the government but insisted that it could not be removed under opposition pressure. After the signing of the agreement, UML leaders canvassed the possibility of removing the constitutional requirement for the prime minister to be a member of the Pratinidhi Sabha, presumably to allow K.P. Bhattarai to succeed Koirala without fighting a by-election. In September, two Congress M.P.s were also reported to have offered to make way for Bhattarai by resigning their seats.

In November it was finally agreed that Bhattarai, who had previously claimed he was resisting pressure from both Ganesh Man Singh and Koirala to take over the premiership, would be the Congress candidate in the February 1994 by-election caused by Madan Bhandari's death in May. "Deshantar" and the government-owned "Gorkhapatra", papers sympathetic to the prime minister, both attacked Bhattarai's decision. Koirala himself made some brief criticisms of Bhattarai's tactics, including in particular his playing of the anti-Indian card, and then shortly before polling day issued a long statement explaining that he had initially advised Bhattarai not to stand and that, although he would have liked to

support his candidacy, he could not do so as Bhattarai's campaign was attacking rather than defending the government's record. This brought both Bhattarai and Ganesh Man Singh into line, but Congress still lost in Kathmandu-1 (by 41, 490 votes to the UML's 43, 319), though winning the former UML-held seat of Jhapa (16, 194 to 13, 337). Bhattarai's supporters staged rowdy demonstrations in Kathmandu, with the district committee head, Prakash Man Singh, one of the main leaders, accusing the prime minister of sabotaging the by-election campaign. However, Bhattarai himself called for calm and later issued written instructions for all Congress M.P.s to support the government against a no-confidence motion moved by the UML, which was therefore easily defeated (113 votes to 81). In the meantime, the Central Committee had decided that all party office holders would continue in post until the next general conference.

A group of 36 dissident M.P.s, led by ex-ministers Taranath Ranabhat and Chiranjibi Wagle, indicated that they would accept Koirala as leader for the present, but would still press for his resignation in due course. They continued to show their displeasure with the government, and their absence from the chamber for a vote on a government bill in March left the opposition in a temporary majority.

Tension remained high within the party, as both Mahendra Narayan Nidhi and (ever more stridently) Ganesh Man Singh called for Koirala to go and Bhattarai, entrusted by a Central Committee decision in April with sole authority to resolve the intra-party dispute, played for time. The prime minister's health also became an issue, as he had collapsed during the special session to debate the no-confidence motion in February and did so again in April; medical tests in the U.S., however, revealed that he was suffering only from exhaustion and irregular eating habits. Another problem for the government were the raid on two houses in Baneshwor by armed Indian police in search of a fugitive. Despite the suspension of the Kathmandu Valley Police Chief for agreeing to the operation, and of the Indian policemen involved, there was intense public protest.

There was some relief at the end of June when Bhattarai finally decided that no action would be taken against those who had 'sabotaged' his by-election campaign, but the prime minister also came under renewed pressure over a report from the Public Accounts Committee suggesting he had acted improperly over the appointment of a new company with Indian connections as the European General Service Agent for Royal Nepal Air Corporation. The government was also embarrassed by Amnesty International's endorsement of charges of unjustified killings by the security forces during the Leftist agitation the previous summer.

On 10 July 1994, despite an earlier undertaking from Bhattarai that he would ensure they would turn up, the 36 Congress dissidents absented themselves from the house during a vote on the government's programme as outlined in the king's speech, thus causing a government defeat. Later the same day, Koirala went to the palace and presented the king with a letter in which he submitted his resignation and also requested that parliament be dissolved and mid-term polls be held in November. The king accepted the resignation at once but then began consultations with other politicians including the UML leader Man Mohan Adhikari and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. Bhattarai, who had asked Koirala not to

seek a dissolution, is believed to have wanted the king to invite Mahendra Narayan Nidhi, the party's General Secretary, to form a new Congress administration. However Koirala had secured a signed statement by 74 Congress M.P.s accepting him still as their leader, and, as no one else could claim majority support in the House, the king agreed on the following day to a dissolution and appointed Koirala acting prime minister until the elections.

Koirala's action and the king's decision were regarded as unconstitutional both by the Communist opposition and by Congress dissidents. Concern over Koirala's commitment to fair elections was also increased by the dismissal of the production team of a popular radio current affairs programme ("Ghatna ra Bichar") which had been seen as critical of him. After the UML and its allies had launched a campaign of strikes and protest meetings, Mahendra Narayan Nidhi called upon the king to dismiss the prime minister and then made a joint appeal with the leaders of the six-party Leftist alliance for the reconvening of parliament. Bhattarai, who had probably authorised these moves in advance, and UML president Man Mohan Adhikari, then signed a joint statement explicitly endorsing them.⁴ Hari Prasad Nepal, a dissident Congress M.P., was among those petitioning the Supreme Court to declare the dissolution of the House invalid. Meanwhile, Koirala had responded by summoning to Kathmandu the delegates to the party Conference and General Council, amongst whom he was believed to have majority support. His popularity amongst Congress activists is partly the result of his long spell as General Secretary, which involved him in travelling throughout Nepal, while Bhattarai and Ganesh Man Singh normally remained in Kathmandu.

When the Central Committee (nominated by Bhattarai and with an anti-Koirala majority) met on 27 July it accepted a compromise proposal from Shailaja Acharya under which neither Bhattarai, Koirala nor Nidhi would stand in the forthcoming elections. This formula had apparently been floated some days earlier by the 36 dissident M.P.s in informal talks with Koirala's group, and Bhattarai himself may have instigated it. Although Koirala himself now publicly endorsed the scheme, three of his closest allies on the Central Committee (Sushil Koirala, Bhubikram Nemwang and Surya Bhakta Adhikari) entered a 'note of dissent' to the decision. Many of his supporters waiting outside party headquarters were also unhappy. These activists were received in regional contingents at the prime minister's residence the next day and at a 'gathering' on the 29 July⁵, where they called for both Bhattarai and Girija to stand in the elections and for the reconstitution of the Central Committee. There was obvious hostility: not just against the publicly-declared dissidents but also to Shailaja Acharya and ministers Sher Bahadur Deupa and Ram Chandra Paudel, who had avoided taking a definite stance and who, as the most prominent members among the party's 'second generation', had most to gain from the old guard stepping aside.

Koirala's position continued to strengthen. In mid-August Bhattarai removed nine members from the Central Committee, including three fierce opponents of the prime minister - Bharat Shumsher, Kuber Sharma and Bal Bahadur K.C. - and added three Koirala supporters: Khum Bahadur Khadka, Bhim Bahadur Tamang and Mahanta Thakur. On 12 September, by a vote of 7 to 4 among the presiding judges, the Supreme Court rejected a petition challenging the legality

of the dissolution. A Central Committee meeting on 13-14 September decided that Koirala, Bhattarai and Nidhi could decide for themselves whether to stand in the election. On 16 September, Ganesh Man Singh resigned his membership of the Congress Party and on 24 September he called for the defeat of pro-Koirala candidates in the election and condemned K.P. Bhattarai as 'the biggest traitor and political criminal in the history of Nepal'.

As had been widely anticipated, Koirala did indeed opt to contest the election personally, being nominated for constituencies in both Morang and Sunsari, as he had been in 1991. Bhattarai and Nidhi did not contest, but Nidhi's place as candidate for Dhanusha-4 (including Janakpur town) was taken by his son, Bimalendra. The 204 Congress nominees, of whom around two-thirds were reckoned to be Koirala supporters, included 91 of their 114 ex-M.P.s. Only one minister (Dinbandhu Aryal) was not allotted a ticket. Official Congress nominees faced opposition in many constituencies from disaffected activists, who either stood as independents or in one of the various Congress splinter groups which had formed immediately before the election. Many were persuaded to withdraw before polling day, but 50 or more remained in the field. Congress expelled persistent rebels, including long-term Koirala-opponent Durga Subedi who was standing against the P.M. in Morang, and Umesh Giri, a party activist who had been accused of using intimidation in past election campaigns and who was now standing for the Nepali Congress (Bisheshwor).

Nepali and foreign observers reported that, although the elections were generally 'fair and peaceful', there were numerous irregularities, mostly committed by the Congress side. Though there were few unambiguous cases of rebel candidates letting the opposition in by splitting the Congress vote, in Manang and Mahottari-4 Congress dissidents defeated the official candidates and elsewhere the fact of Congress division clearly eroded popular support, affecting the result in around 30 seats. In the east, the seats gained and lost by the party were roughly equal but net losses to the UML in the west left them with five seats less than their main rivals. The party lost the only two seats it had held in the Kathmandu Valley (including that of the former speaker, Daman Nath Dhungana) and also all nine constituencies in the districts of Syangja, Palpa and Gulmi south-west of Pokhara. Other prominent casualties included the prime minister's close aide Sushil Koirala (Banke-1) and two of his bitterest critics, Taranath Ranabhat (Kaski-1) and Kuber Sharma (Saptari-4).

Following the election defeat, Girija Koirala resigned as prime minister and called for the party to go into opposition and allow the UML to form the government. This line was backed less publicly by Nidhi and Bhattarai, but Sher Bahadur Deupa, Ram Chandra Paudel and Shailaja Acharya, the main contenders to take the place of the old guard, wanted to try for a coalition government. There are conflicting reports of the intensive inter-party negotiations, but Paudel appears to have tried to get the UML to enter a Congress-led coalition, the UML appears to have wanted a coalition with itself as the senior partner, and Bhattarai, backed by Ganesh Man Singh's supporters, appears to have offered to let the UML hold power alone for one year. After a Central Committee meeting on 23/24 November showed that party workers were strongly in favour of remaining in government, the emphasis switched to discussions with the NDP, with whom Sher Bahadur Deupa, son-in-law of the NDP's Pratibha Rana, had

already been in contact. Despite rumours of western and Indian pressure for an agreement, these negotiations were unsuccessful. However, Deupa's later unanimous selection as leader of the parliamentary **Congress** party might suggest further attempts at co-operation with the **NDP**.

THE LEFT

(1991: total of 82 (81) seats - 36.49%; 1994: 92 seats - 31.83%⁶)

The **Nepal Communist Party**, founded in India in 1949 by Pushpa Lal Shrestha, has, since Mahendra's 1960 coup, splintered into well over a dozen different factions. Seven of the groups agreed in January 1990 to collaborate in a **United Left Front**, which then worked with **Congress** in the democracy movement and shared power with it in the interim government. Leftist groups which obtained seats in the 1991 election were:

NEPAL COMMUNIST PARTY (UNIFIED MARXIST-LENINIST)

(1991: 69 (68)⁷ seats - 27.98%; 1994: 88 seats - 30.85%)

Now providing a minority government, the party was from 1991 to 1994 the main opposition to **Congress**. The party was formed in January 1991 by the merger of the two most significant groups in the **ULF**:

(a) **Nepal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)** ('the Mah Lehs': abbreviated to **NCP (ML)**). Usually the most important leftist group of the later panchayat years, it was represented in the interim government by Jhalanath Khanal (Agriculture, Land Reform and Forestry and Conservation), who won Ilam-1 in the election. Originating as the 'Jhapali' group in the early 70s, it later abandoned 'Naxalite' terrorism and then in 1989 formally abandoned Maoism and accepted the idea of collaboration with **Congress** for the restoration of the parliamentary system. Its most influential figure was Mohan Bhandari, General Secretary after the amalgamation and victory over Bhattarai in Kathmandu-1.

(b) **Nepal Communist Party (Marxist) (NCP(M))**. Cultivating close relations with its Indian namesake, still in power in West Bengal, this was led by veteran Communists Man Mohan Adhikari, now president of the unified party, and Sahana Pradhan, who defeated Ganesh Man Singh's son in Kathmandu-4 in 1991. Pradhan, the widow of Pushpa Lal Shrestha, was chairman of the **United Left Front** and was Industry minister in the interim government.

Despite their involvement in the Nepalese communist movement since its inception, Man Mohan Adhikari and Sahana Pradhan remained less influential within the **UML** than the leaders from the pre-1991 Mah-Lehs, who had a more extensive network of activists. Although the two ex-**NCP(M)** leaders appeared firmly committed to the unified party, others remained unhappy with the dominance in the party of the 'hard-line' faction of the old **NCP(ML)** under Madan Bhandari, Jhalanath Khanal and Madhav Nepal. In September 1991 some former members of the **NCP(M)** broke away to set up the **Communist Party of Nepal (15 September 1949)** (later reverting to the pre-1991 **Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist)** label). The defectors alleged that the conditions of the 1991 merger had not been kept and that Pushpa Lal's concept of 'naulo janbad' ('new people's democracy') was being abandoned in favour of

'bahudaliya janbad' - people's democracy based on a multi-party system. The latter formulation was in fact formally adopted at a **UML** Central Committee meeting in October, in the absence abroad of Man Mohan Adhikari and Sahana Pradhan, and against the opposition of C.P. Mainali's faction of the former **NCP (ML)**. In fact, the change of phraseology did not indicate a great change in substance, since the line both before and after October 1991 appeared to be acceptance of political pluralism but with restrictions on the right of 'reactionary parties' to organise.

Immediately after the general election, the party was involved in confrontation with the government over the civil servants' agitation, but gave the impression of following rather than leading the campaign. Whilst intensifying its political opposition to **Congress** in 1992, the **UML** appeared eager to preserve its standing as a constitutional party. Following the police killing of extreme-leftist demonstrators in Kathmandu on 6 April 1992, the party called for the resignation of the Home Minister, but refused to join more radical Leftist groups in demanding the resignation of the whole government or in calling a general strike for May 3. It attracted further criticism from these groups at the end of April by signing an agreement with **Congress**, providing for a commission of enquiry into the April 6 incident, and the setting up of joint committees to ensure the peaceful holding of local elections at the end of May. During the night of May 2 the **UML's** Radha Krishna Mainali's house in Patan was one of the targets of radical demonstrators. Negotiations between the **UML** and the other leftist parties for a comprehensive seat sharing agreement in the elections were unsuccessful, though, as in the general election, adjustments were made in some localities. The results were disappointing for the **UML**, which gained the post of mayor in only 6 of the 36 municipalities (Bhadrapur, Damak, Hetauda, Bidur, Birendranagar and Dharan); that of deputy mayor in only 5; 119 (=20%) of the seats on municipal committees; and around 26% of the seats on Village Development Committees. In an interview with "Saptahik Bimarsha" in September, Man Mohan Adhikari stated that the party preferred for the time being to remain in opposition and admitted that distrust of communism internationally would cause difficulties if they came to power.

Following the December 1992 Supreme Court ruling on the Tanakpur issue (see above) the **UML**, which had denounced the agreement from the start as a sell-out to India and argued that it was a treaty requiring a two-thirds parliamentary majority, launched a renewed campaign with the **United People's Front (UPF)**, the **Nepal Workers and Peasants Party** (abbrev. **NWPP**) and the **Nepal Communist Party (Masal)** for Koirala's resignation. The party withdrew from the campaign in April 1993, after agreement with **Congress** for a special inter-party committee to examine the issue. In the meantime (January - February 1993) the Party's National Convention approved Bhandari's 'bahudaliya janbad' line by 541 votes to 101. These latter votes were cast in support of Chandra Prakash Mainali's 'parimarjit janbad' ('refined people's democracy'), which was reportedly favoured by Jhalanath Khanal and Man Mohan Adhikari.

In May 1993 Madan Bhandari and party organiser Jeevraj Ashrit died when the jeep they were traveling in swerved off the road into the Narayani River at Dasdhunga. Bhandari's successor as General Secretary was his ideological ally,

Madhav Kumar Nepal, generally regarded as a party bureaucrat rather than a charismatic leader. C.P. Mainali, who had resigned from the Central Committee alleging violation of the National Convention's instructions, now withdrew his resignation. In June a government enquiry concluded that the jeep crash was an accident, and the UML, insisting there had been an assassination plot, called strikes in the Kathmandu valley and country-wide in late June and early July, demanding a fresh enquiry and Koirala's resignation. The agitation, during which 24 people were killed in police firing was supported by six other Leftist groups: the UPF, the NWPP, Masal, **Nepal Communist Party (Amatya)**, **Nepal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)** and **Nepal Communist League**. On 16 August the UML concluded a written agreement with Congress covering most of their demands and claimed also to have reached a secret understanding that the prime minister would soon resign. The UPF and three other groups rejected this as inadequate and continued the protest campaign for some time on their own. By early November Madhav Nepal was complaining of a failure to implement the agreement and threatening to bring about 'the final struggle' if Koirala did not resign.

During the agitation C.P. Mainali and Jhalanath Khanal took a more moderate line than the party leadership, arguing that an elected prime minister could only be removed by constitutional processes.

In September, a Central Committee Meeting took disciplinary action against members of the 'minority', who had defied party orders by supporting the candidacy of Jagat Bogati for the National Assembly. C.P. Mainali was deprived of his post as deputy leader of the parliamentary party. Mainali and Jhalanath afterwards issued defiant statements. In an interview, Adhikari, who was widely believed to be actually in sympathy with the dissidents, criticised them for going against party policy.

Despite reported repeated pleas from Ganesh Man Sing for it to give Krishna Prasad Bhattarai a clear-run in the Kathmandu-1 by-election, the party nominated Madan Bhattarai's widow, Vidya Bhattarai, who won the seat in February 1994. However, the UML candidate lost Drona Acharya's former seat in Jhapa-1. Immediately after the by-elections, the party successfully petitioned the king to summon an extraordinary session of parliament, and tabled an unsuccessful no-confidence motion against the Koirala government. In March, after the start of the new parliamentary session, the party's M.P.s manhandled the deputy-speaker because he did not accept as valid a vote the opposition appeared to have won when rebel Congress M.P.s were out of the chamber. Tension between the 'majority' and 'minority' factions within the party continued and in April three members belonging to the latter were disciplined for joining a parliamentary overseas delegation against party instructions. The same month the party declined to support the UPF anti-India agitation, though Mohan Chandra Adhikari and C.P. Mainali were allegedly sympathetic to it. In June the party announced that they would recommence agitation against the government because of its non-compliance with previous year's agreement.

When abstentions by rebel Congress M.P.s brought about the government's defeat in the house on July 10, the UML tried in vain to form an alliance with the dissidents, and then unsuccessfully asked the king to invite it to form a new government on its own rather than accept Koirala's request for mid-term polls.

Supported by the **Nepal Communist Party (United)**, **United People's Front (Vaidya)**, **Unity Centre, Masal** and **Communist League**, the party then launched an agitation for Koirala's removal and the formation of an all-party government. They argued that it had been unconstitutional for the king to dissolve the Pratinidhi Sabha on Koirala's recommendation after the latter's resignation as prime minister, that Koirala should not have used his prime ministerial prerogative against the wishes of his own party organisation; and that he could not be trusted to hold free and fair elections. Initial protest actions included torchlight processions and a one-day Nepal Bandh on 20 July in which there were minor clashes between demonstrators and police, but no violence on the scale seen the previous summer. When the Congress General Secretary, Mahendra Narayan Nidhi, gave public support to the Leftist campaign, a three-day bandh planned to start on 24 July was cut back to one day and passed off peacefully. The UML vehemently denounced Nidhi and Bhattarai for reaching a compromise agreement with Koirala at the Congress Central Committee meeting on 24 July. The agitation continued but by mid-August the UML's attention was more on its election campaign while its partners (apart from the **NCP (United)**) wanted to carry on.

On 12 September the Supreme Court dismissed an application by a former UML M.P. (Ganesh Pandit) and others to squash the dissolution of the Pratinidhi Sabha. Though critical of this decision, the party was now concentrating fully on election preparations. C.P. Mainali's 'minority' faction complained that it was being allotted too few nominations, whilst veteran leader Mohan Chandra Adhikari, together with Sanu Shrestha, resigned from the party, alleging that it was no longer a revolutionary organisation.

The Party nominated candidates, including 48 of its 68 former M.P.s; for 196 seats. Party leader Man Mohan Adhikari stood in two Kathmandu constituencies and Tulsi Lal Amatya, formerly the leader of his own communist faction, stood in Congress-held Rautahat-3. Party secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal did not stand. Although, as in 1991, it proved impossible to create an electoral alliance amongst the Leftist parties, the UML withdrew in six constituencies in favour of **Masal**, the **UPF (Vaidya)** and Ramraja Prasad Singh's **Nepal Janbadi Morcha**. Outlining their policies in October, Madhav Nepal and Man Mohan Adhikari called for a review of 'unequal treaties' with India, 'regularisation' of the open border, and Nepal-India talks on work permits. Madhav Nepal later promised a lowering of the ceiling on land holdings to 25 bighas.

The party emerged from the election as the largest grouping in parliament (88 seats to Congress's 83). However it still lagged behind Congress in its share of the popular vote and lost 20 of the seats it had held previously, including one in the party's birthplace of Jhapa district. The day after the elections, the UML issued a statement accepting them as fair, but later, as its strong early lead was cut back, it accused the government of rigging in the 79 polling stations where re-balloting had been ordered by the Election Commission. In December the U.S.-based Nepali political scientist Chitra Tiwari backed allegations that the UML had been unfairly deprived of victory in 18 constituencies.

Despite a declaration by Man Mohan Adhikari that the party would under no circumstances combine with the National Democratic Party or with Sadbhavana,

Madhav Nepal and others were more flexible, and informal discussions appear to have been held with the NDP although without result. More extensive negotiations took place with Congress, covering the possibilities of a Congress or UML-led coalition or of Congress supporting a UML-led government from 'outside'. Agreement proved impossible and the UML opted to form a minority government as the largest single party in parliament.

On 29 November, Man Mohan Adhikari was sworn in as prime minister, but, unlike his Congress predecessor, Adhikari did not take control of the Foreign and Defence portfolios, these going to Madhav Kumar Nepal. As party general secretary, Madhav was generally regarded as the key figure in the new administration, especially as Adhikari himself had said at a parliamentary group meeting a week earlier that, in contrast to what had happened with Congress, an UML government 'could do nothing beyond the limits set by the policy of the party.' The full ministerial line-up was:

Ministers:

Man Mohan Adhikari	Prime Minister, Palace Affairs
Madhav Kumar Nepal	Deputy Prime Minister, Defence and Foreign Affairs
K.P. Sharma Oli	Home Affairs
Chandra Prakash Mainali	Local Development and Supply
Bharat Mohan Adhikari	Finance
Radha Krishna Mainali	Agriculture and Land Reforms
Mod Nath Prashrit	Education, Culture and Social Welfare
Pradip Nepal	Information and Communications
Padma Ratna Tuladhar	Labour and Health

Ministers of State:

Ashok Kumar Rai	Works and Transport
Salim Miya Ansari	Forests and Soil Conservation
Prem Singh Dhimi	Housing and Physical Planning
Subas Chandra Nembang	Law and Justice, Parliamentary Affairs and General Administration
Bhim Bahadur Rawal	Commerce, Tourism and Civil Administration
Hari Prasad Pande	Industry and Water Resources

NEPAL COMMUNIST PARTY (UNITED)

(1991: 2 seats, 2.43%; 1994: no seats, 0.38%)

Formed at the end of July 1991 by a merger between the **Nepal Communist Party (Democratic) (NCP(D))** and two parties which had failed to win parliamentary seats, the **Nepal Communist Party (Amatya)** and the **Nepal Communist Party (Varma)**. The NCP(D) was a pro-Soviet grouping, more accommodating towards India than the larger Communist groups. Until early 1991 it was known as the Nepal Communist Party (Manandhar) after its General Secretary, Vishnu Bahadur Manandhar. It was represented in the interim

government by Nilambar Acharya (Law and Justice, Labour and Social Welfare, Tourism). The party remained within the ULF after the December 1990 split, but in the run-up to the election was critical of the UML for seeking a dominant role and not agreeing to adequate electoral adjustments with other leftist parties. Both Manandhar and Acharya failed to win seats in the 1991 election. Bhim Bahadur Shrestha (a member of the former Rashtriya Panchayat) won in Chitwan-2 and Vaidyanath Mahato in Sarlahi-4. The merger was troubled from the start and in April 1992, the Varma group withdrew from the amalgamated party. In June the NCP (United) Central Committee expelled Bhim Bahadur Shrestha and 50 other workers for supporting UML candidates in local elections. Shrestha was later re-admitted but differences between him and the party remained and he was finally to resign in July 1994.⁸ Amatya's group broke away in September 1992 and later joined the UML, but the rump of the party, essentially the old Manandhar group, retained the name adopted in the time of the merger.

The party did not join other Leftists in denouncing the Tanakpur agreement with India, and was prepared to meet with prime minister Koirala while the 7-party Leftist alliance was demanding his resignation in June-August 1993. In the Kathmandu-1 by-election in February 1994, it fielded a candidate of its own but Nilambar Acharya appealed to voters to support Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. In March the party's M.P.s voted in favour of the UML no-confidence motion, despite not supporting the UML's objection to mid-term polls. Following the dissolution of the Pratinidhi Sabha in July, the party joined the UML and four other groups in a joint agitation, but in August, like the UML itself, was becoming less enthusiastic about the campaign.

The party's election programme, unveiled in October, included unemployment benefits for the educated unemployed and a review of treaties with India. The NPC (United) lost in all 36 constituencies it contested, and did not put up candidates in the two the Manandhar group had won in 1991. Only seven of the party's candidates gained more than 1,000 votes.

UNITED PEOPLE'S FRONT (NEPAL)

(1991: 9 seats, 4.83%; 1994: no seats, 1.32%)

A Maoist grouping, formed just before the January deadline for registration with the Election Commission. During the campaign, it argued that real transformation is impossible through parliamentary politics, and that it was contesting only to 'expose' the system and would not form or join a government. Baburam Bhattarai was chosen as the Front's convenor and Lilamani Pokhrel as its leader in the House of Representatives. The UPF was essentially an umbrella organisation for a number of groups which wanted both a means of taking part in conventional politics and also to retain the status of 'underground' parties. These included:

(a) **Nepal Communist Party (Unity Centre)**: by far the most important component, this was formed in 1990 by a merger between the **Nepal Communist Party (Mashal)**, the **Nepal Communist Party (Fourth Convention)**, which had been part of the United Left Front until December 1990, and Rup Lal's lesser-known **Sarvaharavadi Shramik Sangathan**. The

Mashal leader 'Prachand' (Pushpa Kumar Dahal), who had split from Mohan Bikram Singh's **Masal** group in the early '80s, became General Secretary of the combined party. The **Unity Centre** leadership also included the former **Fourth Convention** leaders Nirmal Lama and Lilamani Pokhrel. Lama, one of the drafters of Nepal's 1990 constitution, had also once been with Mohan Bikram Singh's group but broke with him in the mid-80s.

(b) A dissident faction of the **Nepal Communist Party (Masal)** (see below), which rejected party leader Mohan Bikram Singh's call for a complete boycott of the election. This appeared to be led by Shital Kumar, who referred to himself as 'Secretary of the Central Organising Committee of the NCP (Masal)'. Baburam Bhattarai had also been an ally of Shital Kumar's within **Masal** but appears to have broken with Mohan Bikram Singh and joined the UPF earlier.

(c) **The Nepal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) (NCP(MLM))** was part of the UPF during the election but quit in September 1992, alleging that the **Unity Centre** was unfairly dominating the organisation. It appears to have rejoined after a split in the Front in 1994.

In February 1992, the **Unity Centre** joined Mohan Bikram Singh's **Masal**, the **NCP (MLM)** and the **Nepal Communist League** (abbrev. **NCL**) in a Joint People's Agitation Committee to organise protests against **Congress** policies. This was to culminate in the observance of April 6 (anniversary of the climax of the pro-democracy demonstrations in 1990) as 'People's Movement Day'. All four groups backed plans for a meeting that day at Kathmandu's Open Air Theatre, but the **UPF** (effectively now the **Unity Centre** on its own) also organised street demonstrations, which turned violent resulting in police opening fire and the deaths of between 7 and 14 people (figures supplied respectively by the government and the Human Rights Organisation of Nepal). The **Unity Centre** called a second general strike for May 3 which was widely observed in the Valley.

The **Unity Centre** then formed an alliance with **Masal**, the **NCP (MLM)**, the **NCP (15 September 1949)** (later renamed as **Nepal Communist Party (Marxist)**), the **NWPP** and the **NCL** to continue the agitation and contest the local elections. In the elections the **UPF** gained only one deputy mayorship, 8 (= 1.34%) of the seats on municipal committees and around 5% of the seats on Village Development Committees. In Kathmandu its candidate for mayor attracted only 3.4% of the vote, compared with 52.2% for **Congress** and 44.4% for the **UML**. This poor showing indicated that support for the May 3 day of action had been the result of frustration at continuing economic difficulties and/or of intimidation rather than reflecting widespread popular enthusiasm for the radical Left.

The **UPF** joined the Leftist alliance calling for the prime minister's resignation after the Supreme Court's Tanakpur verdict (December 1992) and remained in the campaign with **Masal** when the **UML** and **NWPP** withdrew in April. In June 1993, following the Left's rejection of the Anil commission's report on the deaths of two **UML** leaders, the **UPF** joined the 7-party alliance agitating initially for a new enquiry and then also for the prime minister's

resignation and the fulfillment of other demands. It rejected the August agreement between **UML** and **Congress** and together with the **NWPP**, **Masal**, and the **NCP (MLM)** continued street protests to force Koirala's resignation. The **UPF** decided to boycott the February 1994 by-elections in Kathmandu and Jhapa, despite some opposition from within the party. In March the Front voted for the **UML's** no-confidence motion against the government and in April it began an agitation aimed both at the government and at alleged Indian interference in Nepal; this was supported by the **NWPP**, the **NCP (Marxist)**, **Masal** and the **NCP (MLM)** and 'independent leftist' Padma Ratna Tuladhar.

Internal tension had been building up since the beginning of 1993 as Baburam Bhattarai and the **Ex-Mashal** element attempted a purge of former members of the **4th Convention**. A full split in May 1994, leaving Baburam's section of the **UPF** and Prachand's followers in the **Unity Centre** on one side ranged against Niranjan Gobinda Vaidya's **UPF** and Nirmal Lama's **Unity Centre** on the other. The Vaidya group, which had the support of most of the **UPF M.P.s**, held a national Conference in July, confirming Vaidya himself as convenor and Nar Bahadur Karmacharya as central spokesman. The **UPF (Vaidya)** and **Unity Centre (Lama)** joined the 6-party alliance for Koirala's ousting and the formation of a multi-party government. Baburam's group remained outside the alliance: it opposed the demand for a multi-party government because this would allow the king to become actively involved in politics again, and it called instead for the reconvening of parliament. Prachand and Bhattarai called for a boycott of the November elections, but the **UPF (Vaidya)**, recognised by the Election Commission as the original organisation and therefore allowed to retain the hammer and sickle election symbol, contested 49 constituencies, including 5 of the 9 held by the **UPF** in the previous parliament. All of its candidates were defeated, six of the party's former seats going to **Congress**, two to the **UML** and one to the **NDP**.

NEPAL WORKERS AND PEASANTS PARTY (abbrev. **NWPP**)
(1991: 2 seats; 1.25%; 1994: 4 seats; 0.98%)

Led by Narayan Bijukchhe ('Comrade Rohit'), who split from Pushpa Lal Shrestha in 1975/6. Its **M.P.s** in 1991-94 were Dilli Bahadur Mahat (Jumla-1) and Rohit himself, elected from the party's principal base, Bhaktapur, where it has a firm grip on the **Jyapus** (Newar cultivator caste). One of the first Leftist groups to adopt an 'entryist' approach to the panchayat system, it first won the Bhaktapur seat in 1981. The party was a member of the United Left Front collaborating with **Congress** in 1990, although Rohit and many associates had been in prison since 1988. The party remains officially Maoist and was at one point reported to be willing to contest the 1991 general election under the **UPF** banner. However, at times it appeared to differ from the latter in its commitment to a multi-party system as a permanent requirement for democracy rather than a tactical expedient. It fought the May 1992 elections, in which it won the Bhaktapur mayoralty, as a member of an alliance with the **Unity Centre** and four other parties. After joining the four-party alliance campaigning for Koirala's resignation over Tanakpur in December 1992, it withdrew with the **UML** in April 1993. It joined the 7-party Leftist alliance in another anti-government agitation in June and was one of the four parties which rejected the

UML-Congress agreement in August and continued the protest campaign. The party voted for the **UML** no-confidence motion in March 1994 despite reservations over the **UML**'s objection to mid-term polls. In April it expressed support for the **UPF** (Baburam) agitation.

Following the dissolution of parliament in July, Rohit criticised Girija's action, but accepted that both he and the king had acted within the conventions of 'bourgeois parliamentarianism' and announced his own party's readiness to take part in elections. During the campaign, the party made clear its belief that 'socialism will not be attained through elections'. It denounced as inadequate other parties' plans to grant tenancy rights to some tillers and in its own programme called for the development of ropeways and other alternative means of transport. The party contested 27 seats, and although its total share of the popular vote fell, it doubled its representation in parliament by winning the second Bhaktapur constituency and Dailekh-2 from Congress.

NEPAL SADBHAVANA PARTY

(1991: 6 seats - 4.10%; 1994: 3 seats - 3.49%)

A regional party, representing the interests of the Tarai and its inhabitants of recent Indian origin. Known before the legalisation of political parties as the Nepal Sadbhavana ('Goodwill') Council, the party's grievances against hill domination are probably shared by many in the region, but its electoral support has been limited, perhaps as party president Gajendra Narayan Singh, a Rajput, is seen as representing principally his own, upper-caste group.

The party's demands include official status for the Hindi language, a liberal policy on citizenship for recent immigrants, 'reservations' for under-privileged communities, a separate madheshi battalion in the army, and a federal system of government. After the convening of the House of Representatives and the National Assembly they insisted on addressing the assembly in Hindi and boycotted elections to the Assembly of members representing the development regions in protest against regional boundaries which do not recognise the Tarai as a separate entity. The party also pressed its demand for a separate madheshi battalion in the army. In the 1992 local elections the party won the post of mayor in Rajbiraj, that of deputy mayor in three municipalities, 3% of the seats on Municipal Committees and about 2.3% of the seats on Village Development Committees.

In 1993, a breakaway group, the **Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Ram Janam Tiwari)**, was established. In March 1994, the party abstained in the vote on the **UML** no-confidence motion. Singh made changes to the Central Committee, replacing Hriyadesh Tripathi, who had resigned as General Secretary to take responsibility for the party's poor showing in the recent by-elections, with Shyamsundar Gupta, and appointing Gaurishankar Mohapatra to the Central Committee as an additional vice-chairman. Mirja Dal Sad Beg, an M.P. alleged to have been involved in violent crime, was appointed treasurer.

The party accepted the dissolution of parliament in July 1994 as constitutional and appeared enthusiastic about the forthcoming elections, although voicing some scepticism over how fair they would be. The party manifesto called for the reservation of 50% of government posts for the madheshis and 30% for the hill

'tribals'; they had campaigned on a similar pledge in 1991 but had not then actually included it in their manifesto.

In the election, Sadbhavana contested 86 constituencies. Although winning Saptari-3 from **Congress**, they lost four of their original six seats and were thus reduced to three seats. One of the lost constituencies, Kapilavastu-4, was actually retained by the former Sadbhavana M.P., Mirja Dal Sad Beg, who had deserted to the **NDP**. Triyogi Narayan Chaudhuri, vice-president and former Sadbhavana M.P. for Nawalparasi-4, had joined **Congress** in September, and unsuccessfully ran for his new party against Hriyadesh Tripathi in Nawalparasi-3. However, **Congress** did capture Chaudhuri's old constituency.

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (RASHTRIYA PRAJATANTRA PARTI) (abbrev. **NDP**)

(1991: 4 seats, 11.94%; 1994: 20 seats, 17.93%)

Two former prime ministers of the panchayat era each formed a party to contest the 1991 election, largely incorporating other ex-activists from the old régime. The two were amalgamated in February 1992 as the **United National Democratic Party** under Lok Bahadur Chand as leader and Surya Bahadur Thapa as president. Many other ex-panchas joined **Congress** (to which many of them had belonged before 1961) and defections have continued. The two separate parties were:

(a) **National Democratic Party (Chand)**

(1991: 3 seats, 6.56%)

Led by Lok Bahadur Chand, who served the last of several terms as prime minister in April 1990 before the installation of the interim government. Chand lost in both constituencies he contested in the election. His group's most prominent figure thus became Pashupati Shumshere J.B. Rana, who won the Sindupalchok-3 seat, part of the area he had represented in the old Rashtriya Panchayat, despite the disruption of his campaign by opponents. After the election the party sought to tone down its image as anti-Indian and also to distance itself from the palace.

(b) **National Democratic Party (Thapa)** (1991: 1 seat, 5.38%).

Led by Surya Bahadur Thapa, who alternated in the panchayat years between the roles of royal henchman and dissident. Widely seen as corrupt, though also with genuine liberal leanings, he was defeated by more than two to one by his **UML** opponent in his Dhankhuta-1 constituency.

In the 1992 local elections the **NDP** won the post of mayor in Lahan and Kapilavastu; that of deputy mayor in two municipalities; 9.27% of the seats on municipal committees and around 10% of seats on Village Development Committees. In February 1994, the party's candidates in the Kathmandu-1 and Jhapa-1 by-elections, Jog Mehar Shrestha and Gopal Chandra Singh Rajvamshi, came third with 7,533 and 8,251 votes respectively. Jog Mehar accused Surya Bahadur Thapa of sabotaging his campaign. The party abstained in the 7 March vote on the **UML** no-confidence motion.

Having itself earlier called for fresh elections, the party welcomed the dissolution of the House of Representatives in July 1994. Although accepting that the constitution had been complied with, it agreed with the Leftist demand for a multi-party government to ensure free elections. The party contested 202 constituencies, with most of its leading figures nominated for more than one. It won 20, becoming the third party in terms of seats, as it already was in terms of share of the popular vote in 1991. The party's main strength remained in the central region, where it now holds ten seats, but gains in the west included party leader Lok Bahadur Chand winning both seats in his native district of Baitadi. Surya Bahadur Thapa lost in Sarlahi-2 but won on his home ground of Dhankuta-2. Nine seats were won from **Congress**, four from the **UML**, two from **Sadbhavana** and one from the **NCP(United)**. The one loss was in Darchula, where the **UML** took the new single constituency formed by the amalgamation of NDP-held Darchula-2 and Congress-held Darchula-1.

Following the elections, there were some discussions between the NDP and the **UML** (though the party denied that the communists formally invited them to join a coalition) and protracted discussions with **Congress**. The party's preferred option was a national government with each party holding ministries in proportion to its parliamentary strength, but this was unacceptable to the **UML**. It was believed that Chand, whose group included 13 of the new M.P.s, favoured working with the communists, and that Thapa favoured an alignment with **Congress**. India and western governments were also said to be urging a **Congress-NDP** coalition but in the end the NDP rejected Congress approaches, apparently because it believed **Congress** itself was too disunited for any agreement to stick.

B. LEFTIST GROUPS NEVER REPRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT

Nepal Communist Party (Masal). A hard-line Maoist grouping under Mohan Bikram Singh, who became well-known nationally during the 1980 referendum campaign. The party was once the home of many now in the **UPF**, and it has been alleged that splits may have resulted less from ideological differences than because of Singh's personality. His party has co-operated with other Leftist groups in most of the agitations since 1991, but, despite membership of the six-member alliance formed in May 1992, it put up its own candidate for the post of mayor of Kathmandu. In the local elections in its Pyuthan home base Masal won 228 of the 539 seats. Following the dissolution of parliament, it backed the agitation for Koirala's removal and the formation of a multi-party government. It supported a number of nominally independent candidates in the 1994 election, including Pari Thapa who was elected in Baglung-3.

Nepal Communist Party (Varma) A small, formerly pro-Soviet grouping, led by Krishna Raj Varma and part of the United Left Front during the Democracy Movement. Varma unsuccessfully contested the Saptari-5 seat in the 1991 general election. The group decided in July 1991 to merge with the **Nepal Communist Party (Democratic)** and the **Amatya** group to form the **Nepal Communist Party (United)** but withdrew from the new party in April 1992.

Nepal Communist Party (Marxist). Led by Prabhu Narayan Chaudhuri and made up of former workers of the pre-1991 party of this name who left the **UML** soon after the 1991 election. In December 1993 Keshar Mani Pokhrel, the politburo member responsible for foreign affairs, joined **Congress**. The **NCP(M)** put up candidates in 1994, but all except four of them received less than 1,000 votes and the party's share of total votes cast was only 0.39%.

Nepal Communist League. Led by General-Secretary Shambhu Ram Shrestha. In 1992 joined the **Unity Centre** and other groups in anti-government agitation and in the local election campaign. It also took part in the 7-party agitation of June-August 1993. After the **Congress-UML** accord, the party criticised both the **UML** and the 4-party 'rejectionist' alliance, but said there was no point in restarting the protest movement. The League joined the 6-party Leftist alliance to demand the prime minister's resignation after the dissolution of parliament in July 1994.

Nepal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist). Led by Nanda Kumar Prasai. Was a member of the **UPF** from before the general election until September 1992. Took part in the 1993 7-party agitation over the Dasdhunga incident, and in the 4-party alliance which rejected the ensuing **Congress-UML** accord. It apparently rejoined the **UPF** after the May 1994 split as Nanda Kumar Prasai became vice-chairman of the Central Committee of the **UPF (Vaidya)** in July.

Nepal People's Front (Nepal Janbadi Manch). Set up in 1980 by Ram Raja Prasad Singh, who as a Congress supporter had used the graduate constituency under the original panchayat constitution to challenge the ban on political parties, and was imprisoned. He rejected B.P. Koirala's switch to 'national reconciliation' in 1976 and, in self-exile in India from 1981, advocated the violent overthrow of the panchayat regime and the establishment of a republic. He claimed responsibility for bomb explosions in Nepal in summer 1984, though it has been alleged he was not actually involved but was paid to take the blame by a palace-connected faction who were the real perpetrators. Singh's colleague, Prem Krishna Pathak, led the party within Nepal during the 1991 elections. Singh, who had been condemned to death in absentia but was amnestied in 1991, returned to Nepal in summer 1994. The party contested the general elections in November 1994, putting up 41 candidates, almost all of whom lost their deposits, including Singh himself in Dhanusha-4 (his home constituency). The party received 0.43% of total votes cast.

C. MISCELLANEOUS GROUPS

Rashtriya Janata Parishad, formed in February 1992, with M.P. Koirala (half-brother of Girija Prasad and B.P. Koirala and himself prime minister in 1951-52 and 1953-54) as president and Kirtinidhi Bista (another panchayat-era premier) as vice-president. The general secretary is Shribhadra Sharma, a former Congress M.P. who joined the panchayat system in the 1980s. In summer 1994, the party agreed to join an alliance with the **Janta Dal**

(Social-Democratic), Nepal Praja Parishad, Samyukta Prajatantra Party, Janta Party,¹⁰ and Jana Rajya Parishad. In the 1994 election, in which a son of M.P. Koirala was elected as a UML M.P., the party put up 28 candidates but obtained only 0.12% of votes cast.

Janta Dal (Social-Democratic). Set up by ex-Communist Keshar Jung Raimajhi, it contested 15 seats in the 1991 election and obtained 0.08% of the national vote. In the 1994 election, Raimajhi himself was his party's only candidate and attracted just 404 votes in Nawalparasi-2.

Nepal Praja Parishad. Nepal's oldest political party, formed to oppose the Ranas in the 1940s and re-established by one of its original leaders, the late Tanka Prasad Acharya, after the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1990. Among the leaders of the party after Acharya's death was Bishwa Bandu Thapa. The party put up 7 candidates in the 1994 election, all of whom received under a thousand votes.

Prajatantrik Lok Dal. Launched in December 1992 by Devendra Raj Pande, a former Finance Secretary who had served as an independent in the 1990 interim government, with himself as chairman and Tanka Karki, once a NCP (ML) youth leader, as general secretary. The new party condemned Congress for continuing Panchayat-era policies in the name of economic liberalism and for its lack of intra-party democracy, and accused the communists of failing to come to terms with the collapse of the world communist movement. Of the 10 candidates standing for it in the 1994 election, only Devendra Raj Pande himself received over a thousand votes (1,116 in Palpa-2).

Rashtriya Janamukti Party. Led by Gore Bahadur Khapangi, this is an ethnically-based party, campaigning on behalf of the 'hill tribals', but since, as is also the case with Sadbhavana, its name and constitution do not make its ethnic appeal explicit, it was accepted for registration by the Election Commission. In 1991 the party contested 50 seats and obtained 0.47% of the popular vote. In 1994, 85 candidates obtained a total of 1.05%.

APPENDIX: LIST OF PARTIES MENTIONED

(Parties underlined were represented under their own names in parliament. Italicised names are the author's own translations and may not be the official English title of the organisation concerned. Asterisks denote parties no longer functioning as independent groups, and square brackets enclose an earlier title of the party listed immediately above.)

Name in Nepali	Name in English*	Abbreviation
<u>Nepali Kangres</u>	<u>Nepali Congress</u>	
<u>Nepal Kamyunist Parti</u> (<u>Ekatri Marksbadi-Leninbadi</u>)	<u>Nepal Communist Party</u> (<u>Unified Marxist-Leninist</u>)	<u>UML</u>
*Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Marksbadi-Leninbadi)	Nepal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)	NCP(MLM)

<u>Nepal Kamyunist Parti</u> (<u>Samyukta</u>)	<u>Nepal Communist Party</u> (<u>United</u>)	
*Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Prajatantrik)	Nepal Communist Party (Democratic)	NCP(D)
[Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Verma)]	Nepal Communist Party (Verma)]	
*Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Amatya)	Nepal Communist Party (Amatya)	
<u>Samyukta Jana Morcha</u> (<u>Nepal</u>)	<u>United People's Front</u> (<u>Nepal</u>)	<u>UPF</u>
Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Ekta Kendra)	Nepal Communist Party (Unity Centre)	
*Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Mashal)	Nepal Communist Party (Mashal)	
*Sarvaharavadi Shramik Sangathan	<i>Proletarian Workers Organisation</i>	
*Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Chaturtho Mahadhiveshan)	Nepal Communist Party (Fourth Convention)	
Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Marksbadi-Leninbadi-Maobadi)	Nepal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)	NCP (MLM)
Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Masal)	Nepal Communist Party (Masal)	
<u>Nepal Majdur Kisan</u> <u>Parti</u>	<u>Nepal Workers and Peasants</u> <u>Party</u>	<u>NWPP</u>
<u>Nepal Sadbhavana Parti</u>	<u>Nepal Goodwill Party</u>	
(<u>Samyukta</u>) <u>Rashtriya</u> <u>Prajatantra Parti</u>	(<u>United</u>) <u>National</u> <u>Democratic Party</u>	<u>NDP</u>
Nepal Kamyunist Lig	Nepal Communist League	
Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Marksbadi)	Nepal Communist Party (Marxist)	NCP(M)
[Nepal Kamyunist Parti (15 Saptamber 1949)]	Nepal Communist Party (15 September 1949)]	
*Nepal Kamyunist Parti (Chataum Mahadhiveshan)	Nepal Communist Party (Sixth Convention)	
Nepal Janabadi Morcha	<i>Nepal People's Front</i> ¹¹	
Rashtriya Janata Parishad	<i>National People's Council</i>	
Nepal Praja Parishad	<i>Nepal People's Council</i>	
Prajatantrik Lok Dal	<i>Democratic People's Party</i>	

Janta Dal (Samajik-Prajatantrik)	People's Party (Social Democratic)
Samyukta Prajatantra Parti	United Democratic Party
Rashtriya Janta Dal (Nepal)	National People's Party (Nepal)
Rashtriya Janta Dal (H)	National People's Party (H)
Nepali Janata Parti	Nepali People's Party
Rashtriya Janarajya Parishad	National People's Rule Council

Notes:

1 I am grateful to Krishna Hachhethu of CNAS for comments. Chaitanya Upadhyaya also kindly read through an earlier draft of the paper. Neither, of course, is responsible for errors remaining in the final version. I am also indebted to Abhi Subedi for collecting material on the 1994 election.

2 Figures for the 1994 election are normally taken from CRPS/DAS 1994.

3 Effective strength was actually 113 as the speaker, Daman Nath Dhungana, could only vote in case of a tie.

4 The statement was signed on 25 July but held back for release until 27 July. It was rendered meaningless by the Congress reconciliation on that day, but released to the press by the UML.

5 Despite earlier speculation, there was no attempt to hold a formal session of the General Council. The Congress constitution (clause 12.B) provides that the party's central office (viz. Bhattarai as president) 'may summon' the council on application from one third of the delegates, but the Koirala side presumably preferred not to provoke a fight by putting in such a request.

6 Including parties which failed to gain seats, the total vote for the Leftist parties was 36.79% in 1991 and 33.92% in 1994. The latter figure excludes votes for independent candidates backed by Masal. Had the Left been able to negotiate comprehensive seat-sharing arrangements they would probably have won an additional 14 seats in 1991 and 8 more in 1994.

7 This total includes Padma Ratna Tuladhar, who used the UML election symbol but still describes himself as an 'independent leftist'.

8 Shrestha, who was absent from parliament when the crucial vote was taken on 10 July, afterwards expressed sympathy for Girija and was widely expected to join the Nepali Congress.

9 As the theoretically palatal sibilant in *masāl* and dental one in *masāl* are now identical in most people's pronunciation, they have to be distinguished as *moṭo* (fat) and *pāṭlo* (thin) when words are spelled out. Hence Prachand's former group is often referred to in conversation as *moṭo masāl* and Mohan Bikram's as *pāṭlo masāl*.

10 Presumably to be identified either with the Rashtriya Janata Party (Nepal) of Jayaprakash, or its splinter group Harka Bahadur Buda's Rashtriya Janata Party (H). These put up 9 and 28 candidates respectively at the general election and each received 0.06% of the national vote. The Nepali Janta Party of Kamal Prasad Ghimire registered with the election commission in 1991 but did not put up candidates. This was also the case with the Samyukta Prajatantra Party of former-Foreign Minister K.B. Shahi and Manik Raj Bajracharya's Rashtriya Jana Rajya Parishad.

11 This was the title under which Ramraja Prasad Singh's party fought the 1994 election. It was earlier normally known simply as 'Janbadi Morcha'. A party with that shorter name was also registered for the 1994 election and it is not clear if there is any connection between the two organisations.

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INTERVIEW

Ethnicity and National Integration in Nepal A Conversation with Parshuram Tamang

Karl-Heinz Krämer

Parshuram Tamang, lecturer for economics at the Sarasvati Multiple Campus of Tribhuvan-University, Kathmandu, is Secretary-General of the Nepal Tamang Ghedung, a socio-cultural Tamang-Organization, which was founded as early as 1956, as well as Chairman of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Nepal Chapter. Last year he functioned as Secretary of the National Committee for the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples, Nepal. In July 1990 he was one of the founders of the Nepal Janajati Mahasangh, a kind of umbrella organization of the 'Tibeto-Mongolic peoples' organizations of Nepal. This organization had been preceded by Sarvajati Adhikar Manch (Forum for the Rights of all Nationalities), which was founded in 1986 and Visidh Dharma, Bhasha, Jati tatha Janajati Samgharsha Samiti (Various Religions, Languages and Nationalities Action Committee), which had been active during the movement for democracy of 1990, then presided by Parshuram Tamang. He is the author of several articles relevant to the history and ethnicity of the Tamang, as well as to questions concerning status and rights of the Tibeto-Mongolic peoples in general. The question of the national integration of these ethnic groups and the related increase of politicization of the ethnic organizations in Nepal were the topics of our conversation on 10th April 1994 in Kathmandu.

K-HK: Could you please tell me something about the history and organization of the Nepal Tamang Ghedung? What is the purpose of your organization?

PT: The Nepal Tamang Ghedung is a social Tamang Organization. It is not like an NGO. It is not an organization of only a few people but of the whole Tamang people. Its purpose is to develop a people's movement. The Nepal Tamang Ghedung works for the preservation, support and development of the common