Challenges to Nepal's Republican Structure from Monarchists and Why?

Dear all,
Greetings from Tricontinental Asia !!

On March 28, 2025, pro-republic and pro-monarchy forces organised rival protests in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, to showcase public support for and against the Republic. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, about 4,000 people attended the pro-monarchy rally, while around 35,000 joined the pro-republican protest. This was the second major monarchist demonstration following a bigger rally welcoming the king back from Pokhara on March 9. Pro-monarchy forces have been increasingly active, particularly after the **former king Gyanendra Shah's provocative statement on the eve of Democracy Day (February 19).**

Sensing the offense of counterrevolutionary forces, the pro-republican protest, organized under the Socialist Front, an alliance of the four opposition left parties, aimed to counter what they call reactionary and regressive forces. While the republican demonstration remained peaceful, the monarchists turned violent, vandalizing public and private property and attacking security personnel. In the aftermath, two people lost their lives, and several were injured.

The violent pro-monarchy demonstration sparked intense debate. Republicans claim the monarchists attempted to create chaos and exploit the crisis while the government also accused them of inciting violence. The monarchists, however, argue they faced suppression from the police.

Pro-monarchy protestors turn violent in Tinkune and Kathmandu. Source: Online People's News

Recognising the impact of March 28 protests, inside and outside Nepal, the monarchists are planning nationwide protests and have already formed a joint coordination committee. Meanwhile, after the monarchists vandalised the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Socialist) [CPN (US)] headquarters and damaged properties, the Socialist Front has committed to defend the achievements of the peaceful People's Movement of 2006, which abolished monarchy and paved the way for a socialism-oriented constitution. Uncertainty remains, but two things are evident: Monarchists are uniting and mobilising aggressively, while republican forces remain firm. This could strengthen left unity, though questions persist about division within the largest parties, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) [CPN (UML)]) and Nepali Congress (NC) on republicanism.

NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba may support the Republic, but it is an open secret that many others within his party favour Hindu nationalism and monarchy, and oppose the federal structure of Nepal. There many who question the ruling CPN (UML) asking if its top leadership is pro-monarchy, even while acknowledging that majority oppose the monarchy within the party. The fourth-largest party, the independent Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), and Kathmandu's mayor, rapper Balen Shah, are exploiting the situation to challenge traditional parties and the current political system. There are reports that the monarchists are backed by Indian forces – the ruling regime, the Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) active role in Nepal, and the

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath – who are supporting financially, politically, and even militarily. The republicans struggle in Nepal for defending constitutional democracy will not be that easy.

Mekha Limbu(Nepal), We are on the way to death, 2012.

Historical Context and Dialectics

Nepal's unpredictable politics cannot be understood without historical, dialectical, and global perspectives. Its geopolitical location, India-China rivalry, Hindu fundamentalism, US influence, and EU interests, the recent populist tendencies, etc. have turned Nepal into a battleground for power struggles. When leftist coalitions emerge to govern the country India in alliance with the US and right-wing forces, works to weaken them. Internal party rifts further destabilize the government. Therefore, it may be seen that all the forces within the nation and outside, will unite to weaken Nepali state and create further crisis.

Political instability has been a great challenge of Nepalese democracy. Nepal's political instability is evident in its frequent government changes – 32 since multiparty democracy was restored in 1990, and 13 since Nepal became a republic in 2008. The current government that ruling Nepal is the 14th.

On top political instability, the republicans in Nepal underestimated the monarchy's revival. Even leftist forces overlooked the resurgence of counterrevolutionary elements. Some self-proclaimed theoreticians focused solely on comprador bourgeoisie as the enemy of Nepal's working class while ignoring conservatives, reactionaries, and fundamentalists. As previously noted, after overthrowing the monarchy, there was no significant effort to transform production relations in Nepal and create alternative cultural structures, leaving ample space for people to aspire for the monarchy's return.

Mass media and social media blame top leaders Deuba, K. P. Sharma Oli, and Prachanda, who have collectively ruled for decades, for the crises. Deuba has been prime minister six times, Oli four, and Prachanda three. Other former PMs still lead parties and remain active. These aging leaders have dominated Nepal's politics for 30 years. However, deeper systemic issues are more influential than people or parties.

Socialist Front rallies at Bhrikuti Mandap. Source: Online People's News

Why Is This Happening in Nepal?

A.) Political Instability and Systemic Crisis

Nepal faces severe political instability, deep inequality, unemployment, slow economic growth, weak industrialisation, mass migration, poverty, food insecurity, and rising debt. Climate crises and disasters add to these challenges. Various forces exploit these crises for their interests. Government changes bring only new rulers, not solutions. People are increasingly frustrated with political parties and the system itself. The 2015 Constitution of Nepal, which established a federal democratic republic, is under threat. Federalism is criticised, republicanism is questioned, and neo-fascism and populism are on the rise. Pro-monarchist forces are capitalising on this turmoil. While most acknowledge Nepal's problems, reactionary forces blame political parties and the republican system itself. They falsely claim that restoring monarchy, re-establishing a Hindu state, and ending federalism as the solutions. It is prudent to note that many of these groups receive political and financial support from Hindutva-aligned conservatives.

B.) Failure of the Government to Deliver

The current government holds a two-thirds majority, with two parties who have been historically rivals uniting. Its failure to govern effectively is seen as proof that Nepal's political system itself is failing. This perception fuels calls for alternative governance models, including a return to monarchy.

C.) Corruption, Bad Governance, and Impunity

Recent scandals—such as the Gold Scam, Bhutanese Refugee Scam, and Giri Bandhu Tea Estate Scam—have exposed massive corruption within the state. People now believe that no political leader is clean, as all have been in power at some point. Lack of rule of law, poor governance, and impunity for corrupt leaders have enraged the public. The perception that all top leaders are involved in scandals has made accountability almost impossible.

D.) Public Frustration and Growing Anti-Establishment Sentiment

Government failure, rising unemployment, and foreign labour migration have fuelled widespread frustration. Reactionary and populist forces frame their movements as a revolt against the political establishment. This anti-establishment sentiment explains the rise of figures like Durga Prasai and Kathmandu Mayor Balen Shah. Shah's election was largely due to public anger toward traditional parties. People are increasingly rejecting established political structures, creating space for monarchists and other challengers.

Shashi Bikram Shah(Nepal), Royal Massacre Series, 2001.

E.) Lack of Development Agendas and Weak Leadership

Nepali leaders lack a vision for national development. They show little concern for public suffering, employment opportunities, or economic growth. Instead, they are focused on power, corruption, and alliances with corporate and comprador elites. Leadership incompetence is another major issue. Most leaders have failed to demonstrate effective governance. Though they may be politically experienced, they lack the ability to transform Nepal's economy and society.

F.) Weakening of the State and Attacks on the Left

There is lot of ideological degeneration in Nepal's Left movements as they are heavily infiltrated by conservatives. Also, political revisionism has made the Left on the whole indistinguishable from the bourgeois parties. Many leftists have abandoned class struggle, allowing right-wing forces to gain ground. Anti-communist elements are actively working to defame Nepal's left, weakening national sovereignty and progress. A corrupt judiciary and penetrated bureaucracy further ensure that genuine reformers are isolated or sidelined. Crime networks and muscle power dominate the political scene, making systemic change difficult.

Amid this crisis, pro-monarchy conservatives and reactionaries are exploiting public frustration. While systemic failures are widely acknowledged, these groups falsely present monarchy, Hindu nationalism, and the abolition of federalism as solutions. Many suspect these efforts are backed by right-wing Hindutva groups.

Major political parties' failure to offer a development agenda has left a vacuum that reactionary forces are filling. The 2015 Constitution, which established Nepal as a federal democratic republic, now faces threats from both political actors and street movements. Federalism is under scrutiny, republicanism is questioned, and neo-fascist and populist movements are growing.

Urgent responses from the government and political parties are necessary. Nepal's crisis is deeply systemic, with instability and foreign interference fuelling continued failure. Without addressing corruption, delivering reforms, and safeguarding democratic institutions, Nepal risks further regression. The world watches as one of the youngest republics struggles to navigate this precarious moment.

Hoping this newsletter will create further academic and research interests on the issues facing Nepal.

Warmly,

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