

# ***2006: Jana Andolan 2***



**APRIL 2006 DEMOCRATIC UPRISING**

# Interim Government

- After the 1990 uprising, the interim government rushed the process of constitutional revision. The Congress Party was unable even to summon the will to override the palace's insistence that the king was the "incarnation of God."
- Despite widespread sentiment for a secular state, high-caste Brahmins who controlled the country's major institutions refused to budge. To many people's relief, months of wrangling over the constitution ended in November, and elections were scheduled for May 12, 1991.
- The new Constitution named Nepal a "Hindu, monarchical kingdom." Although caste discrimination was officially made illegal, demands for school education to be held in some of the 38 mother tongues of different ethnic groups were rejected. Both Congress and the ULF supported "equal rights for women," and the new constitution called for 5% of all candidates for any party to be women. Nonetheless, their differences on the retention of the monarchy—even a constitutional one—were quite large.

# 1991 Elections

- Although the Anglo-American winner-take-all system favored the larger parties, Communists won a surprising victory, receiving 36.6% of the vote (only slightly less than the Congress Party's) and some 82 seats in the new parliament. They swept Kathmandu, defeating the interim prime minister as well as the wife and son of Ganesh Man Singh.
- NC was the only party that ran a national slate with candidates in nearly every district, and they won a majority of the seats. The most radical party, the UPF, won a surprising nine seats, while parties associated with the old *panchayat* system garnered only 4 seats (and 12% of the vote).

# 1994 Elections

- In 1994, when NC narrowly garnered more votes than the CP-UML (33.4% to 30.9%), a minority coalition formed led by self-described Marxist-Leninists, making Nepal a rare example of a communist monarchy.
- Between 1995 and 1999, a half dozen coalitions alternated holding power.
- By 2002, twelve years of multi-party parliamentary democracy had produced ten governments. Low caste people, ethnic minorities, and women remained underrepresented in the parliaments.
- As the country's economy faltered, more than two million young people left Nepal in search of jobs elsewhere.

- Nepali communism's appeal needs to be understood through the prism of cultural traditions. As long-time activist Tulsī Lal Amatya, communist leader in Patan, explained:
  - “In our ancient days, our Hindu sages (*rishis*) used to recite a saying which went like this: ‘Let us live together, let us eat together, let us work together, let our intellect grow, and let us not be envious of each other. Let us live together like friends, as a family.’ And this is what we mean by communism....let nobody suffer under the system because they are all human beings...Buddha said that the principle of the ruler is that there should be nobody in this kingdom who has tears in their eyes. And what the Buddha stands for is also what we communists stand for.”
- Communist ideas of equality go hand in hand with a Buddhist concept of compassion.

# Diversity even among communists

- As early as 1972, Nepali opposition politics, divided into Left and Democracy tendencies, was fragmented as in few other countries.
- Even Nepal's communists were organized into no fewer than 14 parties that varied widely on interpretations of revolutionary theory and ways to implement it in practice.



CPN-ML 2001 Kathmandu Rally

# Maoists Armed Struggle

- The most radical communist group, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), failed to win a single seat in the 1994 general election and was excluded from the subsequent UML government. Launching a people's war in February 1996, the small party of only 85 cadre and leaders grew into a People's Army of anywhere from 5,000 to 19,000 armed combatants in a few years. Like the uprising of 1990, the armed rural insurgency gained supporters faster than anyone—including its leadership—had expected.



- In at least 21 districts, they formed people's governments through direct elections in which everyone except "feudal elements" and "comprador and bureaucratic capitalists" participated.
- Their parallel judicial system won wide support among the rural poor.
- Their redistribution of wealth at the village level endeared them to many whom they freed from generations of servile existence. They burned bank records of farmers' debts and assaulted tax collectors and moneylenders who charged up to 60% annual interest to beleaguered villagers. In many cases, if these moneylenders had compelled families to sell their children into sexual slavery in order to pay off their debts, communist justice imposed a death sentence.

- The Maoists redistributed land, promoted women to positions of leadership, formed all-female-fighting units, and lent money to needy individuals at normal rates of interest.
- They banned dice, cards, and alcohol and strictly enforced a prohibition on male violence against wives.
- They compelled schools to stop teaching the arcane Sanskrit texts the monarchy had imposed on ethnic minorities and lowered the fees for private schools so not only the children of the rich could attend.

On the back cover of a Maoist journal, party leaders were pictured as successors to Shah monarchs.



8. Back Cover of the Maoist Journal *Naulo Bibani*, Showing the Maoist Leaders as the Successors of the Shah Kings of Nepal (Photo: M. Lecomte-Tilouine).

- The people's movement of 1990 had spread outward from Kathmandu, but the Maoists strategy was to invert that direction, building up rural base areas and surrounding the capital.
- In May 2002, official estimates put Maoists in control of 25% of the country. By 2006, their adaptation of the Chinese path to power (prolonged people's war from secured base areas) was so successful that they controlled more than half the countryside and seemed poised to bring their armed campaign to the capital—where it was said they had already their own tax system on many businesses.
- By 2005, the United Revolutionary People's Council was believed to be the embryo of a new government, and many expected the Maoists to seize power.
- The US was worried, and president George W. Bush instructed prime minister Deuba on May 2, 2002 to “Go get them, fight them, and finish them.” The US provided more than \$20 million in military aid and an additional \$40 million in development aid to support the war effort.





- Maoist Volleyball Champs 2006

**October 4, 2002**

## **Royal Coup D'Etat**

- The Achilles heel of the 1990 constitution was article 115, which granted the king power to declare a state of emergency.
- In a bloody palace massacre on June 1, 2001, King Birendra and all of his immediate family were slain, and Gyanendra was proclaimed the new monarch.
- Although one of the princes was blamed for the slaughter, many people believe the new king was responsible, motivated by his predecessor's secret dialogue with the Maoists and failure to permit the army to take decisive action against them.
- The king dissolved the parliament on May 22, 2002, and a few months later, on October 4, Gyanendra seized absolute power.



King Gyanendra



# Martial Law

- On February 1, 2005, the king declared martial law using the pretext of the threat from the Maoist rebels in the countryside. Telephone lines were cut, and the prime minister and other political leaders were detained. Satellites were shut off, media censored, and airports closed.
- Three days later, army helicopters fired on protesting students in Pokhara, wounding 15 people. Within ten months, over 6,000 people were summarily arrested, many held without medical treatment at undisclosed detention centers.
- The country seemed headed for catastrophe, caught between the palace's iron heel and the Maoists' iron fist.

# The Seven Party Alliance (SPA) formed in May 2005

- Nepali Congress
- Nepali Congress (Democratic)
- Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist),
- Nepal Workers and Peasants Party
- Nepal Goodwill Party
- United Left Front
- People' s Front.

# SPA (continued)

- The Communist Party of Nepal or the CPN-UM was formed in 1990 and united with the Nepali Congress Party to help form the short-lived democracy in the 1990's.
- The United Left Front was specially formed from a mix of communist parties for the singular purpose of overthrowing autocratic rule.
- Nepal's Worker and Peasant Party was formed in 1976. It supported a Communist rule in hopes of improving conditions for the lower class and the working people.

# SPA

- Since it was illegal to form political parties in Nepal, Gyanendra set up countless raids on homes and businesses attempting to locate members of the S.P.A.
- During these raids, suspected members were beaten and tortured for information on other members.



# Nationwide General Strike

- SPA called for a four-day general strike between April 5-9.
- The Maoists announced a cease-fire in the Katmandu Valley

The King enforced a curfew and ordered that protestors be shot on sight.



- During the first few days of the protests, only a few thousand people appeared in the streets, but their numbers grew rapidly as the uprising unfolded. On April 5, security forces rounded up nearly all major party leaders—some fifty in all—and government forces killed Darsan Lal Yadav as he peacefully protested in Saptari.
- The next day, the first day in the planned general strike, over 450 people—including at least 17 journalists—were arrested in Kathmandu. Where mass arrests failed to deter protests, police used clubs and mercilessly beat unarmed people. When beatings failed to quiet the streets, bullets were used—but nothing could contain people's yearnings for freedom.

# 2006 Democratic Uprising

- April 8 – Curfew declared
- April 9 – Protests continue

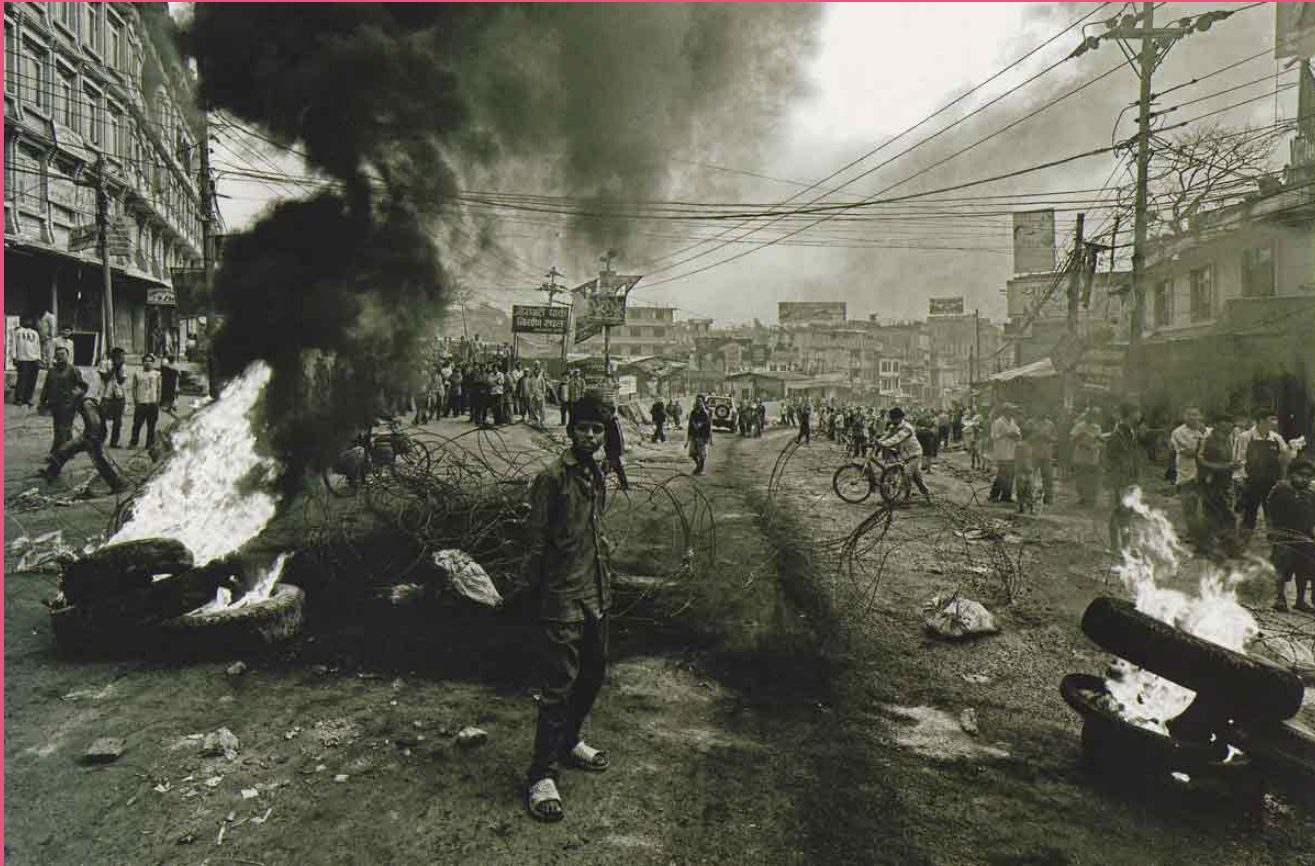


# April 9

- On April 9, the SPA promised that protests would continue indefinitely and called on people to refuse to pay taxes.
- In Banepa, one person was killed when police opened fire and three others were wounded. In Janakpur, almost a thousand workers in a cigarette factory walked off the job to support the general strike. In Parasi, telecommunications, banks, electrical workers and other state employees all joined the protests. Security forces opened fire in many parts the country, including Pokhara and Synagja, killing three people and wounding at least 26 more.
- As the wounded poured into hospitals, medical workers organized protests at hospitals in many different districts.



# Day 5



- On April 11, the sixth day of protests, the SPA called for an indefinite general strike, while the king extended the curfew. More than two dozen people were wounded by gunfire in Gongabu. In Lalitpur, residents chased away security forces after they opened fire. In Pokhara, police again opened fire on a rally of thousands, and arrested nine tourists in Thamel who called for restoration of democracy. Police opened fire on a poetry reading in the Baneshwar district of Kathmandu.
- As professionals continued to mobilize on April 12, police arrested dozens of professors, journalists, teachers, and lawyers. In Pokhara, a rally by the Professionals' Association for Peace and Democracy resulted in 239 arrests.

# 2006 Democratic Uprising

- April 9 to 21:  
Numbers increase to  
300,000



# Protests Continue

- April 10, the day of Birkham Sambat – Nepal's New Year, massive crowds flood capital streets
- Protestors marched demanding the end of the monarchy and the return of democracy.
- The Uprising started as a political party opposition and grew into a People's Movement.
- News of the Uprising traveled around the world and reached most major newspapers.





Declared State of Emergency



Incurred Martial Law

# The Streets of Nepal





Demonstrations





UPRISING

# The People of Nepal



usha titikshu

# Students



- Even more than in 1990, people from all walks of life mobilized: farmers and workers, the urban poor, women's groups, cultural workers, students, professors, engineers, lawyers, accountants, bank employees, transportation and government office workers.
- Their participation in the uprising gave it a new character and was a significant force making it a people's movement, not just an instrument of political parties based upon different sectors of Nepal's urban elite.
- Everywhere vehicular traffic was halted, bringing the country to a standstill.



# Children



# Protest In Dang



# Protest In Dang





# Protest In Dang



# Conflict Continues



# Movement Continues







April 16, 2006



Lawyers April 18 Photo by Bimal Sharma



Blood Donations April 19 Photo by Bimal Sharma

# Royal Nepalese Army

- The RNA used brutal force in their attempt to disperse the crowds.
- They went as far as breaking into a medical dormitory and violently beating students who participated in the protests earlier that day.





# Brutality



# Kalanki

- On April 20, three people were shot and killed, and more than 100 wounded in Kalanki district of Kathmandu.
- Kalanki is outside the area where the king had banned gatherings.
- Without provocation, police and soldiers opened fire.
- The next day, the victims' families reported that security forces sought to force them to acknowledge that their victimized loved ones were Maoists.
- Massive protests called for the corpses to be released from police custody.)

# Protests Expand

- From the Kalanki massacre onwards, the size of protests expanded. According to the *New York Times*, “Hang the King!” became a popular mantra of many demonstrators. On April 21, a “human sea poured in the capital.” Sources claim that a million people participated in the demonstrations despite the curfew. In Pokhara, nearly 100,000 people joined in the protest march.

- On April 22 and 23, millions of Nepalis went into the streets to protest. Madhav Kumar Nepal estimated that 4.5 million Nepalis (out of a population of less than 30 million) protested on April 22 alone.
- Madhav Nepal had visited Gwangju and told me he was “inspired by people’s heroic struggle.” In an interview in Kathmandu on April 12, 2009, he told me that out of a population of 25 million, 5 million people were in the streets, another 5 million on the roofs, and ten million more hoping the movement would be successful.
- He also recounted pressure from India, the US, China, and Europeans to compromise with the king at that moment, but “We refused to stop until the king bowed down before us.”

**Friday, April 21, 2006**





Photo by Bimal Sharma

# Crowds Increase Dramatically

➤ April 21, sources claim that about half a million people participated in the demonstrations in Katmandu.

- Tactics of the demonstrators included worker strikes, mass marches, sit-ins, and vigils



- Crowds begin to fight back against the violent RNA – Throwing bricks and lighting fires.

# April 23

- On April 23, knowing full well the risks involved, people marched on the palace. When police attacked with bullets and tear gas, at least 23 people were critically injured, and hundreds more rushed to hospitals.
- Word of mouth told that two million people would storm the king's palace two days later.



# April 24

- On the evening of the 24th, over 2 million people converged in the streets. Again targeting the monarchy, thousands of voices chanted “Hang the King!” and “Burn the Crown!”
- Twelve people were killed, hundreds wounded
- That night, Maoists attacked government facilities including a telecommunications tower in Chautara, a scant 75 miles north of Kathmandu.
- Finally, King Gyanendra relented, agreeing to reinstate Parliament (which he had dissolved in 2002) and permit a referendum on the constitution.

# Party Leaders



- As in 1990, ordinary people's vision for what was needed were more radical—and accurate—than the leading parties. More than any other factor, what was decisive was thousands of people's stubborn refusal to submit to overwhelming state power carried the day.
- The nationwide *bandh* transformed the entire country. At its high point, five million people were involved, while millions more watched with glee.
- Altogether, 21 martyrs of Jana Andolan 2 were counted, men and women whose sacrifice was accompanied by 18 others who disappeared, more than 3723 who were wounded, and 2979 arrested.

<b>Jana Andolan 1 (1990)</b>	<b>Jana Andolan 2 (2006)</b>
Mainly urban: 4 “purs”	Not limited to main cities—also rural areas
Middle and lower-middle class	Unprecedented numbers
Absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy	Constitutional monarchy to republic
Unitary system	Federal system
Hindu state	Secular state
49 days	19 days
Panchayat system toppled	Monarchy ended

- Unlike the 1990 uprising, the 2006 *jana andolan* was intimately intertwined with the Maoist-led armed struggle in the countryside.
- The unity of these two disparate strands of opposition gave the movement strength and resiliency unknown in places where movements remain bitterly divided—and sometimes even antagonistically pitted against each other.
- “Without the armed struggle, there would have been no victory in 2006,” Maoist leader Shalik Ram Jamkattel told me in Kathmandu.

# Uprising' s Aftermath

- Students rallied against the “reemergence of the old practice” of political leaders.
- People wanted punishment of those responsible for the shooting of protestors—to say nothing of the arrests and years of indignities people had suffered. The new government had to act quickly or lose control of the situation. On May 12, four royalist ministers were arrested, and an investigation was ordered into human rights abuses during the uprising.

- Four arrests were not enough to appease people. They wanted an end to the monarchy itself. After parliament failed to act decisively, protesters burned cars and demonstrated against the politicians.
- Finally, in a momentous act passed unanimously by the interim parliament, the king was stripped of all his powers. Called a “Nepalese Magna Carta,” the act made Nepal a secular state (ending the world’s last Hindu kingdom). All the king’s powers were taken over the parliament; command of the army was designated to the prime minister; the word “royal” was deleted in reference to the army.
- May 18, 2006, the day on which the interim government acted, is now called Democracy Day (*Lokantrik* Day).



Maoist Victory Rally June 2, 2006



# 12 point agreement

- November 21, 2006

Maoists and SPA sign

Comprehensive Peace Accord





**Parties Agree on Interim Constitution  
December 2006**



Prime Minister Girija Koirala  
October 2007

# Continuing Struggles

- Since the 12-point agreement in November 2006 until 2009, there were 1380 killings, 70% by Maoists.
- In one year from mid 2007 to mid 2008, more than 600 people were killed.

- As in the aftermath of *jana andolan* 1 1990, NGO mushroomed. . Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP) has more than 300 groups working in it.
- After the uprising, mini-movements in the Terai where ethnic groups demanded greater participation within a federal structure.
- FM radio stations spread rapidly. One Human Rights radio sponsored by INSEC has over 5,000 listeners' clubs in 2009.
- Even young girls began to protest publicly for the right to go to school. Organizing a children's march, they declared children a "Zone of Peace" and assembled a children's parliament., whose new laws were passed along to the Constituent Assembly.



Hindus



Blind people

# Political Parties Bicker

- Twice elections for the Constituent Assembly were postponed as "irreconcilable differences" among political parties prevented agreement on their form.
- Popular disillusionment with parties became widespread.
- In fairness, the Maoists made reasonable demands as preconditions for participation in the elections, especially the declaration of a republic and proportional system of representation.

# Constituent Assembly

- April 10, 2008 Maoists won elections with 217 seats in the new 601-member constituent assembly.
- The character of the secular republic has yet to be determined. While the Maoists spectacularly won elections for a constituent assembly to redraft the constitution, the monarchy has yet to be officially abolished. The country cries out for a federal structure so that its various ethnic groups and regions can manage their own affairs.
- In previous parliaments, fewer than 5% of delegates were women, but in the new CA some one-third are female. 24 parties, 601 seats.





May 29, 2008

“King Out of Palace!”

# Poverty Continues

- In August 2009, citing a “sharp and sustained decline in food security,” the UN World Food program reported that more than three million Nepalis were endangered. The agency estimated that 48% of children under five were chronically malnourished—as many as 60% in mountainous regions.
- In 1998, life expectancy for women was 53.5, more than year lower than men’s 55.0.
- In 2001, 65.1% of men were literate compared with only 42.5% of women).
- Estimates reported that from 7,000 to 10,000 women and children were sold every year into the sex trade in India.

# “Constitutional Coup”

In mid-2009, the Maoists sought to take unilateral command of the country by firing General Katawal a few months ahead of his mandatory retirement. Katawal is certainly no saint—and neither is his second-in-command they sought to be his replacement.

The CPN UML (United Marxist- Leninists) proposed firing all 3 top generals and bringing in a completely new army leadership, but the Maoists rejected that offer and instead created a crisis leading them to resign.

The Maoists have begun to resurrect the 'parallel governments' once again



- The author interviewing Nepali President Ram Baran Yadav in 2009

The new PM, Madhav Kumar Nepal of the CPN UML—is a former Maoist ally and staunch anti-imperialist.



Photo by Bimal Sharma



- At the end of 2014, Nepal still had no new constitution
- The inclusive process of writing a new one is as important as the document itself