

**POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN BIHAR (1934-42)**  
**A Case Study of Monghyr District**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of the Degree of  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY*

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1993**

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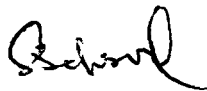
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## CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled,  
POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN BIHAR  
(1934-'42) : A Case Study of "Monghyr District" submitted  
by Hitendra Kumar Patel in partial fulfilment of the award  
of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) in Jawaharlal  
Nehru University is a product of student's own work, carried  
out by him under my supervision and guidance.

It is hereby certified that this work has not been  
submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma by  
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## P R E F A C E

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## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation surveys the political mobilization in Monghyr District of Bihar from 1934 to 1942 (before the Quit India Movement). It consists of three chapters apart from the Introduction and the Appendix.

The first chapter is a brief survey of the development of political consciousness till 1934. For this, I have relied primarily upon some secondary sources carrying narrative accounts of the period, and on interviews with freedom fighters of Monghyr and other senior citizens. Fortunately I could meet a number of people who had actively participated in these political activities or had seen them from close quarters. Their interviews were particularly helpful in verifying the information collected from secondary sources.

The second chapter is an account of Congress activities during the period 1934-42. The attempt is to convey this through a simple narration. I have used archival materials, mostly from Bihar State Archives, Patna, newspapers from Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, and memoirs of Congress leaders apart from secondary sources and interviews. The account, however, has many gaps. The role of caste and religion in the

process of mobilization has not been discussed. I hope to do this in later researches.

An impression derived from the activities of the Congress is that the organisation was successful in getting social sanctity behind it. Its methods of mobilization were very effective as it could involve a large number of people. The organisation certainly had some weaknesses, but it was effective in uniting people behind the organisation against colonial rule.

The third chapter is an account of the condition of kisans and their mode of protest. The sources used are similar to those of the second chapter. It is noticeable that there was hardly any difference between the Congress and the Kisan Sabha workers at the local level. The Kisan Sabha was seen as a part of the ongoing movement for Independence led by the Congress. In Monghyr those programmes were better attended and successful in which Congress leaders were involved. So long as the people saw the Kisan Sabha's work as an extension of Congress activities, the Kisan Sabha leaders enjoyed popular support. This remained true till 1937. Thereafter differences developed and the Kisan Sabha tried to mobilize people along their own 'socialist' lines. It failed miserably.

A look into the account of Kisan Sabha's activities in Monghyr District suggests that the notion, widely accepted by many researchers, that the Kisan Sabha was able to create a large following in the district is historically untrue. The mobilisation of kisans by the Sabha was hurriedly done against some particular demands and it was only partial and centred in some areas of the district.

The fourth chapter is an account of the Bakasht agitation of Barhaiya. The account is based primarily on government records. The account, although based primarily on government records, shows as to how Kisan Sabha leaders tried to make use of the agitation for the Kisan Sabha's organisational benefits. Their confrontationist approach was successful in creating some scenes of kisan 'heroics' but it could not go further. The criticism of the Congress related with this agitation is not justified. The Congress organisation supported Karyanand Sharma, the leader of the agitation so long as he tried to fight for kisans in a peaceful manner and even when he led the movement neglecting Congress interest local Congress workers in different stages helped the movement and the district Congress leadership tried its best to come to a peaceful settlement.

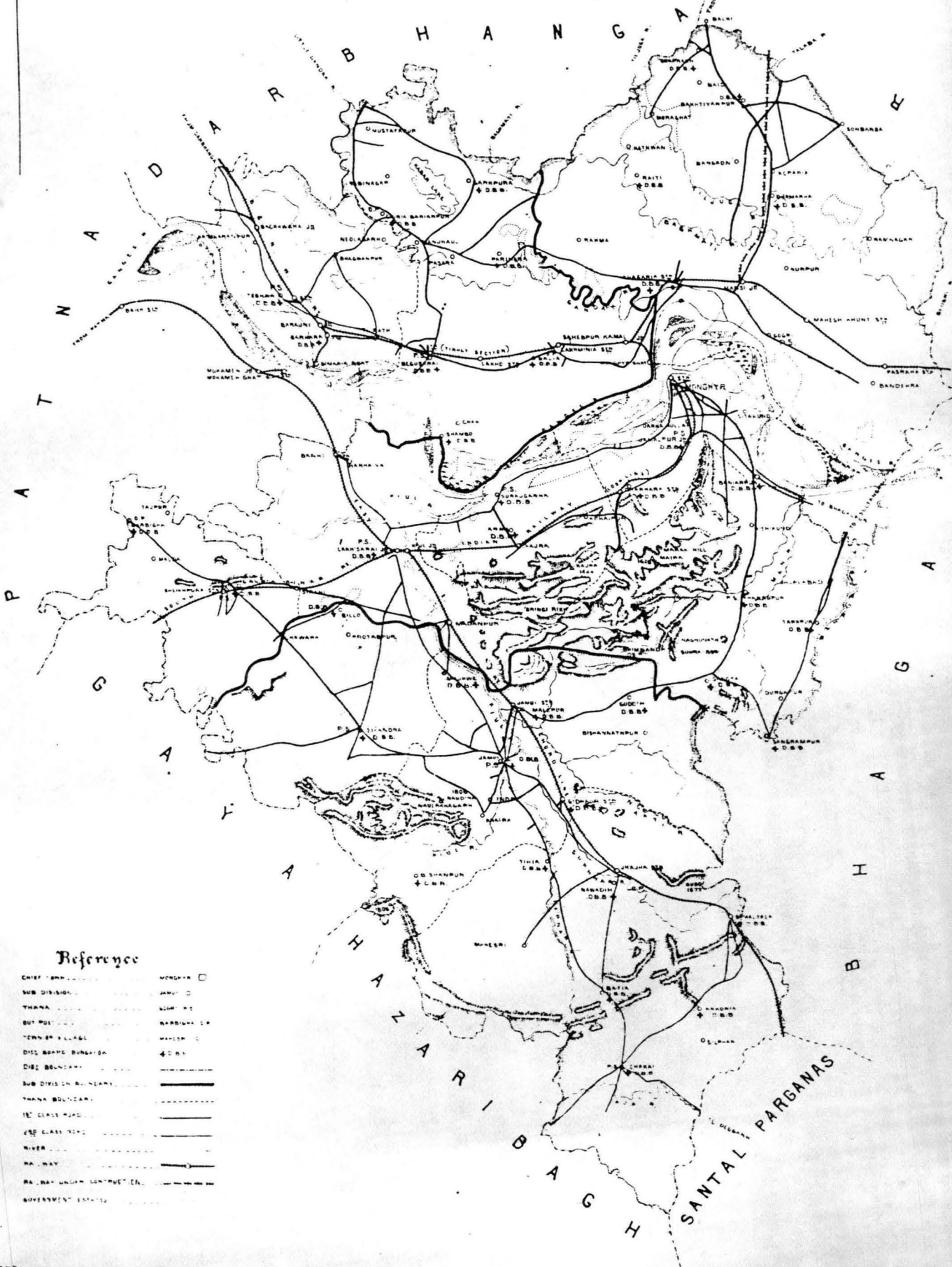


Lastly, some of the activities of the Hindu Sabha, the Arya Samaj and the Communists have been dealt with. I have not been able to integrate this with the larger account of the dissertation but this information, such as it is, throws some light on the mobilization question as a whole, and as such I have thought it fit to present it.

District

# MONGHYR

Scale 1 inch = 8 Miles.



### Reference

- CHIEF TOWN  MONGHYR □
- SUB DIVISION  JAMUI ○
- THANA  LUMPI ■
- SUB POST OFFICE  NARAINIAR ○
- TOWN POST OFFICE  MAHESH ○
- DIST BOARD BUILDING  40 FT
- CHIEF BUILDING
- SUB DIVISION BUILDING
- THANA BUILDING
- 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS ROAD
- 2<sup>nd</sup> CLASS ROAD
- RIVER
- RAILWAY
- RAILWAY UNDER CONSTRUCTION
- GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHMENT

## CHAPTER - I

### A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN MONGHYR TILL 1934

The district of Monghyr <sup>1</sup> was situated between 24<sup>o</sup>22' and 25<sup>o</sup> 94' north latitude and between 85<sup>o</sup> 36' and 86<sup>o</sup> 51' east longitude. It was extended over an area of 3,922 sq. miles and had a population of 2,287 ,154 in 1931. It was subdivided into 12 revenue thanas - Gogri, Monghyr, Jamalpur, Surajgarha, Lakhisarai, Kharagpur, Sheikhpura, Teghra, Begusarai, Sikandara, Jamui and Chakai.<sup>2</sup>

The principal castes of the district in the 1930s were Babhans (Bhumihars), Brahmans, Dhanuks, Kurmis, Dosadhs, Goalas (Yadavas), Mushars, Rajputs and Tantis. Babhans, Rajputs and Brahmans constituted the upper castes or "forwards", while Mushars and Dosadhs along with some other "untouchable" castes constituted the Depressed castes. In between these two were Goalas, Dhanuks

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1. In this dissertation old Monghyr district of 1930s and '40s has been taken. Presently this geographical area has been divided into four districts -Monghyr or Munger, Begusarai, Khagaria and Jamui.
  2. Malley, LSSD, Bengal District Gazetteers, Monghyr, Calcutta, 1909; Census of India, 1931 Volume VII, Part-1, page 38; for details of populations, religion, literacy and caste composition of this district see Appendix-1.

Kurmis, Koeris and Tantis. Regarding the status of these castes there are differences of opinion.<sup>3</sup>

The upper castes dominated in Monghyr district, both socially and economically. Their domination can be illustrated by the fact that most of the lands were in their hands and the percentage of literacy among them was higher than the Depressed and the intermediary castes.<sup>4</sup>

The socio-economic and political situation of Monghyr was such that in a large part of the district the spirit of nationalism penetrated only after first decade of this century, but in areas with an educated middle class

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3. Most strikingly regarding the social position of Mushars and Dosadhs, the views of Malley, the writer of district Gazetteer of 1909, differ from that of the writer of the Gazetteer of 1960, P.C.Roy Choudhury. The former described these castes as living in social thralldom, sometimes selling themselves, their wives and children to life long servitude for paltry sums and appropriate designation ... they are found in every village of Monghyr, and are half starved even in times of plenty. They seldom see coin, but receive their scanty wages in coarse grain, which they flavour with rats, mice, snails, and jangal roots, whilst living in hovels which an English pig would consider poor accomodation. The latter considers that Malley had an exaggerated version.

4. See Appendix - I

populace the development of national consciousness dates back to '70s and '80s of the nineteenth century. <sup>5</sup>

The making of Monghyr, a district headquarter opened new avenues and prospects for educated people. The Bengalis due to their access to English education were first to take advantage.<sup>6</sup> Their employment in government jobs led to the settlement of Bengali families in the town area. Since then in the educated circles the domination of Bengalis can be seen atleast till the first decade of this century.<sup>7</sup> These educated Bengalis mostly engaged in government jobs were instrumental in developing some institutions in the town where they could assemble and discuss the issues of public interests. This process started with the foundation of Merriot Club in 1877 whose

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5. G.P. Ambastha, "Monghyr Zile Ki Rajnaitik Pragati" in Sri Krishna Abhinandan Granth (A brittle copy is at Sri Krishna Seva Sadan, Monghyr). This was written in early fifties. From some other source it is found that this volume was edited by Ramdhari Singh Dinkar:
  6. 'In Post'-Mutiny' period the Bengalis in Bihar made a great impact on the political life of this province...most of them came to this part of this country in the wake of English education. These English educated Bengalis were perhaps the first to organise themselves and assert their rights in the form which later came to known as 'Constitutional'. (J.S. Jha, Early Revolutionary Movement in Bihar, Patna, p.1.
  7. This domination of Bengalis was sometimes resented by the local educated people. 'Murgh-i-Suleman' of Monghyr, in 1876 gave the call - 'Bihar for Biharis'. (J.S. Jha, Ibid), p.6.

all important members were Bengalis.<sup>8</sup> Later some local influential and educated people got associated with these activities. These people took an interest in social work. Some of them became sympathisers of the Indian National Congress. It is possible that some of them attended its Conference also.<sup>9</sup> In 1901 when the Bengal Political Conference was held at Bhagalpur, many people from Monghyr attended it.<sup>10</sup>

In 1897 a college (D.J. College) was founded, whose first Principal was Acharya Baidya Nath Basu, a close associate of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. This College along with the Zilla School Monghyr became centres where the youths got education and in the process some of them started taking interest in national activities.

By the end of the first decade of this century the activities of the nationalists (both extremists and moderates) had influenced a large number of people of Monghyr. The spirit of nationalism filtered also through the activities of Bengali teachers,<sup>11</sup> and the

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8. G.F. Ambastha, Op.cit., p.23

9. Ibid, p.23.

10. Ibid, p.24

11. Some of the Bengali extremist revolutionaries had reached Monghyr after the boycott movement of 1905 to preach their ideas.

revolutionaries like Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki and the visits of nationalist leaders like Surendra Nath Bannerjee.<sup>12</sup>

Alongwith all these developments, the role of reformist movements of nineteenth and early twentieth century should also be emphasised. These movements influenced even semi-educated and illiterate people. Due to the efforts of Sati Kumar Chattopadhyay and Anukul Mitra the Brahma mandirs were established in Monghyr town and Jamalpur.<sup>13</sup> The leaders of the movements like Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramkrishna Mission during the course of propagation of their faiths also tried to touch upon social issues like education and caste system. The Arya Samaj leaders like Swami Nityanand, Swami Visheswar and others made extensive tours of different parts of the district.<sup>14</sup> How the Arya Samaj movement helped in politicization of an area is best illustrated in Gogri thana.<sup>15</sup>

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12. The impact of S.N. Bannerjee was very profound on the youths of Monghyr like Sri Krishna Sinha (Nagendra Mohan Srivastava, Sri Krishna Sinha, P-16. He is said to have visited Monghyr in 1906. (K.K. Datta, Bihar Mein Swatantrata Sangram ka Itihas, vol,3, p.149-150.
  13. Ambastha, op.cit., p.22.
  14. Swami Dayanand had also visited Monghyr twice. He found the responses of the people 'positive' (Ambastha, ibid).
  15. For details see page 11 to 15 of this chapter.

Before the beginning of the Gandhian phase of the national movement, in Monghyr, the leadership of nationalist activities was strictly in the hands of upper caste Hindu elites and some influential Muslim leaders living in the Monghyr town. The leaders like Rai Bahadur Laxmi Prasad Sinha of Gogri, Raja Shivanandan Prasad of Monghyr and Khan Mohammad Yahya were among the most influential people of the district in those days. Rai Bahadur Laxmi Prasad Sinha remained Deputy Chairman of the District Board for 18 consecutive years since 1904. (In those days the chairmanship belonged to the District Magistrate).

The development of political consciousness in different thanas of Monghyr district was uneven. The number of educated people in Gogri thana was higher than most thanas of this district. The activities of religious leaders in the late nineteenth century had influenced this thana considerably. The foundation of Arya Samaj's Branch in Gogri by Mohit Mishra (in 1914), Hari Kirtan Samaj in 1911 by Madhav Prasad were two important developments. The publication of a monthly magazine named Bhakti Pracharak began in 1913. The efforts of Mohit Mishra should be mentioned in some detail. He, along with Gokul Prasad,



founded the Arya Samaj branch of Gogri. He was also associated with the Swadeshi movement.<sup>16</sup> He was among the first in the area to realise the importance of English education.<sup>17</sup> He opposed some of the orthodox practices of society and consequently he, with his family, was barred from his caste and was forced to leave his village with his family. Living under great hardships his family built an 'Ashram' in an interior place and lived there.<sup>18</sup> This ashram later became the centre of Congress activities in the '20s and '30s.<sup>19</sup> His two sons were the most important Congress leaders of thana from 1927 till 1946. The eldest and more famous S.C. Mishra inspired many youths of his thana and hundreds of educated and semi educated people regard him the most important leader this area has ever as produced.<sup>20</sup>

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16. S.K. Mishra, Interview.

17. His sons and daughters were sent for education to distant places. His son recollects that they were taught English first and then only came to Hindi. (Interview with S.C. Mishra, son of Mohit Mishra).

18. An impressive account of those days is given by S.C. Mishra in an issue of 'Agrasar' (Patna), the publication year is not clear. (The brittle copy is lying in his farm house, Chanka, Purnea).

19. S.C. Mishra Agrasar, Ibid; Interview; S.K. Mishra, Interview; also see G.P. Ambastha, op.cit., p.

20. S.N. Shastri, Interview; Mahavir Mandal, Interview; also see Janta 10 August 1939.

Congress activities increased from the Non-cooperation Movement onwards. Some of the upper caste educated people led by Pdt. Ramanugrah Jha, a cousin of S.C. Mishra, established a National School. He along with Pdt. Dasrath Jha, Pdt. Chakradhar Jha (both of Sirnia), Shyamnayan Sharma (of Kanhiyachak) respected homeopathic doctor Keshar Prasad and Hafeez Abdullah (of Mushikipur) were the most prominent Congress workers of this thana.<sup>21</sup>

The National School of Gogri and the Ashram of Diara were centres of Congress activities. Congress volunteer groups used to visit villages to propagate the Congress ideas and the messages of Gandhiji. After the Nagpur conference of the Indian National Congress, in a bid to enlist the support of kisans and other depressed sections of society, these volunteers worked very hard. A number of Chawania members of Congress recruited during this time in this thana was the highest in the district. The thana Congress committee members used to have a meeting every month in different villages. It was controlled by the District Congress Committee. The selection of the place of the next meeting was decided by voting.<sup>22</sup> In spite of these activities most of the people

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21. S.N. Shastri, *op.cit.*, S.C. Mishra, *op.cit.*; S.K. Mishra, *op.cit.*; also see G.P. Ambastha, *op.cit.* pp. 37-38.

22. Ambastha, *op.cit.*, pp. 45-48.

used to think at that time that British rule would never end and these nationalists were too optimistic. Nevertheless the people had the 'emotional support' behind these 'Surajis'.<sup>23</sup> Despite these activities of Congress volunteers after the end of agitational phase of Non cooperation movement there was very little to sustain the organisational apparatus in the thana and the activities of the thana Congress almost ceased to exist after 1922 and since then only very few committed volunteers remained active. Even the National Schools discontinued their services. This process continued till 1927. 1927, however, brought a new lease of life for Congress in this thana. Once again the Congress volunteers were very visible. This was largely due to the visit of Mahatma Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad and others. Their visit proved to be a great morale booster for the people associated with the Congress. The visit of Gandhi and other leaders on 27 January 1927 had a profound impact on the people. His every utterance, even if said in a routine way, had influenced people. His elaboration of the economy of khadi was very well taken by many people and

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23. Vedanand Jha, Interview; Mahavir Mandal, a village school Headmaster, Interview; N.M. Srivastava, Bihar Kesri Dr.Sri Krishna Sinha.

24. S.N.Shastrri, op.cit.,

many people decided thereafter to wear Khadi throughout their lives.<sup>25</sup> Some remarks of Gandhi worked magic for many people.<sup>26</sup> Since then there was great enthusiasm among the Congressmen. During the Civil Disobedience movement period this thana was the most affected in the district.<sup>27</sup>

In Bakhtiarpur thana Congressmen tried to spread their influence. In this area there was a zamindari of a muslim family known as 'Choudhary Gharana, who was pro-British. This family was 'very coercive' towards their raiyats.<sup>28</sup> Once Sri Krishna Sinha and Shah Md.Zubair tried to address a meeting in this locality in the early year of Civil Disobedience Movement. They were forced to

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25. S.N.Shastri, *op.cit.*, Interview; Mahavir Mandal, a village school headmaster, interview; also see The Searchlight, 4 February 1927. 1927.

26. Shiva Kant Mishra, a former MLA, now a very old man still remembers vividly the details of Gandhi's visit. He was in charge of arrangements; S.C.Mishra is said to have earned the reputation of very dear one of Gandhi. Gandhi remarked during this tour that if he gets 25 people of S.C.Mishra calibre the Swaraj could be won in no time. It is striking that almost every freedom fighter of the area who was interviewed by me mentions this. This must have had an impact on people's mind.

27. For vivid description of the Congress activities in this thana see Ambastha, *op.cit.*, p. ; D.P. Singh, *Monghyr Zile Mein Swatantrata Sangram ka Itihas*, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Bhagalpur University).

28. Ambastha, *op.cit.*, p.31.

abandon the idea because of the use of force by this Gharana.<sup>29</sup>

In Khagaria thana the Congress did not find much difficulty in enlisting considerable popular support. Here, in 1908-09 some people like Jai Govind Lal had opposed the use of foreign clothes and had opened a 'Swadeshi Shop'. A Swadeshi school was established at Khagaria in 1909 with a view to educate Hindu boys in 'swadeshim'.<sup>30</sup> In 1914, a branch of Arya Samaj was opened here. It undertook, the task of spreading education. But as the fear of the British was very acute, when there was a proposal to call a Swami Satyadeo 'Parivrajak' there, it was opposed. Nevertheless, the Arya Samajists had a very positive role in the development of political consciousness in this thana. An Arya Samajist Babu Shyamlal gave away a big amount to open a school which during first Civil Disobedience days turned to a National School.<sup>31</sup> In Khagaria, also like Gogri after a lull since 1922, hectic political activities began from 1927 with the visit of Gandhi, Rajendra Frasad, Mahadev Desai, Kasturba and others. When Gandhi came the people present there were so eager to touch his feet that the uncontrolled crowd caused anxiety in Rajendra Frasad's mind. Later he

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29. Ibid.p.31.

30. W.Sealy Connections with Revolutionary Organisation in Bihar and Orissa, cited by J.S.Jha,op.cit.,p.10.

31. Ambastha, op.cit., p.32

was very angry with the local Congress workers over it.<sup>32</sup>  
The role of the National School of Khagaria should also be noted. Even in the period between 1922-27 this was an active centre of Congress activities. It was praised by Gandhi during his visit and he expressed the satisfaction that while other National Schools were losing their numerical strength, in the Khagaria National School the number of students had increased.<sup>33</sup>

In Begusarai thana, Congress activities had rocked the administration during the Non-Cooperation days. Satish Chandra Bose, a famous lawyer left his practice to work for the Congress. A Subdivision Congress Committee was formed whose President was Musahabial, a lawyer and the Secretary was S.C. Bose. Later Bose became the President and Yamuna Prasad Singh the Secretary. These people continued on their respective posts for over a decade. Yamuna Babu ran an Ashram in his village where charkhas and karghas were available, There medicines were also distributed to the poor free of cost.<sup>34</sup>

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32. S.C. Mishra, *op.cit.*,; S.K. Mishra, *op.cit.*, They were among the organisers for Khagaria and Gogri meetings. The Searchlight had noted that This was the most mismanaged and disorganised meeting ever addressed by Mahatmaji in Bihar tour' (The Searchlight, 4 February 1927).

33. The Searchlight, 4 February 1927.

34. Ambastha, *op.cit.*, p-32.

In this thana, most of the leaders were educated, and belonged to upper caste affluent families. (Itaba), Baid Singh, Kapildeo, Singh (Ramdiri) one of the prominent leader of this area, Baidyanath Prasad Singh, belonged to an affluent family, who used to help the Congress committee monetarily. Some others like Sonelal and Raghunatha Brahmchari (Teghra Thana) worked for Begusarai thana Congress committee. Ramadheen Singh helped to establish a National School and became a teacher there.<sup>35</sup>

The educated upper caste leaders were also prominent in Teghra thana. Most of these leaders had academic orientation but on several occasions they worked for the Congress.<sup>36</sup> One exception was Mahanth Siaram Das who later became famous as a Kisan Sabha leader of repute.

In Bariarpur thana the main centre of Congress activities was Manjhaul. This village was the most educated of all villages of this thana and populated by upper caste affluent families. In this area the nationalist activities had been started by Ram Kishore Das, a nationalist, who was active in this area since the post boycott days. Due to his efforts Swami Satyadeo visited Manjhaul in 1914.<sup>37</sup> Among other active volunteers and sympathisers

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35. Ambastha, op.cit., p.32; Shastri, op.cit..

36. Ambastha, op.cit., p.33; Shastri, op.cit.

37. Ambastha, op.cit., p.34; Ram Prakash Singh, Interview.

were Lakshmi Singh, Nripati Singh, Bindheshwari Prasad Singh, Banarsi Singh, Mahavir Prasad Singh, Kare Singh, Ramjee Singh and Nunu Choudhary.

The upper caste educated people were in leadership in Balia also. One of the most prominent Congress leaders of this thana, Brahamdeo Singh was an affluent man. He remained the President of thana Congress Committee for many years. He also took interest in social work. He was involved in Congress activities since 1919, when he was a student of matric. In this area, some of the lower caste people became Congress workers without really understanding what the organisation stood for. There was one Bhujoo Bhagat of Bintoli, who had built a Mahatma Gandhi temple. He used to worship Gandhi daily with rite and rituals. Later when Gandhi came to know of it, he persuaded him to stop this practice <sup>38</sup>

In Kharagpur thana also the nationalist activities began in the post boycott days under the leadership of educated upper caste Congressmen. The main leader of this thana unit in the early years of non-cooperation was

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38. This kind of 'Bhakti' towards Gandhi was not very uncommon. How the magic of Gandhi worked in this part of Bihar has beautifully been shown by Satinath Bhaduri, famous Bengali novelist, who himself was a Congress sympathiser in his novel Dhorai Charit Manas, see 'Balkand'.



Pdt. Ghanshyam Mishra. <sup>39</sup> He left his legal practice and joined Kharagpur National School as its Headmaster. <sup>40</sup> Among other prominent Congress workers of this thana who worked mainly in the villages was Nand Kumar Singh of Gaurabdihi. A Bhumihaar by caste he joined the organisation when he was an Intermediate student. Soon he became the secretary of thana Congress committee. The president was Hari Prasad Singh. The latter was an affluent man and he used to help the organisation financially. <sup>41</sup>

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39. In those days the activities of the Congress of Kharagpur thana and Tarapur thana was conducted by Kharagpur thana Congress committee.

40. Later he left it to join his legal practice.

41. Ambastha, op.cit., p.33

[Among other volunteers were Banarsi Prasad Singh (Milki), Madan Ram Marwari (Kharagpur Bazar), Ram Prasad Singh (the elder brother of Nand Kumar Singh, who resigned from the post of Sub-Inspector in Education department to work for National School), Bagishwar). Prasad Singh (Rataitha), Anant Kuar, Ayodhya Kuar, Ajab Lal Pathak, Dhiraj Pd. Singh (Lakshmipur), Sahdev Singh, Riki Narayan Prasad, Ramanand Singh (Tilakadh) etc. In Tarapur thana there was one National School at Asarganj. Among the active workers of the Congress were Narayan Pd. Bhagat, Shambhunath Singh, Dasharath Sahaya, Gopi Krishna Singh, Jawala Pd. Singh, Chatgurbhuj Singh, Rishi Mahto, Keshavlal Chaudhary, Katwaru Singh, Bhikhari Mahto, Shyamsunder Singh, Basukinath Sharma, Jaimangal Singh Shastri and others.]

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The Congressmen of this area took advantage of every opportunity to highlight and popularise nationalist sentiments among the people. One interesting instance is related to 1923. On 18 August 1923 on the occasion of Goswami Tulsidas' 300th 'Jayanti' a famous play of noted Hindi writer Bhartendu Harishchandra - 'Bharat Durdasha' was being staged. Sri Krishna Sinha went to watch it. He was congratulated by 250 people. In the play, the government authorities claimed, many deliberate changes had been done to distort the original text to popularise the Congress. The main objections raised in this connection were three.

In the first Act, a Sanyasi in a dialogue says that although the British Government was giving many facilities, the wealth of India was being siphoned out from India, causing famines and other natural calamities. In the play it was shown that the British rule was apparently good but actually very bad. Secondly, in the original play the appeal was made to the Queen of England that she must save this nation. It was changed in the play. In it, the appeal was made to Mahatma Gandhi. In the same scene, in the book there was another appeal to the Queen but in the play it was made to Tilak who was in

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heaven while Mahatma Gandhi was in jail.<sup>42</sup> Apart from it in the Act III, 'Bharat Durdev' who epitomised the source of all troubles for India, was shown wearing English clothes.

The police arrested Sri Krihsna Sinha which led to an uproar in the court. It gave the Congressmen all over Bihar an opportunity to condemn British rule. When we consider these allegations we find that there were some distortions.<sup>43</sup>

The National High School, Kharagpur was the centre of Asahyog i.e. Non-cooperation activities.<sup>44</sup> In this thana during those days the mere pasting of a poster was enough to irritate the police. A police sub-Inspector when found that his instructions were repeatedly disobeyed, filed

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42. District Magistrate's Report, cited by N.M. Srivastava, op.cit., p.23.

43. In the Act I of the text there is one line - 'Angrejraj Sukhsaj Saje Sab Bhari/Pai Dhan Videsh Chali Jat Ehe Ati Khwari. (Bhartendu Samagra, Varanasi, p.461). This does not mean what it was tried to convey in the play. Regarding the second allegation in the text the appeal was made to 'Rajeshwari, Sat Samunder Par' (the Queen of England) - (ibid). Again, in the text the dress of 'Bharat Durdev' was half 'Christiani', and half 'Musalmanni', with sword in the <sup>hand. Programmes like this used to</sup> convey strong nationalist feelings to audience in those days. (S.K. Mishra op.cit.; Vedanand Jha, Interview.)

44. The Searchlight, 16 November, 1923.

cases against a Headmaster, two school teachers, thana Congress committee secretary and two students.<sup>45</sup> Even after the end of 'Asahyog' Satyagraha in other parts of the district this thana committee continued to function in Kharagpur thana.<sup>46</sup>

Surajgarha thana did not have enough Congress workers to conduct its activities too, so the representatives of district Congress Committee used to come, and, with the help of few enthusiastic youths, tried to make the Congress organisational presence felt in this thana.

Lakhisarai thana although a very backward thana came to the forefront largely due to the work of Karyanand Sharma, a staunch Gandhian in those days. Barhaiya was a part of Lakhisarai thana in those days. Barhaiya and Gangasarai were the centres of Congress activities. Particularly in Barhayia the Congress had very strong support. During Jan.1932 the activists of Congress alarmed the district authorities so much that an additional Police force was deployed there and its

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45. Ibid.,

46. N.M. Srivastava, op.cit., p.50-51.

maintenance cost was taken from the local people.<sup>47</sup> It was extended support for two more years with even more cost of maintenance. The authorities were reluctant to withdraw the force. The excuse for the continued maintenance of Police was found in the Punjab Mail train accident of 31st May '33 which had nothing to do with the local people. As the accident took place in this area the maintenance cost worth Rs.75,000/- was taken from the local people.<sup>48</sup> Rajendra Prasad also considered this area a base for the Congress.<sup>49</sup> Among the workers notable were Kashi Prasad Singh, Ram Krishna Prasad. Singh (all of Barhayia) and Mudrika Pandey, Ramraksha Singh, Sridharji (all from Gangasarai) and Ashwini Kumar of Hridanbigha and Girivar Singh of Piparia. As the names of these leaders suggest, most of them belonged to upper castes.

In Sheikhpura thana like Surajgarha there were no important local leaders who could lead the thana committee independently. Therefore leaders from the district Congress

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47. The Legislative Council Proceedings 1932, Vol.26, cited by D.F.Singh, *op.cit.*, p.14D.

48. Ambastha, *op.cit.*, p.69-70.

49. Valmiki Chaudhuri, *op.cit.*

committee and Karyanand Sharma used to visit this thana regularly.

In Barbigaha thana also the Congress leadership was in the hands of educated upper caste affluent people and the most important leader was Lala Babu (Krishna Mohan Singh) a Rajput. Sri Krishna Sinha was born here but he could not give his attention to this thana. Lala Babu joined the movement and joined Bihar Vidyapith an important centre of Congress intelligentsia. He again returned to studies but when occasion came in 1930, he again started working for the Congress in his home thana.

In Jamui thana the most important leader was Kumar Kalika Prasad. Singh.<sup>50</sup> (of Gidhaur Royal family). He was in B.A. when he came into contact with nationalist ideas and he left studies and started working for the Congress. He founded an Ashram at Banhalya. His elder brother Kumar Ranvir Singh also supported the Congress. They were persuaded not to indulge in thana activities or when they paid no attention to it, a case was filed against them and Kumar Saheb was imprisoned for one year.

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50. Heera Smriti Granth, Jamui; The Searchlight 16  
December 1979; Sec D.P.Singh op.cit,357.

When he was sent to jail his place was taken by Shyama Prasad Singh of Mallepur.

Sikandra thana did not have a Congress organisation of its own. It had some workers who worked with visiting Congress leaders. Among them were Gangadhar Pandey, Maulvi Saheb Shivanandan Mishra, Jatadhari Singh, Devki Singh, Mahadev, Hari Mishra and Abdul Sattar.

Chakai and Jhajha thanas were among the most backward thanas of this district. A large portion of these thanas were covered by forests and hills and populated by backward castes and scheduled tribes. Mostly the workers of Jamui and Jhajha used to work in this thana.<sup>51</sup>

After making this brief review of the development of political consciousness in different thanas we should also note the role of the intelligentsia living in the district headquarters. The lawyers dominated the politics of Monghyr town. In different district bodies, the Congress candidates won the elections which went a long way in spreading their influence. The role of District Board led by the Congressmen is important. In 1923 the Congress won the District Board election and Shah Jubair became the

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51. Ambastha, op.cit., p.35.

President and Sri Krishna Sinha, the Vice-President. Its work was valued highly and A.N.Sinha notes in his autobiography that 'The Monghyr District Board was valued higher than any other District Board or Bihar.'<sup>52</sup> On 13 January 1927, Sri Krishna Sinha was elected for Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council from the non-Muslim Monghyr rural constituency.

On the basis of this brief review of the development of the nationlist consciousness in different parts of Monghyr district some general observations can be made,

The activities of social reform movement leaders, the popularisation of the cult of militarism, the visits of the nationalist leaders and its impact on the educated youths of the district were most important factors in adding an aura of respectability to nationalist activities. The ground was fertile for the penetration of Congress ideas. In most cases the Congress organisation was strengthened either by active participation/cooperation of the enthusiastic youths of upper caste affluent families or by making use of the benefits of the reformist activities<sup>53</sup>. The process continued even in the

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52. A.N.Sinha, Mere Sansmaran, p.90.

53. The Arya Samajists had opened some school in the district which later turned National Schools and which the local Congress used as their centre of operation.



1920s and '30s. The opening up of schools by the Arya Samajists and their bhajan-kirtan programmes went a long way in helping to spread the message of nationalism in this district.

Secondly, the spirit of nationalism had taken its roots in post boycott movement days., Many leaders who later became the leaders of the Congress involved in movements in those days. Those thanas which were most active in the Gandhian phase had been active in those days too. But in this period the leadership was in hands of affluent family members who sometimes even helped the organisation financially.

Thirdly, with the beginning of the Gandhian phase, (more specifically after Non-Cooperation Movement) a qualitative change took place in the politics of Monghyr. Not only did the mass base of the Congress widen but the centres of its operation were institutionalised and sanctity was accorded to it. The opening up of National Schools, the making of 'chawania' members of the Congress, the processions and celebrations on different occasions highlighting nationalist sentiments involving a large number of educated youths, helped in the creation of an environment in which the nationalist activities could be carried on without much hindrances. The National Schools

and Ashrams became centres of Congress activities and these institutions had important roles to play in political mobilization at the grassroot level.<sup>54</sup>

Fourthly, the activities of the Congress were firmly controlled by upper caste Hindu elites in both rural and urban areas. The involvement of schedule castes and backward castes was hard to find, but one finds the intermediary castes (like Koeris, Kurmies and Yadavas) supporting the Congress in those areas where they had a large population. In a nutshell, the entire Congress machinery was strictly in the hands of Bhumihaar, Rajput and Brahmin elites.

Fifthly, the issues being highlighted at the local level did not touch upon social issues. The Muslim participation in the national movement in Monghyr was very low. Only during the Khilafat days some of the Muslim leaders were active. Little research has been done in this area so far, so it is very difficult to say how Muslims responded to Congress activities in this district in this period. But it seems that Muslims were not politically very conscious. The Muslims mostly remained involved in their day to day struggle for survival like their economic counterparts in Hindu community.

54. Interviews with S.C. Mishra and S.N. Shastri.

Sixthly, in the actual process of mobilization the local considerations were very important and even during Civil Disobedience days the Gandhian directions were not strictly followed. In the most intense period of nationalist struggles the people were involved in violent clashes in both the Non-cooperation and the Civil Disobedience Movements. To illustrate this three examples can be given, which took place during the Civil Disobedience Movement Period. On 28 January on 'Independence Day' a mob of 10,000 attacked the police who had made arrests at Begusarai. The police was compelled to fire and 7 persons were killed. The S.D.O. and 23 Police Officers and policemen were injured.

Again a strong party of pro-Civil Disobedience Babhans of Sheikhpura attacked a party of those Bhumihars who refused to support Civil Disobedience and killed one of them.

The Tarapur shooting case is very famous. There the Congress volunteers had announced that they would hoist the Congress flag on the thana building and they invited the people to watch it. Along with a police party, the S.P. and Collector were present. To disperse the crowd the Collector fired two rounds himself and then six rounds were fired but people remained there. In next ten minutes,

55. DIG (CID) Weekly Reports, Jan (week ending 21st), Home Pol.  
20/1931, BSA.

56. Ibid

realising the seriousness the police fired seventy eight rounds which caused the death of eight and the injury of five people.<sup>57</sup> One leader was killed while he was trying to enter the thana by breaking the wall.

Sometimes during the Civil Disobedience period ricketing became violent. In some areas the customer ganja were abused and they feared entering shops to make their purchases. At Chakai it was impossible to enter the excise shop owing to the dense body of volunteers collected at the door and when a vendor went to distribute ganja to his regular customers he was followed. One customer tried to force his way into the shop and had his face smeared with tar. The victims were afraid to complain to the Police.

Seventhly, as to the role of the caste organizations in this district hardly any research has been done so far.

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57. In fact the number of deaths 14 and number of injured was more than 100, (D.P.Singh, op.cit., p.210. He has quoted Tripuraj Singh one of the volunteers present there; details in 'Tarapur' Golikand ka Sachcha Vivran, 1932). The two incidents were not unique. In some places attempts were made to hoist the national flags on Government Buildings and Ashrams. (D.P.Singh, op.cit., p.212, He has quoted Sri Chaturbhuj Singh 'Bhramar').

So it is hard to demonstrate how the caste organisations influenced the political mobilization in this district. The attempts at social reform appeared to make the strongest appeal if run on caste lines.<sup>58</sup> Also the lower castes sabhas must have played an important role in raising the general consciousness level in their respective castes. Along with caste sabhas of Kayasthas, Bhumihars and Rajputs, the sabhas of intermediary and lower castes like Gope Jatiya Mahasabha, Kurmi Kshatriya Mahasabaha, Dushashan Bansiya Kshtriya Mahasabha (of Dosadhas) existed in these years.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, the appreciation, admiration and treatment accorded to the jail goers helped Congressmen in enhancing their reputation. The Civil Disobedience days witnessed a scene like this in this district - 'Crowds collected before the jail gates each day to welcome the prisoners whose release was expected and a sum of Rs.5,000 was collected to give them a suitable reception and banquet when they came out.'<sup>60</sup> The influence of the Congress can

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58. Census of India, 1921.Vol.I.

59. These organization held regular meetings during 1937 and 1940 particularly 1937 and 1940 particularly Gope Jatiya Sabha had regular meetings in 1938.

60. Home Political DIG (CID) Weekly Report week ending 14 March 1931, BSA.

also be gauged by some examples. In many places the villagers were urged to form village Panchayats to try cases to enforce temperance and the boycott of foreign goods.<sup>61</sup> A Marwari of Monghyr town was fined Rs.210 by his caste followers for selling foreign cloth and the fine was handed over to the Congress.<sup>62</sup>

All these features helped in creating an environment in which the Congress leadership and people associated with it or sympathetic towards it could think and believe that Swaraj was not too far. In the Civil Disobedience days Monghyr was among the most affected district of Bihar.

Till 1931 the total number of arrests in Bihar was 12,924 in which Monghyr's share was 2241 which was higher than any other district of the province.<sup>63</sup> Some people had got impatient with the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932 (specially the younger section) but the general mood was that the nationalists should work towards attainment of the Swaraj patiently.

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61. Home Political, DIG (CID) Weekly Report, Week ending 21 April 1931, BSA.

62. Ibid, Week ending 28th April 1931.

63. [In different subdivisions the number of people jailed were as follows. Begusarai-400, Khagaria-200, Gogri-200, Sheikpura-50, Bakhtiyarpur-48, Barhaiya 150, Jamui-46, Sikandra-26, Jhasha-14]  
D.P.Singh op.cit.

## CHAPTER-II

### AN ACCOUNT OF POLITICAL MOBILIZATION BY THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (1934-42).

The reorganisation of the Bihar Congress was to be undertaken in Sept.1934. It led to a competition among Congressmen for popularity. There were two channels which could be utilised by local Congress leaders. First, by associating with Kisan Sabha activities which was becoming more and more popular among kisans in those days, and second, by getting involved in the Congress constructive programmes. The activities of Congressmen from the platform of Kisan Sabha will be discussed later in this dissertation in Chapter III).

The Congress volunteers had been active in the constructive programmes during the Civil disobedience days. These programmes included Harijan upliftment movement, literacy movement, anti-liquor movement etc.. By meetings and processions Congress volunteers helped in the creation of an environment in which even conservative Hindu Sabha, heavily dominated by big zamindars of the district had to support the entry of Harijans in the temples and their use of general wells.

The Congress programmes were so organised that the organisational works could go on side by side with the constructive programmes. For example, on 9 May 1933, a meeting of the district workers was held in the League office in which the programmes were fixed in the following way—(a) 11 to 13 May, enrollment of volunteers and collection of funds, (b) 14 to 24 May, 'cleansing of Harijans' and their quarters, (c) 14 to 24 May, the opening of the wells and other tanks to Harijans, (d) 25 to 28 May, opening of temples, if possible and (e) 29 May, public meeting. It was also resolved to enroll Harijan students in the pathshalas or in schools during all these days.<sup>1</sup> On 8 May, 1933 the teachers and students of the National High School Khagaria observed fasts, cleaned all the six Harijan quarters of the town in the forenoon and persuaded some hundred Doms and Chamars to take oath in their own temples to give up drugs. "Great was the enthusiasm when hundreds of students led by their teachers proceeded with spades, baskets, broom sticks etc. in their hands to clean the Harijan quarters for removal of untouchability and praying to God for the success of Mahatmaji...Khagaria Bazar observed Hartal on that day".<sup>2</sup> These were not exceptions and activities of this type were reported from Tarapur, Rangaon, Topkhana Bazar,

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1. The Searchlight, 14 May 1933.

2. The Searchlight, 12 May 1933.



Nayagaon, Puraniganj, Jamui, Majahida (Gogri), Baltara, Ramganmj, Sansarpur, Nowgaon Kharia (Kharagpur), Masumganj Chanpura (Tarapur), Jamaipur, Begusarai and other other parts of the Monghyr district.<sup>3</sup>

1934 was the year of great natural calamities for Monghyr. First the earthquake and then cholera and floods hit Monghyr in this year. Jawaharlal Nehru who happened to visit Monghyr three weeks after the earthquake wrote - "we had become used to ruin and destruction on a vast scale. And yet when we saw Monghyr and the absolute destruction of this rich city we gasped and shivered at the horror of it. I can never forget that terrible sight"<sup>4</sup> According to an official estimate 1,260 people died in this earthquake.<sup>5</sup> But, according to Rajendra Prasad's cable to C.F. Andrews the number was 10,000.<sup>6</sup>

This devastating earthquake brought to an end for the time being Congress involvement with agitational politics (in Bihar).<sup>7</sup> Rajendra Prasad writes that the atmosphere had completely changed as a result of the earthquake. No one was offering or intended to offer Satyagrah here.<sup>8</sup>

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3. The Searchlight, 30 April, 3 May, 10 May, 28 May and 2 June 1933.
  4. Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography, 1987, p.488
  5. Wilcock, Bihar and Orissa in 1933-34.
  6. N.N. Mitra, Annual Register, 1934 p.19.
  7. G.Mc Donald, Bihar Polity 1909-37, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Western Australia, 1978, p.370.
  8. Rajendra Prasad, Autobiography, p.378.

The Congress volunteers worked very hard with other organisations in the relief activities. Congress leaders also gave attention to Monghyr and Gandhi and Nehru personally visited the district. Rajendra Prasad and Sri Krishna Sinha were among those who worked very hard with other workers. In the process any neglect of the Government was highlighted.<sup>9</sup> Although Congress was not the only organisation,<sup>10</sup> which worked in the relief activities, the relief activities had the great advantage of having the Congress organization in the rural areas at its disposal.<sup>11</sup>

After few months the customary activities of the Congress started again. These activities were to highlight Congress programmes and show solidarity with the Congress. The meetings and processions related to constructive programmes were attended by prominent citizens of area. "The meetings and processions of which slogans and songs

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9. A.B.Mishra, Interview; Nehru, op.cit., p.488.

10. Along with official camps working under District Magistrate, the Central Relief Camp of Rajendra Prasad's Committee, Vivekananda Mission, Shri Ram Krishna Mission, The Marwari Relief Society of Calcutta, The Hindu Mahasabha and twenty other bodies also opened relief camps. A.B.Mishra, op.cit., Veni Shankar Sharma, Bhule Bisre Log, Bhuli Bisri Baaten, 1982, Mitra, op.cit., vol.1, 1934 p.19. Also see Government of India (Home ), 75/vii/35 Police, NAI.

11. Nehru, op.cit., p.489.

were an integral part gave the Congress a good platform to popularise its ideas, and attract people's attention. The presence of respected citizens must have had a good impression in the minds of the people. One can, however, notice that in these activities the leadership remained in the hands of upper caste affluent people. Even in a body like Harijan Sevak Sangh the office bearers were of upper castes. One example can be cited in this connection.

On 29 July 1934 Gandhi Day was observed at Monghyr on behalf of the District Harijan Sevak Sangh. At 5.30 a procession was taken out consisting of nearly one hundred and fifty Harijan citizens of the town with songs and slogans. The procession terminated at the Dharamshala of Rai Bahadur Dilip Narayan Sinha where a big meeting was held under the presidentship of Tejeshwar Prasad Rajniti Prasad, zamindar and banker, President of Harijan Sevak Sangh, Pdt. Srikrishana Mishra, Hemchandra Basu, Nirapada Mukherjee, Rafiuddin Ahmad Rizwi and others were present in the meeting. After the opening song sung by the girls of the local Anathalay, Pdt. Sureshwar Pathak, secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh read out the report of the organisation and thereby helped to focus attention on its activities.<sup>12</sup>

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12. The Searchlight, 5 August 1934.

Meanwhile some areas of Monghyr were hit by natural calamities again. A flood of unprecedented ferocity hit the district. The Central Relief Committee bulletin noted that flood, famine and unemployment were rampant in Bakhtiyarpur, Chautham, Khagaria and Gogri thanas of Monghyr.<sup>13</sup> In these areas standing crops were destroyed. In Begusarai houses, grains and crops were washed away and Surajgarha and Gogri were submerged.<sup>14</sup> Srikrishna Sinha himself working in Gogri thana wired to The Searchlight in which appeal was made to public for funds. Srikrishna Sinha was very busy in relief activities in North Monghyr and it was said in his appreciation that he rescued about two hundred and fifty men.

In the relief work operations in the district the other most notable names were Nirapada Mukharjee, Suresh Chandra Mishra, and Ramcharitter Singh.<sup>15</sup> In the first week of September Sri Krishna Sinha's name was approved as the Congress candidate for Gaya and Monghyr constituency.

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13. The Searchlight, 22 August 1934.

14. The Searchlight, 24 August 1934.

15. The Searchlight, 21 September 1934, S.C.Mishra op.cit.

On 29<sup>th</sup> September 1934 the election campaign started in Monghyr. In the election campaign the Congress methods were to approach the voters through prominent men of different localities. The Congress leaders also attended public meetings which were attended by respected citizens of the area along with the Congress leaders. Congress volunteers toured extensively in different areas for harnessing support. In addition to all these, the appeal of nationalism very effectively made by press and the political platform also played an important role in ensuring victory of the Congress candidate. On 30<sup>th</sup>, Nirapada Mukherjee, secretary District Congress Committee, accompanied by Uma Shanker Sinha opened the election campaign at Jamalpur. All the prominent men of the locality were approached. They extended their wholehearted support. At many places the Congress workers organised processions with placard describing what the Congress will do in the Assembly. In Monghyr town prominent Congressmen with nationalist views had already expressed their support.<sup>16</sup> On September 29<sup>th</sup> a meeting was held at Tilak Maidan.<sup>17</sup> At the same venue there was another meeting

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16. The Searchlight, 3 October 1934.

17. The Searchlight, 5 October 1934.

which was attended by distinguished citizens of the town.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, the election work in mufassil areas went on very briskly.<sup>19</sup> At Tilak Maidan, a public meeting was again held on 26th October which was addressed by Sri Krishna Sinha.

In The Searchlight of 4 November and 7 November reports were published which had strongly favoured the landslide victory of Sri Krishna Sinha. The local workers were moving throughout the town (Jamalpur) canvassing votes for Sri Krishna Sinha. Prominent persons were rendering sufficient help.<sup>20</sup> The Congress had to face some in The Searchlight's phrase, 'hit below the belt' propaganda on behalf of Kunwar Gupteshwar Prasad Singh, the rival candidate. The Searchlight mentioned that some of the Municipal Tax Collectors were reported to be going about canvassing for him. They were approaching the people and attempting to tempt them by saying that those who would vote for Gupteshwar Babu would get remission of at least half of their taxes on the ground of earthquake suffering. Under the garb of Aman Sabha some government servants were

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18. The Searchlight, 24 October 1934.

19. Ibid.

20. The Searchlight, 7 November 1934.

also trying their level best to advance the cause of Gupteshwar Babu.

The Congress leaders during their campaign addressed national issues and tried to link the sense of "honour" and "duty" with voting for the Congress. In a largely attended meeting at Tarapur, the Congress attacked the "White Paper" and "its sympathiser Gupteshwar Babu" On 13 November '34 The Searchlight carried an appeal-

"Today is November 13

For sake of National Honour and Prestige.

Vote for Congress candidates only".

In a news item it carried-

'I have high hopes about my own province says Babu Rajendra Prasad, Congress President, will you believe that hope?'

The electorate of Monghyr responded heavily in favour of Sri Krishna Sinha. The election result-

Total

No. of votes. Polled

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Male	-	12627	10787	Sri Krishna Sinha (Congress)-9204
Female	-	324	68	G.P. Singh-1651

(Independent-supported by  
Hindu Sabha)

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Source : The Searchlight December 2, 1934.

In January, 1935 attempts were made to promote village organisations on the lines laid down by the Congress. In these activities particularly in Kisan meetings Congress Leaders expressed sympathy with Kisan's grievances and they were more articulate in denouncing the atrocities of the landlords. Congress meetings were held in Khagaria<sup>and</sup> Begusarai. In Bachhwara on 29. December 1934 Sri Krishna Sinha and Sahjanand expressed "extreme political views"<sup>21</sup>. Sri Krishna Sinha was present in the meeting on the next day when "fiery speeches" were made.<sup>22</sup> In these meetings, the newspaper report notes that the speakers attacked the Government and dilated upon the grievances of the tenants.<sup>23</sup>

In connection with the village uplift movement a Khaddar shop was opened at Jamalpur.<sup>24</sup> On 26th January Independence day was celebrated in the districts.<sup>25</sup> In most of the meetings no speeches were made. On the protest day speeches were made by some of the local leaders and resolutions were passed condemning the constitutional changes.<sup>26</sup>

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21. Government of Bihar, Political Special, 20/135, Fortnightly Reports (henceafter only FR) January 1, Bhagalpur Division, BSA. The term "extreme political views" was used in the report.

22. Ibid.

23. FR. January II, 1973, BSA.

24. Ibid.

25. FR, January II, 1935: The Searchlight, 30 January 1935.

26. FR, January II, 1935.



Some more meetings were organised to protest against the Communal Award. In these meetings prominent district Congress leaders participated.<sup>27</sup> During these days attempt were also made to enroll Congress members.<sup>28</sup> 2,875 members had been enrolled as Congress members by the first fortnight of March 1935.<sup>29</sup> Along with it Gogri and Khagaria National Schools were revived partly, as believed by the intelligence report, with the money supplied by the Bihar Central Relief Fund. Chitranjan Ashram was completed with the same source of assistance. An expert from Muzaffarpur came to Gogri to teach Charkha Spinning.<sup>30</sup> National week was observed at Kharagpur and Jamalpur. The Congress made a final spurt to swell the enrollments before enlistment closed in June.<sup>31</sup> Congress volunteers also hawked khadi from door to door and there was a good response from the people who purchased khadi in large quantities.<sup>32</sup> Three other small meetings were reported which were held at Lakhisarai, Barbiga and Monghyr.<sup>33</sup>

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27. The Searchlight, February 10, 1935.

28. FR, Feb. I, 1935, BSA

29. FR, March II, 1935, BSA

30. FR, Feb, II. 1935.

31. FR, March II, 1935.

32. The Searchlight, 2 April, 1935.

33. FR, April I, 1935, BSA.

Monghyr District Congress Committee had by April 1935 enrolled three thousand Congress members.<sup>34</sup> The day was observed in Monghyr town, Kharagpur and Jamui. In Monghyr Rafiuddin Rizwi and Sri Krishna Sinha spoke.<sup>35</sup> The Congress volunteers also tried in the second half of May 1935 to make collections for the Quetta relief fund.<sup>36</sup>

In June Ramgulam Sharma and Krishna Mohan Prasad President and Secretary of the thana Congress committee, Jamalpur were out on tour for the enrollment of Congress members in their thanas up to 13 June. In the enrollment of Congress members, the performance of Gogri and mufasil Monghyr thana Congress committees was the best. In Gogri one thousand Congress members were enrolled. By the second half of the month of July 1935 the number of enrolled members of Congress in the district rose to 6,571.<sup>37</sup> Attempt was also made to find out a good centre for starting khadi work in villages. The President and the Secretary also visited several Harijan Schools and distributed fifty books and ten slates among the poor Harijan boys.<sup>38</sup>

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34. The Searchlight, I May, 1935.

35. FR, May I, 1935, BSA.

36. FR, May II, 1935, BSA.

37. FR, August I, 1935, BSA.

38. The Searchlight, 26 June, 1935.

The prominent Congress leader's tour started in August. On 5 August Sri Krishna Sinha visited the villages of Lakhisarai thana. He addressed a meeting of the kisans which was attended by ten thousand people including a thousand ladies, who had come from a distance of five to six miles.<sup>39</sup> Karyanand Sharma and Babu Girdhar Narayan Singh also addressed the meeting. Sri Krishna Sinha in his speech said that he was moved by the pitiable condition of the people of the Chanan pargana and assured them that he would do his best to remove their grievances and to stop the tyranny of the amlas of the Estate. He asked the kisans to be fearless and to organize themselves to be able to stand against tyranny. They should unite and none should purchase the land to help the estate in ousting the tenants from their land.<sup>40</sup> On 6 August 1935, Tulsi Jayanti was celebrated in the Town Hall under the presidentship of Babu Devkinandan Prasad Singh. The Jayanti was also celebrated under the auspices of National H.F.School (Haveli Kharagpur).<sup>41</sup>

It is evident that from September 1934 onwards the Congress activities had increased in Monghyr. At the organisation level too the attempts had been made to strengthen it. The Congress organisational work continued

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39. The Searchlight, 4 August 1935.

40. Ibid.

41. The Searchlight, 4 August 1935.

unabated. Its programmes were such that without putting much pressure on its supporters and sympathisers it could continue its nationalist propaganda. Whether it was relief work, election, celebration or advocating the case of kisans or something else it had developed channels to come to terms with different situations and address different classes and different issues. Enjoying this position the organisation had the advantage of rumours. In September 1935 there was a rumour that the Congress intend to press on the village upliftment movement with vigour and to give particular attention to start shops in each village in which locally manufactured goods will be sold. A bootshop had already been started in Barhaiya.<sup>42</sup>

The Congress activities intensified in October due to forthcoming elections of delegates to the National Congress. Sri Krishna Sinha, Chairman of the District Board toured the Begusarai subdivision.<sup>43</sup> A district political conference was summoned at Begusarai for 25 and 26 October 1935 urging Begusarai to maintain its reputation as a Congress centre.<sup>44</sup> The meeting was held at Begusarai on 24 November. Meanwhile leaflets were in circulation calling on people to make the Congress jubilee celebration a success.<sup>45</sup>

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42. FR, Sept. I, 1935, BSA.

43. FR, Oct. I, 1935, BSA.

44. FR, Oct. II, 1935, BSA.

45. FR, Dec. I, 1935, BSA.

The kind of work force the Congress could deploy in the preparation and programmes of jubilee celebration is indicative of the fact that the Congress had once again strengthened its position after the Civil Disobedience days.

The Congress made elaborate arrangements to celebrate the golden jubilee on the 28 August 1935. The programme comprised of prabhatpheris before dawn, flag hoisting and salutation in the morning, national service illustrating the constructive work of the Congress, sale of small national flags, processions in the afternoon, public meetings in the evening where the President's message and speeches about Congress were to be read, illumination at night (but no fire works of any kind), sports (wrestling, Indian games), mela (khadi exhibitions) and demonstrations, village industries exhibition and demonstrations, exhibitions of swadeshi articles, Kavi Sammelan or mushaira on subject of national interest and importance, music and Congress propoganda through suitable literature.<sup>47</sup> The Congress jubilee was celebrated in important towns and villages in which a large number of people turned out.<sup>48</sup> In Monghyr town, the Pandal of the

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46. K.K.Dutt, Bihar mein Swatantrya Andolen ka Itihas, 1974.p.263.

47. The Indian Nation, 27 November 1935, cited by K.K.Dutt, Ibid, p.263.

48. Government of Bihar, Home Pol.Special, 274/1935, BSA.

Tilak Maidan was illuminated free of cost by the Monghyr electric supply. Arches were erected in municipal areas. The District Board and Local Board Offices and a few schools were decorated and illuminated.<sup>49</sup> The collection for this celebration from different areas were -

From Monghyr town - 500 Rs.

" Jamui - 250

" Muffasil - 1195"<sup>50</sup>

The Congress Jubilee celebration activated many Congress workers in different thanas. In Lakhisarai thana the Congress Golden Jubilee Committee remained very busy. It was decided that sixteen gates would be constructed. The Committee met at Chittaranjan Ashram and decided that arrangements should be made for the decoration of the whole town. People decided to illuminate their houses in a befitting manner. A grand procession with elephants, horses and music was to be taken out. The Congress workers toured the interior.<sup>51</sup>

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49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. The Searchlight, 20 December 1935.

In Haveli Kharagpur the Congress workers met on 4 December 1935 in the premises of the Rashtriya Vidyalaya to consider the ways and means for the celebration of the Congress Jubilee. The subcommittees namely 'Fund collection committee' and the Decoration committee were formed and an estimate of 500/- was drawn for expenditure. The committees met again on 8 Dec. Nearly all the members and other prominent people of the locality were present. It was expected that within a week the require. amount would be collected from Kharagpur Bazar alone. Provisions for illuminations, huge processions, band playing, theatrical performances for two consecutive nights and competitions in wrestling, Charkhas, takli, music and different races had been made. New band accessories were purchased and uniform dresses were prepared. The Congress volunteers were themselves to play on the band on the occasion.<sup>52</sup>

As already , mentioned, during these days the Congress men shared platforms with the kisan leaders. In fact, the issues which were of direct concern for kisans were directly and vigorously taken up for the first time during this period. But in these meetings the Congress leaders' approach, indicate that by attending in these

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52. Ibid.

programmes they wanted primarily to widen the support base of the Congress in their struggle against the British while <sup>the Kisan Sabha</sup> focused almost exclusively on redressal of the kisan's grievances. But the differences were not so prominent and they worked unitedly atleast till December 1937. The Bariarpur conference held in January '36 clearly suggests this. Bariarpur Congress committee held its first day's sitting on 12 Jan. 1936.

In this meeting about four thousand kisans including about forty ladies were present. Among, present on dias were Babu Nand Kumar Sinha, Karyanand Sharma, Ras Behari Lal, Ram Narayan Chaudhary, Jagdev Mandal, Babu Bageswari Prasad Sinha and others. The name of Swami Sahjanand was duly proposed and seconded for President amid shouts of 'Bande Matram' and 'Bharat Mata ki Jai'. The latter dealt with the deplorable condition of the kisans of the province in general and those of Binda Diara in particular and pointed out the necessity of a kisan organisation.<sup>53</sup> On the next day Sri Krishna Sinha presided over the meeting.

In February 1936 "Rajendra Prasad came to Monghyr. He received a rousing reception. A glimpse of how Rajendra

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53. The Searchlight, 19 Jan. 1936.



Frasad was welcomed is worth depicting. He was taken round Bekapur Bazar in a procession of bands of volunteers, with music marching ahead, crying about the usual nationalist slogans. Throughout the route ladies showered fried paddy and flowers as a mark of respect and by way of blessing on him. Every one was eager to have a 'Darshan' of him. There were six gates erected with beautiful decorations (at District Board building). In the welcome address and honour of Babu Rajendra Prasad a distinguished leader described him as 'conscience keeper of Mahatma Gandhi'.<sup>54</sup>

Every visit of the distinguished Congress leaders were to help the organisation of Congress as their revered leader's mere arrival was enough to inspire the rank and file.<sup>55</sup> In the first week of May '36 Dr. Rajendra Prasad went to Gogri in connection with the marriage of Babu Bishewar Prasad Verma. While at Gogri he along with some others visited the Congress Ashram where a public meeting was held in which he explained the Congress programme.<sup>56</sup>

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54. The Searchlight, 23 March, 1936.

55. Interviews with S.K. Mishra, Ganga Sharan Singh  
[The interview of the contemporary Congress workers indicated how even informal and personal visits helped the Congress.]

56. The Searchlight, 15 May 1936.

Congressmen were always ready to make use of a 'day' to celebrate and to show solidarity with the Congress leadership by organising meetings in which the respected citizens used to be invited. On 11 March, at Jamalpur on account of death of Mrs. Kamla Nehru a mourning day was observed. On 11 May 1936 at Monghyr Congress president's mandate about holding Abyssinia Day and Subhash Day was duly observed in a well attended public meeting held in Moghal Bazar Durgasthan compound under the auspices of the local Congress Committee. Babu Nemdhari Singh presided over the meeting. Among present people were R. Rizwi, Babu Tejeshwar Prasad, Baldev Prasad. Singh, Chaudhary Devendra Narayan Singh, Ram Gobind Prasad Singh, Sidheswar Pathak and others.<sup>57</sup>

In June '36 efforts were made to enroll new members in the Congress. In Begusarai this was done by Ram Charita Singh and in Monghyr thana too this was 'noticeable' (i.e. evident).<sup>58</sup>

On 21 June 1936 the Khagaria thana conference was held over which Mahanth Siaram Das presided. In it Srikrishna Sinha made a 'forceful speech' while the Kisan Sabha

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57. The Searchlight, 15 May, 1936.

58. The Searchlight, 10 June, 1936.

leaders like Karyanand Sharma emphasised the need to work for abolition of the Zamindari system to redress kisans' grievances.<sup>59</sup>

In March 1936 the Monghyr District Committee was elected. By that time the struggle between the Kisan Sabha leaders and the traditional Congress leaders had begun, but it had not reached a breaking point. The Kisan Sabha leaders and the Congress leaders shared platforms but the emphasis on the issues they chose differed substantially. The Congress leaders usually put emphasis on the national issues and most of their activities were meant to highlight the image of the Congress as the liberator of the motherland. The Kisan Sabhaites had by then formulated programmes and objectives along socialist lines, particularly after the 1935 Hajipur session of the Kisan Sabha in which the 'abolition of the Zamindari System' had been accepted as the demand of the Sabha. Forthwith, the Kisan workers intensified their activities and their tone on different issues changed. They highlighted the grievances of the kisans of whom they had a very flexible definition.

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59. The Searchlight, 28 June, 1936.

This changed attitude of Kisan Sabhaites created problems for the district Congress leadership. The Kisan Sabha's more direct approaches to local concerns made it very popular in some areas. This popularity of kisan leaders was mostly due to people's identification of their activities as a part of ongoing national movement led by the Congress. Presence of the Congress stalwarts in kisan meetings and the Kisan Sabha leaders in Congress meeting was very common. But since 1935 the influence of Socialism increased in the Kisan Sabha and now the attempts were made to 'capture Congress organisation'. This endeavour was like a group of Congressmen trying to capture Congress bodies. Till then, in Monghyr Karyanand Sharma was considered a 'staunch Gandhian' and he was the leader of Lakhisarai thana Congress.<sup>60</sup> The intentions of the Kisan leaders alarmed other Congress leaders and they realised the need to keep the district leadership in their hands by electing their own nominees. The selection of 1936 District Congress Committee clearly indicates this - President Sri Krishna Sinha, Secretary S.C. Mishra (later when he resigned in 1936 - Ramprasad, Treasurer - Ramprasad and Accountant, Nand Kumar Singh.<sup>61</sup> Before it, in 1935

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60. In a letter to Nehru on 10 March 1937, Rajendra Prasad referred Karyanand Sharma as "our dedicated worker", see Valmiki Chaudhry edited Selected Correspondence of Rajendra Prasad, Vol.1.

61. G.P.Ambastha, op.cit., p.77.

Sri Krishna Sinha, Nirapada Mukherjee, Ramcharitra Singh, Kumar Kalika Prasad Singh and Dr. Raghunandan.<sup>62</sup>

At organisational level the District Congress leadership hardly left any space for the Socialist or the Kisan leaders. In 1937 Sri Krishna Sinha remained the president while Nand Kumar Singh who was very loyal to Sinha, was made the Secretary. In 1938 when Sri Krishna Sinha led the Congress ministry of Bihar, Nemdhari Singh was made President and Nand Kumar Singh remained at the Secretary's post (Nand Kumar Singh had defeated Karyanand Sharma a stalwart of Kisan Sabha.)<sup>63</sup>

In between 1936 and 1939 the traditional Congress leadership had to face the challenge of Kisan Sabha and Socialists but due to its control of the leadership at district and thana level its domination remained virtually intact. After the formation of the Congress ministry it rather increased. Attempts were also made to revitalise the thana Congress bodies by organising thana conferences.

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62. Ambastha op.cit., p.76.

63. Ambastha. op.cit., p.77.

In 1937 the following thana conferences were held -

Chautham	thana	Conference	(President-K.B.Sahay)
Khagaria	"	"	(Sri Krishna Sinha)
Balia	"	"	(A.N.Sinha)
Kharagpur	"	"	(Dr.Syed Mahmud)

(Held at Tetea Bumbar) <sup>64</sup>

Apart from this, the fifth district conference was held at Jamui in 1937 under the presidentship of Smt. Sarojani Naidu, <sup>65</sup>

In 1938 the following thana political conferences were held -

Khagaria	-	President	-Nand Kumar Singh
Kharagpur	-	"	- K.B. Sahay
Tarapur	-	"	- Abdul Bari
Monghyr	-	"	- Syed Rafi Uddin Ahmed Rizvi.
Gogri	-	"	- Sri Krishna Sinha
Surajgarha	-	"	- S.K.Sinha.

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64. Ambastha op.cit., p.78.

65. Ibid

In 1939 the following thana conferences were held -

Bakhtiyarpur	- President	- Nirapanda Mukherjee
Teghra	- President	- Dr. Syed Mohammed
Mansi	- "	- Abdul Bari
Gogri	- "	- Jai Prakash Narayan

It can be seen that barring J.P.Narayan no president of any thana political conferences was of leftist leanings. Even J.P. Narayan by 1939 had somewhat changed his attitude towards the Gandhian leadership.<sup>66</sup>

This dominance of Sri Krishna Sinha, Nand Kumar Singh and others in the district Congress bodies could not be challenged. For it, some social factors were also responsible. Apart from their long association with the Congress they belonged to the Bhumihaar caste which was the most dominant caste at that time in Monghyr. (The Bhumihaars were solidly behind Sri Krishna Sinha and Nand Kumar Singh) There were some villages populated and dominated by Bhumihaars which were the most active centre of Congress activities, e.g. Nayagaon. The other dominant upper castes also got representation in the Congress. The challenges could only come from the backward castes or the

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66. Ibid

kisans as a body cutting across caste lines. The solidarity of the backward castes had yet to develop and the most backward castes had barely started their caste association with a handful of educated people representing them. The political leadership of backward castes had not emerged in this district before Independence.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile, the changes in the political scenario of contemporary Bihar politics started to affect the political mobilization patterns in Monghyr. So long, with some differences, the traditional Congress leaders and Kisan Sabha leaders had been working in close cooperation. As already mentioned the important kisan leaders like Karyanand Sharma and Mahant Sita Ram Das were not only sharing platforms with prominent Congress leaders but also in their speeches never tried to characterise their movements autonomous and independent from the Congress led national movement.

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67. This assumption is based on a highly impressive interpretation of district politics of those days by S.N. Shastri, who himself was an important local Congress leader of Gogri thana and a well educated man, Interview, Mahavir Mandal, Headmaster of school in those days, Interview.



But with the emergence of the Congress Socialist Party in the national politics and the widening of its influence in Bihar new trends started to emerge in Bihar politics. The Kishan Sabha leaders started getting influenced more and more by socialist ideas and they began to be critical of Congress in Bihar.<sup>68</sup> They shared the Socialists' beliefs that Congress could be reformed by "capturing" it and turned pro-Kisan. This was resented by the traditional Congressmen and consequently the influence of Kisan Sabhaites declined. But the acceptance of office by Congress gave Kisan Sabha a chance to put pressure.

After taking over office the Congress leadership found it difficult to fulfill the expectations of the people in general and the kisans in particular. Working under some legal restrictions, its actions were looked upon as inadequate and disappointing by the Kisan Sabha and socialists. The attempt was made to sideline the traditional Congress leadership particularly after J.F. Narayanan and Rajendra Prasad debate.<sup>70</sup> This however, could not be.

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68. See Chapter III

69. Based on the studies of Rusch, A.N. Das and V. Damodaran.

70. See Mc Donald, op.cit., pp 41-42.

The Congress machinery which had dominated the political environment of the district having organisational presence in the different localities got an impetus when Congress took over the ministerial responsibilities in 1937. The aura associated with government helped the Congress in different ways. Not only it gave the Congress leaders more social sanctity but also the opportunity to highlight their programmes. At every stage assurance were made to practically every social group like the lower castes, Muslims, sepoys, kisans and zamindars. These rhetoric should be understood in its immediate context or else it would appear opportunistic, mere hollow promises intended to maintain status quo.

To illustrate the rhetoric used by Congressmen it would be appropriate to look at Sri Krishna Sinha's speeches. He was considered an outstanding orator who could move his audience.<sup>71</sup> Sri Krishna Sinha, in a meeting at Jamui said that during the Congress regime there would be absolutely no partiality for any particular community or any political group of people.<sup>72</sup> Again at Tilak Maidan he said how he and his colleagues had been working day and night to ameliorate the lot of the tenants

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71. See Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's 'Sri Krishna Singh' in Sri Krishna Abhinandan Granth: N. M. Srivastava, Bihar Kesri Dr. Sri Krishna Singh.

72. The Searchlight, 6 October, 1937.

and trying to give relief to the tenants which they had been badly wanting.<sup>73</sup> For small zamindars he said that they were not to be led away by any wrong propaganda in this connection. 'The zamindars he said, 'should not lose the golden opportunity which the Congress had given them...to co-operate with the Congress in a spirit of sacrifice....The Congress did not aim at the abolition of the Zamindari System, but it certainly wanted the establishment of equitable relations between the zamindars and the tenants'. For government officials also, he had something to offer, as he asked the people not to cherish ill feeling and hatred against the Magistracy and the police as their quarrel was never with the men...but against the system. He also appealed to the Police and the Magistracy to change their attitudes not only towards those who held office but towards all Congressmen.<sup>74</sup>

In another meeting, on a visit to a Muslim anjuman, he chose different topics to dwell on. He made touching reference to the high regard in which he held Islam. He said that the Prophet Mohammed came to the world when it was badly in need of democracy and he preached the principles of equality. On the same day i.e., on 2 October, on the occasion of the birthday of Gandhi he said, 'I am a blind follower of Mr. Gandhi. I appeal to the

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73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

people to follow Mahatma Gandhi and try to win by love and not hatred? Some more references to Sri Babu's speeches -

'... It is not the time that the people should fight amongst themselves in the name of religion. They would have to provide bread to the thirty five crores...help by ministry which is trying to secure power for you - create a healthy public opinion for the establishment of the rule of the people, for the people and by the people'. In the same meeting he said - 'I say before God and man that so long I am the Prime Minister, for me, Hindus, Muslims and Christians are all one.' Again, 'If I have to show any favour or partiality to the Bhumihar, or the Rajput or any other caste or community I pray to the God that I should go down then and here beneath the earth '... if by the side of a temple a Muslim orphan was seen hungry and dying of hunger it was rather sin to offer sweets in the temple and leave the orphan dying. In the same way if Hindu orphan was seen dying of hunger by the side of mosque it will be sin to leave the boy uncared for. Remember, the quarrel of the Roman Catholics and the Protestants and how miserable they were...I tremble to hear the grievance of the kisans... I want justice should be done to all irrespective of caste and creed.'<sup>75</sup>

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75. See The Searchlight, 6 October, 9 October, 14 October, and 12 November, 1937.

This rhetoric was well taken by the people and it played an important role in increasing the influence of <sup>the</sup> Congress and its respectability. The Institutions associated with this organisation also enhanced their acceptability as the ministers like Sri Krishna Sinha and Jaglal Chaudhury visited the khadi shops, National schools and ashrams during their official visits,

For Congressmen difficulties also increased with the acceptance of the ministry. The pressure on them by Kisan Sabhaites for direct intervention for one side in the struggles between the kisans and the zamindars mounted. By that time the Congressmen were helping the Kisan leaders in their struggles and even initiated some kisan movement themselves. But when they saw that the Kisan leaders were out to discredit them they tried to check the influence of the Kisan Sabha leaders. Consequently in 1938, the Kisan Sabha leader Karyanand Sharma was defeated by Nandkumar Singh for the Secretary post of the District Congress Committee. During the Monghyr Municipal election, they were aware of the danger of the entry of pro-Kisan Sabha Congressmen.<sup>76</sup>

Before moving to the post 1939 phase, we must also consider one other aspect. Most researches have tried to show that the Kisan Sabha led movement had shown the

76. The Searchlight, 4 Dec. 1938.

limitations of the Congress programmes dealing with kisans' grievances. By citing from the debate in the Legislative Assembly and trying to show Barhaiya Tal agitation as the kisans' desire to agitate against their oppressors who had the backing of the Congress stalwarts they have tried to show that the conservative Congressmen were not against zamindar as they had organic links with this class. But if we try to take into consideration the context in which District Congress Committee Monghyr had to work, realising their constraints the remarks would need modification,.

In Monghyr, Congress had to face the communal forces, of both Hindu and Muslim varieties. Former was a serious challenge as most of the big land lords and Rajas were supporters of Hindu Mahasabha and it had a considerable following. The Chowk Bazar temple-issue which had attracted extensive media attention demonstrates how these people's influences could create a volcanic situation from practically nothing.<sup>77</sup> The organisation was well maintained and Bihar Hindu Mahasabha conference was held in Monghyr which proved to be an important step towards the spread of influences of Hindu Mahasabha in Bihar. <sup>78</sup>

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77. See Appendix - for Chowk Bazar Temple dispute.

78. Ram Sevak, History of Bihar between the two World Wars 1919 - 1939, pp. 26-27.

The threat of Muslim communalism was also very serious. Some instances would be suffice to indicate that Muslim communalists had their influence among Muslim masses. Generally, the Muslims were less active in Monghyr, but on occasions like one of 27 September 1937 they attended meetings in large numbers. On the question of partition of Palestine protest meetings and demonstrations at Monghyr were held by 15000 people, which was the biggest in the last 20 years. At Idgah a meeting was held in which one speaker exhorted the Muslims to unite keeping aside their individual interests and differences in matters of political and religious importance to the Muslims in general.<sup>79</sup>

The Muslim communal organisations were at work to mobilize political support from Muslims in this part of the province. At Bhagalpur, Zafar Ali Khan's dangerous exhortation on 30 September 1937 can be mentioned. He said 'Islamic brotherhood is unique in the world... a Muslim would never bow his head before anybody but the 'Raja of Kaba'. He harped on the glories of Islam and hoped that so strong was the inner appeal of the faith that a day would come when there would be 35 crores of Muslims in India.

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79. The Searchlight, the date not clear, probably of 30 September or 1 October 1937.

He violently attacked the Congress and said that the Congress demand for independence was not a sincere one. He urged the Muslim League and exhorted the audience to organise a branch of the League in every village.<sup>80</sup> He was well taken by local Muslim population as he was welcomed by a 8000 strong Muslim crowd. 'He was profusely garlanded and taken round the town in a never ending procession. In spite of incessant rains the procession went on marching cheerfully.' He attended a meeting in which a 20000 strong crowd listened to him. He enjoined on the Muslims not to leave the Holy Quran but to study it. He mentioned how he, himself a Congressman, who had been in jail several times got disillusioned when he understood that Gandhi and Nehru were only working for Hindu supremacy.<sup>81</sup> The communal propaganda among the Muslims continued in 1938 also. It got an impetus by the Muslim League Conference held at Sheikhpura in April 1938. At Teghra, handwritten leaflets purported to have been written on behalf of the Muslim League were found asking people to renounce Hinduism or get out of India and threatening that there would shortly be no trace of any Hindu temple left in this country.<sup>82</sup>

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80. The Searchlight, 3 October, 1937.

81. The Searchlight, 6, October, 1937.

82. Home Pol (Sp) 16/FR. 1938. cited by Ram Sevak, op.cit., p.190.



Apart from these, there were many instances of communal tensions in different areas, especially at Burhee, Jamalpur and Gogri. It must be said that the name of the Congress could not be drawn into these disturbances. In Monghyr the communalists could not survive politically despite having most influential families behind them demonstrates the magnitude of the Congress success.

Another aspect of the District Congress leadership was that it spared the Kisan Sabha activists and gave them a chance to check their activities affecting Congress adversely. We do not have examples of Kisan Sabha activists prevented from working in any area of the district.<sup>83</sup>

Dealing with the impact of Congress ministry in Monghyr it must be said that it helped the Congress organisation a lot. The Ministry period witnessed a sharp

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83. It must be said in credit of Congress leaders that they were not vindictive against the Kisan Sabha leaders and workers Sri Krishna Singh kept courteous relationship with Swami Sahjanand and others. See his letters to Sahjanand in Sahjanand Papers. Reel 1 and 5.

increase in the number of Congress members. It has aptly been commented that 'Once the Congress became the party of government., it acquired both prestige and power and important men in rural society.'<sup>84</sup>. The membership drive resulted in competition for enlisting members between pro-Gandhian group and Kisan Sabha activists during the Ministry years...and more general political activity during 1937 and 1939 added to general political consciousness. Also, the incidents like these must have enhanced the respectibility of Congressmen - 'The District Magistrate of Monghyr ordered the police to salute the Congress flag everytime the Premier Sri Krishna Sinha did so while the Premier was on tour of his district. He also flew a Congress flag on his car along with the Union Jack while Sinha was on tour. <sup>85</sup>

This report also confirms how the Ministry had helped the political mobilization in Begusarai sub-division, Monghyr 'The Congress organisation in about every village more or less, the young men of villages, especially the

84. Chandran Mitra, in G. Pamdey ed. The Indian nation in 1942, p.170.

85. Hallett, then Governor of Bihar to Linlithgow, 25 October, 1937, File L/P & J/5/169 IOL cited by Chandan Mitra, Ibid, p.178.

Bhumihars had an inherent tendency to work as volunteers under the Congress flag on many occasions. These village organisations were in their best form at the time of Congress Government.<sup>86</sup>

The police attitude had also changed. The policemen were now treating Congress leaders with respect and their attitude towards the Congress volunteers had also changed for the better. It had been possible largely due to the popular belief that these Congressmen were to get political power in their hands soon.<sup>87</sup>

'The outbreak of the war proved to be the great winner of the Indian National Congress. All elements in the Congress were forced to decide whether their primary loyalties lay with Indian nationalism per se.'<sup>88</sup> Responding to it, the Socialists virtually rallied behind the Congress.<sup>89</sup> In Monghyr the Congress and virtually hegemonised the entire political environment.

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86. Begusarai papers related to August Movement, Home Political 45/1942.BSA.

87. Interview with A.B.Mishra, SC. Mishra, SN Shastri and others.

88. Rusch op.cit., p.466.

89. V. Damodaran, Broken Promises, p.12.

When World War II began the Congress protested against India's participation in the War. The Congress celebrated 'Independence day' to make it the starting point of the fight for which they had been asking the people to be ready ever since the resignation of the Congress ministers.<sup>90</sup> The programmes of the Congress included prabhat pheries, flag hoisting, torchlight or bicycle processions and public meetings held for the purpose of explaining the significance of the day and the taking of the pledge.<sup>91</sup> Side by side attempts were made to make Ramgarh Congress a success.

In the first half of May the District Congress Committee was converted into a Satyagraha committee in order to evade arrest.<sup>92</sup> Out of the 19 thana Congress committees of Monghyr district nine were converted into Satyagraha committee - Monghyr, Khagaria, Chautham, Manjhaul (Beg usarai), Tarapur, Barhaiya, Kharagpur, Teghra, Balliya apart from Monghyr District Congress Committee.<sup>93</sup>

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90. FR, Jan II, 1940, BSA.

91. Ibid.

92. FR, May I, 1940, BSA.

93. Report of the District Magistrate, Monghyr, concerning Congress volunteer organisation, letter no.500 con., dated 13 June 1940, Included in Appendix, D.P.Singh, op.cit., p.443-444.

The workers of Chautham Thana Committee opened a Satyagraha camp from 15 June to 21 June 1940 where they organised a permanent volunteer corps. Brisk collection of funds was also contemplated to maintain the corps and to construct a Congress building. Mahendra Narayan, a staunch follower of Suresh Mishra was in the lead.<sup>94</sup>

Upto 8 May 1940 the total number of Satyagrahis had reached 166. A list of organisers for the Satyagraha Committee included Nand Kumar Singh, Bageshwari Singh, Kalika Prasad Singh, Rafi Uddin Rizvi, Ramrijhan Prasad Singh, Raghubir Singh, Janaki Prasad Singh, Ram Kishore Prasad Singh Nemdhari Singh, Dwarika Prasad Singh, Bhramdeo Narayan Singh, Mitran Chaudhari and Hirday Narayan Prasad.<sup>95</sup>

By September 1940, there was speculation about the chances of the Congress declaring Civil Disobedience movement. Congress leaders took precautionary measures as the withdrawal of Congress money from banking accounts, the transfer of Congress papers from ashrams to private houses and the appointment of a chain of dictators to meet successive arrests. Along with it many Congress

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94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

meetings were held in which the leaders and Gandhi Jayanthi was celebrated by pushing the sale of Khaddar.

On September 3 and 4, 1940, in the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee meeting at Gaya, it was decided to participate in individual Satyagraha. Sri Krishna Sinha was given the permission of being the first Satyagrahi of Bihar.<sup>96</sup> The kind of support given to Sri Krishna Sinha in Begusarai clearly demonstrates the popularity of Congress. On 25 November no less than 10000 people turned up to bid goodbye to Sri Krishna Sinha. In prindrop silence and with rapt attention the people assembled there listened to his exhortation.<sup>97</sup> Sinha said to his audience that he had come to take leave of them. As a soldier he had taken up the reins of the Government in his hand at the bidding of the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi and again at their bidding he was now on his way to jail. Concluding, he exhorted the people to obey Gandhiji implicitly by adhering to his creed of non violence, by cultivating Hindu-Muslim unity, wiping out

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96. K.K.Dutt, op.cit., p.373; also see D.P. Singh, op.cit., p.235.

97. The Searchlight, 28 November, 1940.

untouchability and taking to spinning and wearing Khaddar. At last, he said, 'Don't be impatient to offer satyagraha. you have chosen your General and it is for him to select those who will offer Satyagraha'.<sup>98</sup> When he was arrested at Patna, Monghyr town market observed Hartal.<sup>99</sup>

After the beginning of individual Satyagraha by Sri Krishna Sinha, several others joined him. Nemdhari Singh, the first Satyagrahi of the district started Satyagraha at Tilak Maidan he was arrested. Then, Ramcharitra Singh, Sajjid Rafi Uddin Ahmad Rizawi, Narayanlal, Ramgovind Prasad Verma, Remprasad and Nurulla Saheb were arrested after their individual Satyagraha. Then in different quarters of the district Individual Satyagraha began.<sup>100</sup> When the number of Satyagrahais increased they were not arrested. During those days Begusarai was very active. Sarju Prasad Singh, Vice Chairman of Local Board resigned and started Individual Satyagraha. After him, 45 people participated in satyagraha.<sup>101</sup> In Jamui Dr. Rameshwar Singh, Kumar Kalika Singh and Shyam Prasad Singh were arrested.<sup>102</sup> Among others arrested in this connection

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98. Ibid.

99. The Searchlight, 3 December, 1940.

100. D.P.Singh, op.cit., p.235.

101. D.P.Singh, op.cit., p.236: he cites the interview of Saryu Prasad Singh.

102. D.P.Singh, ibid. He cites the interview of Rameshwar Prasad Singh.

were Krishnamohan Pyare Singh, Ram Gulam Sharma, Saryu Prasad Singh, Siaram Das, Lakhanial Mishra, Maulana Abdul Ajim Ansari and others. <sup>103</sup>

Congress leaders of Monghyr constantly opposed the war efforts of Britain and asked the people to follow Congress. The way in which the leaders tried to articulate their message gave the authorities very little ground on which to take action. Sometimes, however, particularly in larger gatherings leaders spoke eloquently. In a meeting held on 7 June 1942 at Begusarai Sri Krishna Sinha criticised Sir Stafford Cripps, and Government's 'divide and rule' policy in India. He accused the Allies of fighting the war for personal gain and not for democracy.<sup>104</sup> In explaining Congress programme he expressed the fear that if the British left the country, they would destroy all communications and bridges so it was all the more necessary to be self-supporting and to organise volunteers to guard against internal disturbances which were likely at the time of invasion.<sup>105</sup>

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103. G.P.Ambastha, op.cit., p.89.

104. FR, June 1, 1942, BSA.

105. FR, June 11, 1942, BSA.



Again, in a meeting held near Mansi, Sri Krishna Sinha addressed a gathering of 5,000 people and criticised British war policy, supported Gandhi's request to the British to withdraw from India and deplored the increase in lawlessness.<sup>106</sup> In the same meeting Abdul Bari praised Russian resistance which had saved the existence of other countries.

In 1942 in the early months Congress leaders paid good deal of attention to Monghyr. On 25 and 26 May, 1942 Rajendra Prasad accompanied by Sri Krishna Sinha, .. Abdul Bari and other Congress leaders of the province toured district with the declared object of encouraging people to enroll as Congress volunteers.<sup>107</sup> The Tarapur meeting was utilised for discussing lines for action for coming events.

On the 8 August Sri Krishna Sinha accompanied by Jaglal Chaudhary came to Monghyr for consultation with the local leaders like Nirpada Mukherjee and others and left for Patna<sup>108</sup> where he was arrested.

The active phase of August movement began from 9 August. During the August movement period Monghyr was one of the most affected districts of Bihar.

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106. Ibid.

107. First Report of the Civil Disobedience Movement in the District of Monghyr, Freedom Movement Paper, Monghyr; BSA.

108. Ibid;

## CHAPTER III

### KISAN AGITATIONS IN MONGHYR IN THE 1930s

A detailed study of the agrarian society of Monghyr is beyond our scope here. But on the basis of the impression one gets from the Survey and Settlement reports, Census reports, Hunter's account and Gazetteers it can be said that many of the tendencies which were highlighted in the 1930s had already been there much earlier.

The attempts of landlords to dispossess the actual cultivators were reported in the Survey and Settlement Report of 1905-07. In Gogri thana several kisans were dispossessed by Ram Bahadur Singh and his uncle Udit Narain Singh a year or two prior to Khanapuri.<sup>1</sup> In the same area one landlord was found to have dispossessed a large number of tenants in order to provide himself with suitable land for growing sugarcane on a large scale under promise of giving them other land in exchange. This promise was never fulfilled.<sup>2</sup> In another case a whole

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1. Coupland, H., Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the District of Monghyr (North) 1905-1907, 1908.

2. Ibid

village, Sirdhia, was claimed as bakasht by its Rajput landlords and it was with great difficulty that the Khanapuri Officer M. Ashfaq Hussain succeeded in discovering that a very large part really belonged to the holdings of a number of low caste resident tenants who had not at first the courage to claim even the small patches of cultivation adjoining their own houses. <sup>3</sup>

Attempts had also been made to raise rents, sometimes arbitrarily and sometimes by fake claims to raise more than legal limits. In one case one Mahanth Lachhmi Das of Salauna claimed rents at rates varying from Rs.3-9 to Rs.7 per bigha, the raiyats stated the rate to be only Rs.1 to Rs.2-12. From enquiry it seemed that rent had been paid at the rates of Rs.2 and Rs.4 for sometimes before the passing of the Bengal Tenancy Act and were above the legal limit and so were disallowed. The Mahantha succeeded in inducing the Case Officer to record the higher rent claimed on the ground that in the interval between attestation and final publication he had got decrees against tenants for arrears of rent at those rates.<sup>4</sup> In Nadilmani village the malik landlord ousted many tenants and converted their lands into his bakasht or settled them

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3. Ibid

4. Ibid

with other tenants.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes these changes led to disputes between the old and new cultivators. (e.g. Ijmalipatti).<sup>6</sup> The Settlement Report also mentions that in thana Begusarai, in a large village Kasmaut during Khanapuri a considerable amount of ejection and suppression of raiyats was discovered<sup>7</sup>. Likewise in the village Bhurwar during Khanapuri a large area was recorded as being the bakasht of the maliks, but the Attestation Officer soon discovered that this included the holdings of no less than 70 tenants whose names had been suppressed, and who had been prevented from coming up to claim their own.<sup>8</sup>

The landlords also tried to get rules changed in their favour. L.S.S.O. Malley wrote in the district Gazetteers in 1909 that determined efforts had been made by landlords to substitute 'danabandi' for 'batai' often with success.<sup>9</sup> Danabandi as a system was preferable to the landlords who by means of various abwabs or cesses and overapprisement could manage to secure a very large proportion of the

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5. Ibid

6. Ibid

7. Ibid

8. Ibid; for other examples see the Report pp-34-45.

9. Malley, LSSO, Bengal District Gazetteers, Monghyr, p-126.

outturn, as much as 27 seers in a mound (1 mound=40 seers) in the some cases.<sup>10</sup>

Agrarian disputes in Monghyr were very common at the beginning of this century. The number of disputes per square mile in north Monghyr was 35.<sup>11</sup> There were Khasra disputes over 359 plots in a single Narhan Estate which contained 60 villages.<sup>12</sup> The number of estates in Monghyr in 1908 was 8119.<sup>13</sup> In North Monghyr in 619 villages surveyed the number of boundary disputes filed was 794.<sup>14</sup>

On the basis of these references one should not, however, conclude that the relation between the kisans and <sup>the</sup> zamindars were very strained in terms of any polarized political and/or class consciousness. The Settlement Reports suggest at least in the case of north Monghyr that the disputes were not primarily cognised as between the

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10. Ibid. Dababandi was a system in which the crop was valued or appraised before it was reaped, and a fixed proportion of the actual produce or of its value in cash was made to the landlord, according to the apprisement after the crop had been reaped.
  11. P. W. Murphy, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Bhagalpur District, 1901-10, Calcutta, 1912.
  12. Stevenson and Moore, Survey and Settlement of the Narhan Estate in the Monghyr District, seasons, 1893-98.
  13. P.W.Murphy, op.cit., p.25.
  14. Ibid.

tenants and the zamindars. There were complexities involved if we consider the stratification in agrarian social structure in a district like Monghyr.<sup>15</sup> Also, the nature of disputes<sup>16</sup> was such that these could be resolved seemly<sup>ing</sup> amicably and quickly.<sup>17</sup>

The kisans also had the option of leaving lands and migrate elsewhere to nearby districts particularly

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15. The attempts later made by <sup>Kisan leaders</sup> to find all source of evils in Kisan's life in zamindar-tenant relationship was perhaps simplistic.
16. The Settlement Report of Bhagalpur comments on the nature of the disputes - "the vast majority of disputes dealt during the Khanapuri stage were the ordinary disputes regarding to possession of Patti among the landlords and the possesison of fields between the tenants...innumerable false claims were set up and, as usual were met by counter claims...in many cases the only motive on the part of the original disputant was that of annoying his neighbour'. (p.26)
17. The Statement Report of Bhagalpur District mentions- "Nearly five sixth of the total number of disputes (65,691) in three seasons were decided by Kanungoes and their decisions were as in North Monghyr found, to be satisfactory, on the whole, p.31; In case of Narhan Estate most of the Khasra disputes and out of 79 boundary disputes 78 were disposed off at the Khanpuri stage, (S.Moore, op.cit p.11).

Bhagalpur,<sup>18</sup> Still, it would be incorrect to say that in Monghyr agrarian society was always peaceful. There are examples which show that on some issues the kisans fought for their interests.

Sometimes the tenants opposed the enhancement of rents by violent means. As early as 1873 Monghyr witnessed the murder of Ram Sharan Das, a very powerful landlord of Salauna, predecessor of Mahantha Lachmi Das (who had the reputation of being 'the most oppressive landlord in his subdivision) owing to an attempt to raise the rents from Re.1, Rs.2-12 and Rs.3 to Rs.2 and Rs.4<sup>19</sup>

In Monghyr Kisan issues were taken up for the first time politically in 1910 by some nationalist leaders of Kharagpur. Under their influence an agitation against indigo planters began in Kharagpur sub-division. Later after the Champaran Satyagraha the agitations were

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18. In thana Kishanganj of Bhagalpur every year the area in cultivation increased as the tramps which formerly covered this thana gradually dried up and the grass jungles were cleared. The works of reclamation was mostly carried on by cultivators from Monghyr district. These people did not settle on the lands cultivated by them but only used to come to sow their crops and having done so returned home again until it was time to cut them.

19. Coupland, op.cit, p.33; For other protests of Kisans see pp.34-42.

launched against the indigo planters in other parts of the district.<sup>20</sup> in 1918, the Indigo planters of Kharagpur filed cases against the kisans of Gaurabdih, Barsanda, Bambar, Majra, Jamua and Kunwargarhi and many people were arrested. Sri Krishna Sinha was the lawyer of the Kisans. The kisans won the case and they were set free.<sup>21</sup>

Since 1920 minor peasant associations had sprung up in Bihar to deal with kisan demands. They were of ad hoc nature usually led by local activists and were rarely effective before 1928.<sup>22</sup> In Monghyr, a Kisan Sabha was formed in 1922 with Shah Jubair as President, Sri Krishna Sinha as Vice-President and Singheshwar Chaudhary and Nand Kumar Singh as secretaries. This effort was however premature and soon it became inactive. But in March 1933 when Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha was revived<sup>23</sup> its district wing became an active body in Monghyr. Soon its meetings was attended by district Congress leaders and it started drawing large crowds. During the 1934-36 period this organisation was particularly active in Monghyr.

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20. G.P. Ambastha, op.cit., p.108.

21. Ibid

22. Hauser, W. 'The Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha, 1929-42' p.36.

23. Ibid



The most important reasons for the popularity of the Kisan Sabha leader was the people's identification of their endeavours as the extension of the works done by the Congressmen. The rhetorics of Swami Sahjanand, Karyanand Sharma and others gave clear impression that the Sabha was a body of Congress.

For example Swami Sahjanand said in a meeting at Tarapur on 4 February 1935 - 'There was no question of no rent campaign and he never advised the kisans to stop the rent...There was no doubt that if ever that question was taken up, it would be taken up from the Congress platform. when the Congress abandoned the fight of Satyagraha the question of the rent campaign was a ridiculous one'.<sup>24</sup> Karyanand Sharma, the most respected Kisan Sabha leader of Monghyr, said in a meeting at Khagaria - 'the Kisan Sabha was working all along on the principle of non-violence dictated by Gandhi.'<sup>25</sup>

The Kisan Sabha also followed Congress in its organisational set up. The hierarchy of the Kisan Sabha organisation at different levels was organised in the same manner in which the units of Bihar Provincial Congress

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24. Home Pol. (Sp.), 16/35 I, BSA.

25. Home Pol. (Sp.), 33/37 I, cited by G.P. Sharma, 'Congress Peasant Movement and Agrarian Legislation, p. 102.

Committee were formed <sup>26</sup>. The Kisan Sabha also took advantage of its links with the Congress in Monghyr. Its leaders operated from Congress ashrams, Karyanand Sharma had his headquarters at Chittranjan Ashram (Lakhisarai). Kisan Sabha also adopted the Gandhian method of Satyagraha. On the pattern of the Civil-Disobedience movement the leader of the Kisan Satyagraha was called - 'dictator'.<sup>27</sup> Against this background the activities of Kisan Sabha in Monghyr district should be studied.

In Monghyr Kisan Sabha meetings became frequent from 1933 onwards. On May 7 1933, a Subdivisional Kisan Conference was held at Jamui under the presidentship of Swami Sahjanand. In spite of inclement weather, 10,000 kisans came to conference held in garden under trees. Prominent among those present were Pdt. Jamuna Karjee, Joint Secretary, B.P.K.S., Jamuna Prasad Singh, Pleader, Maulvi Md. Abdul Hai, Prof. Lalit Kishore Singh, Tilakdhari Singh, Mokhtar, Giridhar Prasad, Narayan Singh, Bisheswar Prasad Sinha and Har Ballah Narain Singh.<sup>28</sup> After the opening song Maulavi M.A. Hai, Chairman of the

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26. G.P.Sharma, Congress, Peasant Movement and Agrarian Legislation in Bihar, 1937-39, P. 86.

27. G.P. Sharma, Ibid, p.97.

28. The Searchlight, 14 May, 1933

Reception Committee welcomed Swamiji who made a forceful speech protesting Bihar Tenancy Amendment Bill expressing no confidence in Shiva Shankar Jha and Guru Sahaylal.<sup>29</sup> A committee of five local gentlemen was formed to enquire into the grievances of the kisans of Jamui Subdivision.<sup>30</sup> On 9th may a meeting of kisans was also held at Begusarai.<sup>31</sup>

In June, Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha appointed the following men to speak for them in Monghyr District -

Babu Jamuna Prasad Sinha	- Jamui
Babu Brahma Dev Narayan sinha	- Begusarai
Baldeo Prasad Sinha	
Pandit Dasrath Jha	
Hakim Abdul Hai	- Jamui
Maulavi Md. Ibrahim	
Bisheshwar Prasad Sinha	- Jamui
Bhoju Bhagat <sup>32</sup>	

All of these leaders were Congress leaders.

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29. They had formed a fake Kisan Sabha and had contacts with zamindars.

30. Ibid.

31. The Searchlight 14 May, 1933.

32. The Searchlight, 25 June, 1933.

Monghyr district Kisan Conference was held at Jamui on 7 and 8 July, 1934, under the presidentship of Sri Krishna Sinha. It adopted 13 important resolutions. It was resolved here to appoint a committee consisting of Nand Kumar Singh, Giridhar Narayan Singh, Suryanarayan Singh and Karyanand Sharma to enquire into the grievances of the kisans of this district and to place them before public through the press and the platform.<sup>33</sup> It also drew the attention of the Government of the desirability of taking action under section 112 of the Bengal Tenancy Act to reduce the rent of the land in view of the fall in prices and acute economic depression. It was moved by Nand Kumar Singh and seconded by Jammuna Prasad Singh.<sup>34</sup> A District Kisan council was also elected whose office bearers were President - Maulavi Rafi Ahmad Rizwi.

Vice Presidents - Jamuna Prasad Singh, Banarsi Prasad  
Singh, Mahanth Siaram Das.

Joint Secretaries- Baldev Prasad Singh and Karyanand  
Sharma

Treasurer - Ram Prasad

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33. The Searchlight, 25 July 1934.

34. The Searchlight, 15 July 1934.

Member - Nand Kumar Singh, Krishna Mohan Pyare Singh, Giridhar Narayan Singh, Abdul Nadvi, Bisheshwar Prasad Singh, Suryanarayan Sharma and Pandit Dasrath Jha.<sup>35</sup>

On 6 August Monghyr District Kisan Conference was held at Lakhisarai under the presidentship of Ramswaroop Mahto.<sup>36</sup> Around 4000 Kisans assembled there. Swami Sahjanand said in this meeting "only remedy for all the ills kisans had been suffering from was that they must learn to work in an organised manner. He also spoke on demands related to day to day problems of kisans.<sup>37</sup> Another Kisan Conference was held on 7 August at Durgasthan, Lakshisari under the presidentship of Jagtanand Sahai.<sup>38</sup>

In the meetings of October 27 and November 4 at Nima and Bithalpur Kisan's grievandes were highlighted.<sup>39</sup> The 30 December Kisan Sabha meeting held at Bachhwara was attended by Sri Krishna Sinha and Sahjanand. Resolution were was adopted that the Government should reduce the

35. Ibid.

36. The Searchlight, 12 Aug, 1934

37. The Searchlight, 12 Aug'. 1934.

38. Ibid.

39. The Searchlight, 14 Nov. 1934.

existing rents by at least 50%, the price of sugar should be fixed at a minimum of 6 annas a maund and that raiyats should be exempted from payment of a portion of their debts.<sup>40</sup>

On January 13, 1935 a public meeting was attended by a hundred near Manpur (Lakhisarai) Railway Station. In this meeting Ramswarup Das, Vice President of Subdivisional Congress Committee and Karyanand Sharma, the Secretary District Kisan Sabha advised the kisans not to surrender begar. They also disapproved the new Bihar Tenancy Act and tried to draw the attention of Gidhaur Raj and Khaira Estate towards the report of the Chanan Enquiry Committee.<sup>41</sup>

On 15 March '35 a district Kisan Sabha meeting was held in which 12 out of 20 thanas were represented.<sup>42</sup> On 31 March the new Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha council was formed in which Karyananad Sharma, Ramswarup Das and Hari Sharma were elected representatives of Monghyr District.<sup>43</sup>

At the Monghyr District Kisan Sabha conference held on May 4 and 5 at Haveli Kharagpur, Babu Benarasi Prasad

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40. Home (Political), 20/1935, B S A.)

41. The Searchlight, 18 Jan, 1935.

42. The Searchlight, 24 March, 1935.

43. The Searchlight, 31 April, 1935.

Singh and Jaimangal Singh Shastri made vigorous propaganda for the success of the conference. They toured in the villages and enrolled members of the Kisan Sabha as well as the Reception Committee. Madan Ram, Secretary of the thana Kisan Sabha also toured in northern part of the thana.<sup>44</sup>

Kisan Sabha was active elsewhere also. Swami delivered a lecture at Gogri. He advocated the return to produce rent he also dealt with some particular local matters such as the proposed Manasi embarkment.<sup>45</sup>

There was a big Kisan Sabha meeting on the 2 June at Alauli (Khagaria). Swami Sahjanand and Sri Krishna Sinha were expected to address the gathering but did not reach the venue.<sup>46</sup>

On 27 June the Mufassil thana kisan meeting was held at Sunderpur (at Surajgarha Monghyr Road) in which Tarni Prasad was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee and

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44. The Searchlight, 1 May, 1935.

45. 12 March, FR, Bhagalpur Division, Home Political  
20/35. BSA.

46. 12 June, FR, Bhagalpur Division, Home Political,  
20/35.

Karyanand Sharma President. About 2000 kisans attended from all parts of thana. Prominent among those present were Swami Sahjanand , Ram Gulam Sharma, Tara Prasad Singh, Hari Prasad Choudhury, Ram Narayan Choudhury, Pleader, Ramswarup Sharma, secretary Jamalpur Socialist Party and others.<sup>47</sup>

On 27 June there was a meeting at a village near Jamalpur and Swami Sahjanand was among the speakers. He told his audience not to listen to priests because they were only propagandists for the capitalist system. He advised the kisans to bring their troubles forcefully to the notice of the District Officers and to apply to Government for legislation.<sup>48</sup>

Karyanand Sharma was active in the Gidhaaur estate in July 1935.<sup>49</sup> The Government recorded that Sahjanand seemed to be attempting to provoke hostility against zamindars as a class in a way he was not doing formerly.<sup>50</sup> Swami had visited Monghyr several times and it was reported that the feeling between tenants and landlords

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47. The Searchlight, 26 June, 3 July, 1935.

48. 12 July 1935 FR, Bhagalpur Division, BSA

49. 26 July 1935 FR, Bhagalpur Division, BSA.

50. 12 Aug. 1935 FR, Bhagalpur Division, BSA.



were none too good as a result of his exhortation. The reports adds further that Sri Krishna Sinha took interest in the Kisan Sabha movement in south Monghyr. He was assisted by Karyanand Sharma and Dharnidhar Prasad. He attended a meeting and advocated non-violence. He attacked the Gidhaur Estate vigorously.<sup>51</sup>

The Kisan Sabha meetings were also held at Tarapur and Sheikhpura. At Sheikhpura, Karyanand Sharma attended the meeting. On October 1, 1935 Swami Sahjanand was prohibited to address any meeting or do anything in connection with the kisans of thana Bakhtiyarpur by the Sadar SDO under section 144.<sup>52</sup> As soon as he arrived at Khagaria Station to address the thana Kisan Conference the local Police Sub-Inspector handed over the notice to him. About 3000 kisans of the thana and specially of the neighbouring villages had assembled there. Pandit Karyanand Sharma secretary of Monghyr Kisan Sabha, explained to the audience the circumstances in which Swamiji could not speak to them and asked them to organise themselves with redouble vigour. The meeting had been organised solely by Karyanand Sharma in connection with the kisan organisation

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51. 26 September FR, Bhagalpur Division.

52. Home (Political), 16/35 Part I B S A.

in general and it had nothing to do with the local conditions. There was no hand of the local people in it.<sup>53</sup>

In March 1936 a committee was formed by the District Congress Committee to work for the kisans. Its members were Karyanand Sharma, Nand Kumar Singh and Mahanth Ramswarup Das. District Kisan executive committee decided in its June meeting that Provincial Kisan Enquiry committee should visit Sikandara, Bariarpur, Chanan and Balia.<sup>54</sup>

In 1936 to fight against begari kisan courts started in Adabari, Malya, and Kurban in Chautham thana. At that time the president of the Kisan Sabha of the area was Raghunath Choudhury and the secretary was Ragubir Singh.

<sup>55</sup> In 1936 the kisans rose against the zamindars in Bank of Balia thana. Karyanand Sharma and Mahanth Sia Ram Das were attending the meeting. <sup>The zamindar's men attacked the meeting</sup> with lathis and the <sup>Kisans</sup> had to run. The Police intervened and tried to control the situation but the meeting could not be held <sup>and</sup> volunteers and invitees had to leave.<sup>56</sup>

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53. The Searchlight, 6 Feb.1935.

54. G.P.Ambastna, op.cit.p.110.

55. Ambastha, op.cit. p.110.

56. Ambastha, op.cit., p.110.

During these days in Namser Balia, Bari Balia, Faharpur, Malhipur, Phulmalik, Dharrapatti and Paraura village kisans rose against zamindars. Sensing the seriousness of the situation the Provincial Kisan Enquiry Committee's members reached Balia. To enquire Sri Krishna Sinha and Nand Kumar Singh reached there. They advised the zamindars to stop extortions. In the same year in Oct.1936 the Balia Thana conference was held in which Swami Sahjanand also came.<sup>57</sup>

In 1936-37 a kisan movement started in Gohda. The zamindars wanted to settle their lands with new cultivators. The kisans opposed it and they went to the lands with their ploughshares and cattle. Some of them, including some women, were arrested. The women were later released. During the court proceedings, to end the disputes, the zamindars agreed to give some lands to the kisans.<sup>58</sup>

In 1937 at Chautham and in 1938 at Pipra Kisan conferences were held which were attended by Swami Sahjanand and Karyanand Sharma. This kisan movement's leaders were Suryanarayan Singh and Mahabir Mandal.<sup>59</sup>

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57. Ambastha, op.cit., p.112.

58. Ambastha, op.cit. p.112.

59. Ambastha, op.cit.,p.112.

In Khagaria Thana the kisan movement started under Munshilal Verma<sup>60</sup> and Parmanand Thakur. On 1 Jan 1937 a thana kisan conference was held at Alauli under the presidentship of Nand Kumar Singh. Mahanth Siaram Das and Karyanand Sharma also attended. In that area, in Chaur, big landlords and officers used to visit for hunting birds. The killing or even throwing stones at birds was prohibited even if birds were destroying the crops. The protests mounted and the questions related to it were raised in the Provincial Assembly.

After sometime at Simuraha, Chilkari and Bhikhari the kisans rose against begari. Due to efforts of Mahanth Ramswarup Das, Mahanth Siaram Das and Congress Committee Secretary Baldev Prasad Singh visited these areas. After this at Rahim pur, Mehsauni, Rani Sakarpura, Labhgaon, Khutha and Bhabhanganwa kisans rose in protest against 'harjana' 'farkana' etc.

In 1938 under the presidentship of Karyanand Sharma Kisan meetings were organised at Rani Sakarpura and Kamathan Ikarna. A number of important leader attended these meetings. At Rani Sakarpura Sarju Prasad Singh and Gogri's S.C.Mishra are prominent

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60. See. D.F.Singh's op.cit., p.352.

examples. In those days Provincial Congress Committee members Anugrah Narayan Singh and Krishna Ballah Sahay also toured this area as did Sri Krishna Sinha.<sup>61</sup>

In the same year a Provincial Kisan Conference was held at Bachhwaara (Teghra thana) under the Presidentship of Yadunandan Sharma. Among the leaders present were Swami Sahajanand, J.P.Narayan, Ramnandan Mishra, Yamuna Karjee, Rambriksha Benipuri, Gangashran Singh, Kayyum Ansari. In this meeting the Congress had abstained due to some differences.<sup>62</sup>

In 1937-38 in Darbhanga Raj's Bangalwa gram which was populated mostly by the Santhals and the Mushars, a movement started against begari. Some of the Congress workers, who tried to help kisans, were beaten by the amlas of a zamindar. The zamindar became even more coercive towards the kisans. Then, the Congress volunteers started to live in a camp and tried to mobilise the kisans and the workers. They organised a meeting which was attended by Nirapada Mukherjee and Nanadkumar Singh. Due to their efforts many changes were brought about and many unpopular amlas were removed from their jobs.<sup>63</sup>

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61. Ambastha op.cit., p.113.

62. Ambastha, op.cit., p.113

63. Ambastha, op.cit., p.114.

In Surajgarha thana kisan agitation started at Ghoshett and Manihpur. In this connection the leaders who visited these areas were Swami Sahjanand, Rambriksha Benipuri, Bisheswar Prasad Singh, Karyanand Sharma, and Sampurnanand (of Benaras).<sup>64</sup>

In Sheikhpura, Karyanand Sharma started the Kisan agitation. A kisan conference was held there. Dispute started on the bakasht land at Kusummadih and Kusumbha Ghat. After the conclusion of All India Kisan Sabha Conference at Gaya's Conference, Rasul and Indulal Yagnik accompanied Karyanand Sharma on his visit to these areas. In this area the disputes were put for consideration against the Government and Panchayats. At first Dr. Rajendra Prasad tried to persuade the Newab Saheb of Todighat! whom the kisans were fighting. Later Sri Krishna persuaded and he agreed. Babu Nemdhari Singh and Babu Shyama Prasad Singh were chosen as the panchs. About 1700 bighas of land were given to the kisans.<sup>65</sup>

In the same year kisan agitation started in Odbadiya, Akarpur, Jiyan, Dighe, Gagor, Maro etc. over the issues of bakasht lands and beth begari.

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64. Ambastha, op.cit., p.115.

65. Ambastha, op.cit., p.115.

In Mofassil Monghyr thana in Bindra diara the kisan movement dated back to 1931 when the disputes began over Khas Mahal land. Till 1930 under the law the cultivator, during the time of his land being under the water, had to pay 4 annas per bigha land tax to remain the owner of his land after the river's water evacuated his land. Later rules were changed as to lands under the water of the Ganges. It was decided that the raiyats would not have to pay the taxes and after the removal of water the settlement could be made afresh with any cultivator. This rule was not favourable for raiyats and they started protesting against it. They demanded that they should not be made to pay the tax (during the 'Gangashikasti') and even if made to pay the tax, it should not exceed 4 annas/bigha. Regarding this many meetings were held which were attended by Swami Sahjanand and Nand Kumar Singh. Kumar Kalika Singh also put this matter to the Legislative Council. When the Congress came to power, considering the protests of kisans, it decided that the kisans would pay only 1 anna/bigha to continue their claim over the lands. The kisan were satisfied.<sup>66</sup>

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66. Ambastha, op.cit., p.115.

Meanwhile, the difference between the Congress and the Kisan Sabha had developed at the provincial level. Its natural fall out was that the District Kisan Sabha tried to distance itself from the Congress. But, it was extremely difficult in Monghyr as the Kisan agitations had been actively supported by the Congress. In Barhaiya, however, the Kisan Sabha leader Karyanand Sharma led the kisans in such a way that, despite all efforts Congress leaders could not arrange an amicable settlement. <sup>67</sup>

The Kisan Sabha, under Congress Socialist Party and Marxian influence had become very critical of Congress leadership and some of their leaders dubbed the organization as 'zamindar Congress'. This was unjustified as the entire process of mobilization under Kisan Sabha had been done over the years with the assistance and direct involvement of the Congress, and, Kisan Sabha leaders even in 1938, one year after being banned by District Congress Committee, could not sever their links with Congress. This one could clearly see in their meetings. They could not be disrespectful to Congress stalwarts. In a Kisan Sabha meeting at Bariarpur Bari, Monghyr on 17 Nov. 1938, Ramnandan Missir, who was in chair, said that the Congress was fighting against the English and wanted to stop their loot. He also

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67. For details see Chapter IV.



said - "No Congress leader whether Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel or Dr. Rajendra Prasad were against the Kisan Sabha but some of the Congress workers did objectionable propaganda in the name of those leaders against the Kisan Sabha."<sup>68</sup> Swami Sahjanand also dealt with the Congress Kisan Sabha relationship. He refuted the charge that the Kisan Sabha weakened the Congress saying that 52 years before the Congress was nothing but a body of rajas, maharajas and the capitalists....the history of the Congress showed that there was always some difference of opinion amongst the Congressites but it never retarded the progress of the Congress, but it progressed more and more."<sup>69</sup>

This dilemma of Kisan Sabha leadership was quite natural. The Kisan Sabha had not developed as an autonomous body in Monghyr. At the local level the Kisan Sabha workers were Congress workers and vice versa. Any attempt to separate the support base was not possible. This was the reason why in Monghyr once District Congress Committee ceased to take interest in Kisan Sabha activities, the Sabha ceased to remain a

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68. Home (Political), 33/38 (C), B S A .

69. Ibid.

force. Even a charismatic leader like Swami Sahjanand, though respected, could not do anything about this.

In Monghyr the Kisan Sabha received very little response even among the kisans as they were not sufficiently interested to respond to the call for a rally<sup>70</sup>. However the activities of communists and Forward Blockists affected a section of students.<sup>71</sup> The Searchlight wrote - 'Even the kisans failed Swami Sahjanand at this hour of trial. The left wing is in confusion. Jai Prakash Narayan is unable to distance himself from his close associates of Congress and Swami Sahjanand cannot produce any lasting impression on the kisans. The extreme socialists and communists are only talking of starting the fight on their own.' This division among the leftists must have had affected their activities,. But with some leftists stalwarts~~the~~ Kisan Sabha organised a District Kisan Conference on 3 and 4 Feb. 1940 in which the chief speakers were S.C. Bose, Bharadwaj of the United Provinces, Rahul Sankrityayan and Swami Sahjanand.<sup>72</sup> The presence on the platform of this Conference of some communists was resented by the main body of kisan workers who suspected

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70. FR, Jan II, 1940, B S A.

71. See Appendix II.

72. FR, Feb, I. 1940, B S A.

them of a desire to capture the organization.<sup>73</sup> Speeches and resolutions followed the usual line of 'exaggerating' kisan troubles and giving a 'distorted version' of the international situation.<sup>74</sup>

In May a Kisan council meeting was held at Lakhisarai which decided to carry on a secret campaign of anti-war propaganda and no rent campaign. Karyanand Sharma undertook to stimulate labour agitation in Jamalpur and to bring about a strike in the East Indian Railway Workshops. He was arrested and sent to jail for taking out a procession without license.<sup>75</sup>

The agrarian issues ceased to be in the forefront by May '40 completely. At a meeting held in Lakhisarai Karyanand Sharma discussed future plans with local kisans workers and decided to intensify anti-war propaganda.<sup>76</sup> Since then he made a strenuous effort to revive Kisan Sabha actively in the form of secret anti-war propaganda and distribution of leaflets.<sup>77</sup> A search of the Kisan

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73. Ibid.

74. FR May II, 1940, B S A.

75. FR May II, 1940, B S A.

76. FR August II, 1940, B S A.

77. FR September I, 1940, B S A.

Ashram at Lakhisarai on 2 October '40 led to the recovery of anti-war and communist leaflets and the arrest of five persons. <sup>78</sup>

Apart from kisan agitations discussed here there was one agitation which should be discussed in some details as this agitation has not drawn the attention of any researcher as yet.

In 1937 a kisan movement started in the Zamindari of Kashi Prasad Tewari.<sup>79</sup> over the settlement of 200-250 bighas of land.<sup>80</sup> These lands were under the cultivation of Goala kisans. Kashi Prasad Tewari wanted to give these lands to the kisans with an agreement of a one year tenancy. It was a practice that if the zamindar felt the need of taking back land from the cultivator he could do so, though not always without resistance. The kisans did not accept these terms of the zamindars and so the dispute began.

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78. FR. October 1, 1940, B S A.

79. Tewari was in fact a Jagirdar. The land was under the raj Banaili estate (Some court papers in possession of S.C.Mishra, Chanka, Purnea; Sahjanand's artical 'Lagar Ke Kiaano Ki Bheeshan Larai' in Janta, 10 Aug. 1939).

80. According to Sahjanand it was over 150 bighas of land (Janta, op.cit).

In Lagar area which was in Gogri thana, there were two to three hundred houses of whom 200 were of godias (Yadav). As a class they (the yadav of Gogri thana) were said to be less litigious than Babhans but no less fond of a fight.<sup>81</sup>

This struggle of Yadav kisans with the zamindar Kashi Prasad began in Jan.1939. In fact, before that 'pantrebazi' was on from both sides.<sup>82</sup>

When the kisans showed unwillingness, the zamindar tried to get his lands evacuated by force and by the assistance of the police twice once in April and then in November 1938. The Zamindar's men took coercive measures.<sup>83</sup> Initially the local thana Congress committee was reluctant to take the issue as the leaders like S.C.Mishra had very close relations with the zamindar.<sup>84</sup> S.C.Mishra wanted to get the issue settled by mutual

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81. L.SSO Malley, Gazetteer of Monghyr, p. 62.

82. S.C. Mishra's Statement after being arrested in connection with Lagar Satyagraha, Janta - 6 July 1939.

83. For details see the letters published in Janta in its August issues.

84. S.C.Mishra's statement (Janta, 6 July 1939); S.N. Shastri' Interview; G.P. Ambastha, op.cit.

agreement. He took initiative and in response Tiwari agreed. Consequently, some 'panchs' were chosen who decided that those lands which were taken by Tiwari in April and went without claim from kisans side should go to the zamindar and the land taken in November should be returned to the kisans. By this agreement the land in dispute was divided almost equally between the zamindar and the kisans. This decision was initially accepted by both sides, but the zamindar later changed his mind and decided to take the assistance of the police and the law.<sup>85</sup>

S.C. Mishra started the Lagar Satyagraha and his involvement meant that the entire thana Congress organisation was in favour of Satyagraha.<sup>86</sup> On 22 June the Yadav kisans reached to fields to sow the seeds. The police sub-inspector came with lathials<sup>87</sup> and prevented it. S.C.Mishra, Vinay Kumar, Lakhania Mishra and seven others were arrested by the police after this incident.<sup>88</sup> Again, on 24 June when zamindar's men tried to cultivate the disputed lands, forty satyagrhis (half of them were women) went there to prevent it. According to an eye

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85. S.C.Mishra's statement,<sup>op.cit.</sup> Interview with him.

86. Janta 6 July 1939. (Editorial).

87. Janta, 29 June 1939.

88. Ibid.

witness account, published in Janata, the police started beating the satyagrahis including women. This process continued from morning till around noon. Again in the afternoon when Tiwari's men tried to cultivate ~~the lands~~ the satyagrahis reached there. Again the beatings of these satyagrahis began. This time the policemen were even more ruthless in beatings.<sup>89</sup> Again on the next day one batch of satyagrahis went to the fields. This time the number of women was 28. The women lay town on the fields. On that day a lathial took away a 'nath' (an ornament) of a young girl and fled.<sup>90</sup>

The news of Lagar Satyagraha were published in detail in the Janata's issue of 2, 25 June and 27 July but the authorities did not take sufficient measures to save the satyagrahis. Instead, all possible measures were taken to threaten kisans.<sup>91</sup>

At that time the District Congress Committee appointed a kisan committee consisting of Nand Kumar Singh, Baldev Prasad Singh, Shyama Prasad Singh, Munshi Lal Verma and

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89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. Janta, 10 Aug. 1939 .

Jangbhadur Prasad. As the approval of the district congress committee had not been taken before launching Satyagraha differences of opinion came up. District Congress Committee appointed Kumar Kalika Prasad Singh to enquire into the problem. On his report the District Congress Committee instructed Gogri thana Congress committee to end the Satyagraha. To solve the dispute between the zamindars and the tenants Sayyid Rafiddin Ahmed Rizvi was appointed the 'panch'. (judge/mediator)<sup>92</sup>

During the course of this Lagar Movement the Kisans did not always adhere to nonviolent means. According to a case filed by one Anugrah Lal Thakur, a karpandar of Tiwari during the winter of '39 Sukhai Mahton, Mahabir Mahton, Bhagwan Mahton, Ghottam Mahton and Khantar Mahton and Madan Mahton and others came in a mob of 70 to 80 persons to take forcible possession of crop of 22 bigha kalai and 11 bighas of sugarcane. A complain was lodged of apprehension of breach of peace and there was a police enquiry and notices were sent under section 144.<sup>93</sup> Even after this in the sixteen bighas of lands in which sugarcane were being sown a mob of 100 kisans (in the month of Feb.) came and obstructed the sowing.

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92. Ambasta, op.cit, p.116.

93. Ibid.



The mob was armed with lathi, bhala and pharsa. Before the Police could come pea crops of thirty six bighas of lands had been looted by the kisans. However, seeing the police the mob fled away leaving sixty four bundles of the crops.<sup>94</sup>

On the next day the bullock cart of Tewariji was attacked and a mob of goalas collected to loot away the bundles. From the Eart Surafal Misra and Chhotu Singh, peon of Tewari were assaulted.<sup>95</sup>

If we take this sketchy account with the propoganda of the Kisan Sabha in the press the political and platform we find that the Kisan Sabha tried to make use of this movement by linking it with other movements of the area that they considered led by Kisan Sabha workers. It would be historically incorrect to accept this claim. Swami Sahjanand gave undue retrospective credit to the Kisan Sabha for leading this movement in its early phase.<sup>96</sup> In fact, the goala kisans who started the movement had nothing to do with Kisan Sabha. Even when the movement became very well known the Sabha was not able to take the

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94. Court papers in possession of S.C. Mishra.

95. Ibid.

96. Janta, 10 Aug. 1939.

leadership of the movement. The leadership ultimately went to S.C. Mishra, who, according to Janata's editorial, himself had been critical of the Kisan Sabha and its activities.<sup>97</sup>

It can be noticed that in Janata a deliberate attempt was made to highlight any dispute between zamindar and kisans to suggest that the kisans were fighting ultimately against zamindars in Monghyr district.<sup>98</sup>

However, the fact is that though S C Mishra was a leader of this kisan struggle he was never formally a member of the Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha.

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97. Janta 6 July, 1939.

Even when S.C. Mishra criticised Congress' attitude to Kisan's problems at a great risk of his political career he never mentioned the name of Kisan Sabha in his locally famous speech of Nayagoan (S.K. Mishra, his younger brother and an eye witness, Interview).

98 See Janta 20 April, 11 May, 15 May, 8 June, 1939.

CHAPTER IV  
THE BARHAIYA TAL AGITATION (1936-'39)

Many scholars have tried to show that the Barhaiya Tal agitation showed the limitation of Congress programme for agrarian reforms, its inability to launch anti-zamindari struggle because of the leader's links with zamindars and the change of the kisan's attitude towards the Congress as the kisans drew more towards the Kisan Sabha. On the basis of this agitation, it has been argued that the Kisan Sabha was successful in mobilizing the kisans in Monghyr apart from Gaya, Darbhanga, Patna and Muzzaffarpur districts.

A new look on the account of the Barhaiya Tal agitation can be useful because in the existing historiography of this agitation the official view has not been adequately used and the accounts are based on the Government reports of only the year of 1937 and 1938, the reports of Kisan Bulletin and Janta. These accounts, at best, try to tell the story from the Kisan Sabha point of view.

In the account given in this chapter multiple sources are rarely used. It is based primarily on Government records, mostly from three files and newspaper reports. I am aware that a point of view is contained in the

narration of events in these records. I am also aware that internal evidence is not enough by itself, but I find it useful as it gives the picture from a different angle and thus enriches our understanding of the Barhaiya Tal agitation.

The wide expanse of land to the west of the main line of the East Indian Railway near Barhaiya Railway station was known as Barhaiya Tal which was spread over an area of about one hundred square miles.<sup>1</sup> There were about a dozen villages in the Tal besides Kusumbha. Kusumbha was situated on the extreme border of the Tal under the jurisdiction of Sheikhpura.<sup>2</sup> The Tal was a treeless tract and practically no rice was grown in this area but due to great productivity caused by fluvial action and silt bumper Rabi crops were obtained in the cold weather yielding perhaps the richest rabi crop in the country with little effort not extending beyond scattering the seeds and the reaping of the crops.<sup>3</sup> Dhanuks and Dharis formed the majority in the villages while in some there were other castes such as Kahars, Kurmis and Banias.<sup>4</sup> Most of

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1. Home Dept. Political (Special) 29/39, p.1 (BSA)
  2. Ibid
  3. Home Dept. Political (Special) 29 (VII)/39 p-149 (BSA);  
The Statesman, 19 June 1939.
  4. Home Dept. Political (Sp.) 29(VII)/39 p-150.

the lands were under the zamindari of about a hundred zamindars of Barhaiya. Except for four or five zamindars others were cultivators.<sup>5</sup> As the names of the important landlords of the area suggest most of them were Bhumihars.<sup>6</sup>

In almost all the villages of the Tal the lands were raiya. After the settlement operations many raiyats were deprived of a good portion of their lands. There were two principal reasons for this. Firstly, the raiyats did not pay the rent of the lands and so their lands were sold in auction and, secondly, some zamindars and mahajans got their lands sold in money decree. But till the commencement of the year 1936 the zamindars used to give some portion of their bakasht lands to the raiyats for cultivation. In lieu thereof the raiyats had to plough and sow their bakasht lands.<sup>7</sup>

Politically this area had been a traditional stronghold of the Congress. During the Civil Disobedience Movement it was one of the most affected areas of Monghyr. Rajendra Prasad had written—"We (the Congressmen) have always looked upon the village (Barhaiya) as a Congress

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5 Home Dept. Pol (Sp) 29/39, p.2.

6. See Rakesh Gupta, Bihar Peasantry and the Kisan Sabha, p.195-96.

7. Home Dept.Pol(Sp.)29/39, p - 2.

stronghold and the Government was unable to break its spirit in spite of severe repression."<sup>8</sup>

The agitation against the zamindars of this area dates back at least to 1927 when Karyanand Sharma (then a staunch Gandhian) organised a struggle of the tenants at Chanan against arbitrary extortions by the zamindars. This was particularly directed against the oppressive zamindars of Gidhaur Raj and Kaira estate. The local Congress leaders supported him. The zamindars had to bow down.<sup>9</sup> In 1935 when he was elected Secretary of the District Kisan Sabha he once again started leading the peasants against the zaminders. The Congress leaders of the district actively helped him in his efforts. Sri Krishna Sinha took interest in kisan's problems of this area and attended many meetings.<sup>10</sup>

The famous Barhaiya Tal bakasht struggle began in mid 1936. It began "humbly" with an attempt perhaps in pursuance of the Congress resolutions on "Mass contact" at rousing the consciousness of the kisans.<sup>11</sup> This Congress connection of the movement was underlined by the official

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8. Rajendra Prasad's letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 10 March 1937. (Valmiki Chaudhuri ed - Selected Correspondence of Rajendra Prasad Vo.I.

9. Arvind Narayan Das, Agrarian Movements in Twentieth Century Bihar, p.63.

10. Ibid., p. 64; 26 September 1935, Fortnightly Report, Bhagalpur Division (BSA).

11. The Statesman, 19 June 1939.

records also which considered Karyanand Sharma a 'Congress-cum-kisan worker'.<sup>12</sup> Karyanand Sharma initially started lecturing against begari (ie. enforced labour), non grant of zamindari receipts and the like "illegal" privilage enjoyed by the zamindars.<sup>13</sup> He succeeded in gaining a hold over a large number of men. "His lectures produced some ferment amongst the tenants of tthe Tal area."<sup>14</sup>

Karyanand Sharma's few month's lecture tour drew the attention of Sri Krishna Sinha (then District Congress President) and he, accompanied by Nand Kumar Singh (Secretary, District Congress Committee) visited the Tal in the winter of 1936-37 and enquired into the troubles and grievances of the tenants, came into touch with zamindars and collected information from them. He paid another visit and brought about rapproachment between the zamindars and the tenants in the presence of Karyanand Sharma.<sup>15</sup> The compromise, however, could not last long.

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12. Barhaiya Tal agitation (1936-1939) by R R Ghosh, SDOC, 1 June 1939. Home Dept. Fol.(Sp.)29(VII)/39, BSA.

13. The Statesman, 19 June 1939.

14. Report of R.R.Ghosh, op.cit., p.151.

15. The Statesman, 19 June 1939; R.R. Ghosh's report op.cit., p.151.

Shortly after the compromise during the harvesting season of 1936, several incidents of uprooting of crops by tenants in zamindari bakasht lands occurred in some villages in Sheikhpura thana and Kamarpur.<sup>16</sup> The main cause for the failure of the rapprochement was the agitational leadership of Karyanand Sharma. The SDO's report recorded Karyanand Sharma allowed the feeling between the parties to deteriorate'.<sup>17</sup> On 27 and 28 February 1937 the district kisan conference met which provided " a ready platform for the kisans who had... been fed on doctrines like "collective farming" and the "Godgifted right of tenants over land and as an exact corollary to a man's right to free air, light and water".<sup>18</sup> Karyanand Sharma, in the meeting, instead of condemning the acts of the kisans, made a violent speech instigating them to 'sit over the chest of zamindars' and to take forcible possession of their bakasht lands. Swami Sahjanand, who had heard stories of kisans uprooting the crops delivered a mild speech and while not openly denouncing the acts of kisans expressed sympathy with the aggrieved zamindars. The kisans did not like his speech. They took their lesson from the fiery speech of Karyanand Sharma and while returning home from the

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16. R.R. Ghosh, op.cit., p.151.

17. R.R.Ghosh, Ibid.

18. The Statesman, 19 June 1939.



conference, uprooted crops from some zamindar's fields which fell in the way.<sup>19</sup> By this time the Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha had not openly supported these kind of reactions of the kisans which is the main reason behind this difference of approaches between Swami sahjanand and Karyanand Sharma.<sup>20</sup> Some other villages of this area also witnessed looting of crops by the kisans On 1 March 1937, the crops of the zamindars of the village Gogar and Dhadharia were looted. On 2 March, and after this the crops of zamindars of some villages were also looted. The landlores went to the court with the result that sixty to seventy kisans including Karyanand Sharma were arrested.<sup>21</sup>

This agitation was to a considerable extent carried on by the Congressmen themselves.<sup>22</sup> In fact, it was a logical sequence to the bigger Congress movement being carried on these days days.<sup>23</sup> Till the looting of crops began Congressmen were supporting the kisan's agitation, so these developments in the Tal however was not viewed with equanimity by the traditional Congress leadership.

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19. R.R. Ghosh's report, op.cit., p-151.

20. In the fact Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha never took the movement in its control. It was led individually by Karyanand Sharma and others. (Swami Sahjanand, Mera Jeevan Sangharsh, p.316).

21. Home Dept. Fol. (Sp) 29/39.,p-3.)

22. The Statesman, 19 June 1939.

23. Ibid.

In the political conference held at Jamui with Mrs. Sarojini Naidu in the chair on 14 and 16 March 1937, they condemned the acts of the kisans and a committee consisting of Nand Kumar Singh, Shyama Prasad Singh and Mahanth Siaram Das was formed to enquire into these acts. They gave their report to Rajendra Prasad who asked Sri Krishna Sinha to deal with it. We get some idea of the content of the report in the letter of Rajendra Prasad, written after getting this report, to Nehru. He wrote-"The difficulty that faces us in this is that.... it may be that in some cases the bakasht land would have been acquired by selling out of tenants arrear of rent but there are also cases in which what is recorded as bakasht has always been in possession of the landlord for generations or has been acquired or purchased by him from other landlord. No tenant has ever had anything to do with it. The loot of the crop (by kisans) is indiscriminate and takes place in the land of any or every landlord whether he is oppressive or otherwise and whether the land was cultivated by tenants or not...while Congressmen sympathise with the trouble of the tenants...and like to help them, they find it difficult to justify and support this loot of crop."<sup>24</sup>

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24. Valmiki Chaudhuri, op.cit.

Rajendra Prasad came to Barhaiya on 2 or 3 April '37 and after long discussions with the kisans and the zamindars gave his famous award which is known as 'Rajendra Babu's Award'. It laid down that the zamindars must settle at least that much area of their bakasht land with the Tal tenants which they used to settle with them before the agitation of 1936. Both parties accepted this award.<sup>25</sup> K.B. Sahay's note however maintains that some people from both sides did not accept the award.<sup>26</sup> Some kisans and Karyanand Sharma who were arrested were released. The responsibility of translating the Award into action was given to a committee consisting of Sri Krishna Sinha and three other members.<sup>27</sup>

In 1937 at the time of sowing some raiyats complained that the zamindars did not settle their bakasht lands with the raiyats according to the list. Rajendra Prasad asked Nandkumar Singh to enquire into the complaint who found three or four zamindars guilty.<sup>28</sup> Then, Sri Krishna Sinha himself went to Barhaiya and got the complaint

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25. R.R. Ghosh, op.cit., p.152.

26. Draft press note by K.B. Sahay (Home Dept. Political (Sp.)29/39 BSA) p-4.

27. Home Dep. Pol.Sp. 29/39.p.4.

28. G.P.Sharma says that this number must to higher (than three or four) but he does not mention the source of his information. see G.P.Sharma, Congress. Peasant Movement and Agrarian Legislation in Bihar, 1937-39.

redressed.<sup>29</sup> After this, except for the usual harvesting disputes, there was no serious trouble during the harvesting season of 1937-38<sup>30</sup>

In the middle of 1938, the District Congress Committee elections were to be held. Karynanand Sharma was a candidate for the post of secretary. For winning he needed the backing of the Congress members, so in the months preceeding the election the tone of speeches of the Kisan Sabha leaders were milder and they stressed that this movement was a part of the Congress.<sup>31</sup> But he lost the election against Nand Kumar Singh which marked a change in the course of the Barhaiya Tal agitation. Hereafter Karynanand Sharma and other Kisan Sabha leaders turned more militant. Thus the defeat in the election for the post of secretary of District Congress Committee made kisan leaders more militant in their approach at Barhaiya.

Karynanand Sharma distributed notices in villages of Barhaiya mazdoors who were asked not to work in the Tal land. In addition to it, he raised scores of red shirt volunteers from amongst the kisans and trained them in

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29. Home Dept. Pol. Sp. 29/39 p. 4.

30. R.R. Ghosh, op. cit., p. 153.

31. Fortnightly Report (hereafter FR), March II, 1938, BSA.

drills with lathis to start Satyagrah in the Tal area from the commencement of sowing season of 1939.<sup>32</sup>

In October 1939, following violent speeches delivered by Karyanand Sharma and Swami Sahjanand at Kusumbha Tal and other places, Satyagraha was started by men, women and children in ten villages. Due to it 'the zamindars were not allowed to plough their bskasht lands and minor clashes occurred as some lands were forcibly cultivated by the tenants'.<sup>33</sup> Karyanand Sharma issued an alarmist report of extensive violent attacks by the zamindars upon the kisans.<sup>34</sup> According to a Government report these were greatly exaggerated. It commented, 'it is evident that Karyanand Sharma is not anxious for a settlement and is trying to start a similar Satyagraha in the neighbourhood.'<sup>35</sup> The SDO's report says 'for the sake of propaganda every effort was made by Karyanand Sharma to advertise this Satyagraha and to magnify the minor injuries received by the kisans both in the press and on the platform.'<sup>36</sup>

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32. R.R.Ghosh, op.cit., p.154.

33. Ibid., p.154.

34. F.R., October II, 1938. (BSA).

35. Ibid.

36. R.R.Ghosh, op.cit., p.154.

By now the Kisan Sabha activists were not eager to avoid confrontation with the zamindars. Sometimes they provoked the zamindars. In November 1938 a kisan conference was to be held at Lakhisarai. 'In their way to the conference about hundred kisans under the leadership of Panchanan Sharma were brutally beaten.<sup>37</sup>' It has widely advertised as an example of zamindar's brutality. But we should also consider how it took place. On 18 November 1938, Panchanan Sharma took out a procession of a hundred red shirt volunteers from Indupur and instead of going to Lakhisarai proceeded towards Barhaiya. Indupur was a village between Barhaiya and Lakhisarai and for going to Lakhisarai it was not necessary to go to Barhaiya because Lakhisarai was to the south of Indurpur and Barhaiya to the north. When the procession reached the temple of Radhamohan Singh, a zamindar, the zamindar's men began to assault Panchanan Sharma and other volunteers of the procession with the result that the procession was dispersed and volunteers fled. Panchanan Sharma again collected the volunteers in the morning and made preparation for taking out a procession for the second time. Their procession reached the place where it was dispersed before. Apprehending breach of peace, the sub-inspector of Police advised Panchanan Sharma to take

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37. Swami Sahjanand, op.cit., p-315.



procession as he had not sufficient police force, and secondly, the way to Lakhisarai was in the opposite direction. Instead of returning Panchanan Sharma and his volunteers joined the road leading to the house of zamindars. They had hardly gone a few steps when the zamindars' men attacked the procession. They first threw brickbats on the procession and then attacked the procession and many kisans were injured including Panchanan Sharma. With great difficulty and help of a Congressman Panchanan Sharma went to the hospital in the evening and showed his injury and then he proceeded towards Lakhisarai.<sup>38</sup>

Why Panchanan Sharma brought the procession at that juncture from that route is indicative of his intentions. Government report recorded, 'the Lakhisarai procession was to provoke the zamindars of Bahaiya by uttering slogans against them.'<sup>39</sup> Commenting on the Tal dispute in general and this incident in particular the Fortnightly Report recorded, 'the Congress organisation have tried their best to secure an amicable settlement of the disputes but progress is difficult ... the negotiations have received a setback due to this clash (of 19 November) between the

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38. Home Dept. Pol. Special, 29/39. pp. 5-6.

39. Ibid, p-6.

zamindars and a Kisan Sabha procession which was taken out without a licence of orders .... Provocative slogans shouted by the processionists caused the attack by the zamindar's party.<sup>40</sup> It should also be noted that when cases had been instituted the police did not get any help from the Kisan workers in the prosecution of the case by the way of evidence.<sup>41</sup> Despite these developments the Kisan Sabha leaders were not successful in its bid to convince the kisan not to cultivate the lands of zamindars and almost all the lands in the Tal were cultivated.<sup>42</sup>

On 31 December 1938 there was a big meeting of the kisans under the presidentship of Keshwar Prasad, a kisan worker. It was attended by fifteen hundred men and one hundred women. In a speech, Karyanand Sharma told the kisans that the conditions of the kisans of Barhaiya Tal was similar to that of the kisans of France and Russia where the kisans obtained their object by revolution. In his rhetoric here and elsewhere around this time Karyanand Sharma was very ambitious. As to his intentions a Government report says that "his dream was to make Barhaiya Tal the epic centre of agrarian revolution in the province."<sup>43</sup>

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40. F R, Noember II, 1938, (BSA).

41. Home Dept. Pol. Sp. 29/39 p-6.

42. R.R.Ghosh, op.cit., p.154.

43. Home Dept.Pol.special,291/1939, cited by K.K.Sharma, Agrarian Movements and Congress Politics in Bihar,p-153.



The situation of the Barhaiya Tal grew worse from January 1939. Several complaints were filed in the court by the zamindars to the effect that the kisans were destroying their standing crops. The District Magistrate of Monghyr convened a conference of the representatives of the kisans and the zamindars in order to settle the Barhaiya Tal disputes. On 20 and 21 January, 1939 an Arbitration Committee consisting of five men was formed in which the zamindars and the kisans had one representative each. This committee was fully empowered to settle the disputes. The members of the Committee were Nand Kumar Singh, Shyama Prasad Singh, Dwarka Prasad Singh, Bacha Babu and Chunkeshwar Das. The first named three persons were the representatives of the Congress and Bacha Babu and Chunkeshwar Das represented the zamindars and the kisans respectively.<sup>44</sup>

This was a concrete step towards settlement of the disputes. The presence of three Congressmen in the Committee along with the kisan member could have arrived at a settlement which could have been acceptable to both the disputing sides. Also this, settlement would have had the Government authorities' backing behind it. But as the account would suggest the kisan leaders had different

44. R.R.Ghosh's, report, op.cit., p.155.

objectives in their minds. As to this a newspaper had commented - "To the kisan leaders settlement of the agrarian disputes by negotiation and 'awards' meant strategic (sic) defeat."<sup>45</sup>

The members of the committee with the Sadar Subdivisional Officer, a Sub-Deputy Magistrate and necessary staff reached at Pali village in the first week of February 1939. Karyanand Sharma had promised full cooperation with the Arbitration Committee. He had also assured the authorities on behalf of the tenants of a peaceful atmosphere during the sitting stage of the committees in the Tal area. But this was not a promise which he had made to keep. The SDO Report recorded, "From the very start the members of the committee sensed difficult atmosphere and witnessed curious sights of villagers in large numbers shouting cursing and yelling and rushing headlong to the bakas<sup>h</sup>t lands of the zamindars either to prevent the zamindars' men from harvesting the crops or to loot the crops themselves. Karyanand Sharma was there an idle spectator to all these incidents with no efforts on his part to create the promised peaceful atmosphere."<sup>46</sup> Then the Committee decided, to create a

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45. The Statesman, 19 June 1939.

46 R.R.Ghosh, report, op.cit., p.8.

peaceful atmosphere, entrust the work of harvesting and storing of bojhas (i.e. the bunch of crops) of all disputed lands with the sub-divisional Officer and his Police staff. But the work of the Committee remained at standstill as the kisans neither appeared to give evidence nor to say anything to any of the members of the committee. An "idle excuse" was put forward by Karyanand Sharma and the kisans representative (Chankeshwar Das) that as the kisans were busy in harvesting so they could not attend the Committee's camp.<sup>47</sup> To make the task more difficult for the Committee many "frivolous objections" were raised on the question of employment of the labourers by the zamindars during harvesting, mostly "with the sole objective of discrediting the arbitrators in the eyes of the kisans in case of rejection of such objections by them."<sup>48</sup>

In spite of all this the members of the Committee tried to record the evidence of the tenants but none appeared even from those areas where the harvesting was either completed or was nearing towards completion.<sup>49</sup> The reason for putting these hindrances against the

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47. Ibid, p-156. The quoted phrase was used by the report writer.

48. Ibid, p-156.

49. Ibid, p-157.

Arbitration Committee was that Karyanand Sharma had promised lands to all agitating kisans which was not possible in case of any settlement. The SDO wrote "Karyanand Sharma having promised land to all, was finding it impossible to have it fulfilled by any award of the Committee which was to arbitrate on the basis of Rajendra Prasad's Award." The dilemma of him was that he could not denounce the committee openly as he himself was a party to its formation. He devised a strategy and advised the kisans not to appear before the Committee individually. He also filed a "stereotyped petitions" making collective demand of sixty to hundred percent of the bakasht lands in possession of the landlords in each village for distribution to the kisans on per capita population basis.<sup>50</sup> In some villages the kisans claimed all the plots of land. According to the petitions out of thirteen thousand bighas of land the kisans had claimed about eight thousand and five hundred bighas of land.<sup>51</sup>

This clearly shows the intentions of Karyanand Sharma. The SDO wrote - 'it was an impossible demand for the committee to satisfy and Karyanand Sharma knew it well. He simply wanted to wriggle out of the situation by breaking up the Committee'.<sup>52</sup> In this connection the SDO

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50. Home Dept. Pol. Sp. 29/39 p-7.

51. Ibid, p-8.

52. R.R.Ghosh's report, op.cit., p-157.

in his separate report wrote, "I am firmly convinced that the tenants have been made absolutely a pawn in the game which is being played by Karyanand Sharma and that probably they themselves do not know if such exorbitant demand has been made on their behalf by him."<sup>53</sup> The Collector wrote to the Chief-Secretary to the Government of Bihar-" I am told that the basis of the claims put in so far has been to see that each individual in the Tal area - man, woman or child gets at least two bighas of land... The main reason why individual claims are not being put forward is that the kisans had a sad experience... when a tenant came forward with a claim for twenty bighas, but was unable to prove to the satisfaction of the Committee that he ever cultivated so much."<sup>54</sup> Another report suggests that Karyanand Sharma put some pressure on the kisans by threats also. It mentions, "Karyanand Sharma is now actively threatening the tenants through the village committees with social ostracism if

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53. 'A Brief Narration of the Day to Day Events at Barhaiya Tal (from 6 february to 11 february 1939)', (Home Dept. Pol. (Sp) 29 VII/39 p-48)BSA.)

54. The Collector's letter to the Chief Secretary, R.E.Russell, 11 February 1939 ((Home Dept. Pol. (Sp) 29 VII/39. p-23.)

they attempt to enter into individual compromise with the zamindars through our efforts."<sup>55</sup>

The kisan leaders had started speaking in many voices by the first week of February 1939. On the one hand Karyanand Sharma was requesting kisans not to uproot the crops, till the Committee give their verdict, on the other hand his close associates Nawal Kishor Dhawal and Anil Mitra denounced the Committee as 'a farce', called the zamindars, 'goondas' (i.e. the criminals) and advised the kisans to cut the crops.<sup>56</sup>

Speaking in different voices continued. Chunkeshwar Das, the kisan representative in the Arbitration Committee, agreed to settle the disputes of Gora lands according to Rajendra Babu Award and that the representation of the zamindars and the kisans should submit a list of the plots, which they wanted to claim, by 7 February 1939.<sup>57</sup> This was intended to avoid the kisans

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55. 'A Brief Narration of the Day to Day Events at Barhaiya Tal (from 6 february to 11 february 1939)', (Home Dept. Pol. (Sp) 29 VII/39 p-67).

56. Home Dept. Pol. (Sp) 29/39, p-11. In February the kisans uprooted crops in many villages.

57. Chunkeshwar Das created another "hitch" by insisting on the committee to take up first the disputes about Gora lands. (The letter of the Collector, Monghyr to the chief secretary, Government of Bihar, February 1939, Home Dept. Pol(Sp) 29(VII)/39 p-29.

being interviewed by the Committee which had given the kisan leaders some very embarrassing moments.<sup>58</sup> This was not in the Committee's agenda then, still they tried to give the kisan leaders no excuse and informed Nemdhari Singh and Nirapada Mukharjee whose presence was necessary for any settlement of Gora lands according to Rajendra Babu Award to , come to Barhaiya. But the kisan leaders had different ideas and they "created a curious situation".<sup>59</sup>

The villagers of Mehamchak, Kothwa and Fadarpur had - non-cooperated with the authorities. They had neither pointed out the lands which they had claimed nor had taken part in the harvesting of the crops in their own villages. These villagers were utilised by Karyanand Sharma to offer satyagrah round the Committee and the SDO's Officer's camp.<sup>60</sup> On 16 February 1939 about five to six hundred

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58. In the interviews the kisans could not substantiate what they claimed. To it the kisan leaders said that they did not understand what the committee members said and they were too scared to say the truth. This could not be the case as the members include Nand Kumar Singh and Shyama Prasad Singh, well acquainted with local dialect. The committee was even prepared to concede that the tenants should be cross examined only by Chunkeshwar Das, but Chunkeshwar Das claimed that there should be no cross-examination of all and that whatever the tenant claimed was to be accepted as correct without cross examination. See the Collectors letter op. cit p-29.

59. R.R.Ghosh's report, op.cit., p-157.

60. Ibid, p. 158.

men, women and children with about hundred cattle and a number of goats came in a body and surrounded the camp. In the afternoon, Karyanand Sharma delivered a violent speech denouncing the Committee and the local authorities and demanded food for these people and fodder for their cattle. The SDO and his staff and the members of the Committee were practically kept confined in the tents.<sup>61</sup>

In the morning of 17 February Karyanand Sharma demanded fodder for the cattle. The Subdivisional Officer said that the Satyagraha should first return to their villages before any arrangement could be made for fodder.<sup>62</sup> Then Karyanand Sharma ordered the volunteers to uproot the green grams from a zamindar's field. Seventy to eighty volunteers and other kisans then crossed the river and started uprooting the crops. Ramashray Prasad Singh, a zamindar of Barhaiya, with some ten lathials rushed out from the zamindar's camp and took position between the bank of the river and the field where the crop was being uprooted. The kisans did not dare to advance inspite of the repeated words of encouragement from Karyanand Sharma and his lieutenants. 'In the meantime about fifteen

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61. Ibid, p.158.

62. Ibid, p.158.



hundred kisans had collected on the bank of the river. Some had lathis in their hands. Karyanand Sharma then attempted to cross the river on a boat but under the Subdivisional Officer's orders constables, did not allow him to cross the river. He then started admonishing his volunteers for their cowardice and after a while again tried to cross the river. This again failed and he was saved from serious consequences at the hands of the zamindars' lathials who had even rushed into the water to attack him. The SDO then brought Karyanand Sharma to his camp and induced him to send back the satyagrahis to their villages but he gave evasive replies and offered no constructive suggestion.<sup>63</sup>

In the afternoon of 17 February 1939 one of the zamindars of Barhaiya, wanted to address a few people of his party under the tree where some of the satyagrahis were present. This was noticed by the SDO and he brought Karyanand Sharma to his camp to avoid any unpleasant incident developing between him and the zamindars. A few minutes after this the Subdivisional Officer noticed a scuffle under the tree between the zamindar's men and one of the lieutenants of Karyanand Sharma. Leaving Karyanand Sharma in his camp the Subdivisional Officer rushed to the

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63. Ibid, p-159.

scene and tried to separate the fighters. Just then small clods of earth were showered by some one from the side of the kisans and this was enough for the zamindars' lathials, who were sitting with lathis here and there, to rush at the satyagrahis. With about eight constables and some peons the Subdivisional Officer tried his level best to snatch away the lathis from the hands of the lathials. The kisans of Pali and the satyagrahis started throwing clods of earth and some of these struck the Sub-Divisional Officer and the Kanungo and others in the camp. The situation became critical but the Subdivisional Officer and his small force threw themselves headlong between the two infuriated mobs. About two thousand kisans on one side were against fifty lathials, subsequently increased to about eighty on account of the landing of a boat load of lathials near the scene of occurrence. The lathials were trying their level best to rush into the village but they were pervented from gettting inside the village where many of the kisan were armed with sticks and bamboo-poles by the Police force. Frustrated in their attempt to rush into the village the lathials chased away the cattle of the satyagrahis to the other side of the river, broke their pots and threw some of their belongings into the river before retiring to the other side. It was an act of retaliation by the zamindars' lathials to the uprooting and looting of crops by the satyagrahis in the morning.

The Sub-Deputy Magistrate had all this time stood on guard for Karyanand Sharma and one of his lieutenants Jagdip Singh and had thus saved them from the hands of the lathials. After the dispersal of the lathials and the kisans the satyagrahis also melted away and most of them took refuge in village pali.<sup>64</sup>

A meeting of the kisans was held at Kusumbha Tal on 17 February 1939. Sahjanand, Karyanand Sharma and some other kisan leaders attended it. Here, in a "provocative speech" Karyanand said, "The Kisans of the Tal area had to suffer much and now the zamindars want to take shelter under Dr. Rajendra Prasad's Award. But I want to make it clear that Dr. Rajendra Prasad's Award was given at a critical time when there was no Congress Government in the province. The Tal agitation has taken root and has become very powerful today. The remedies suggested by Dr. Rajendra Prasad three years ago cannot be of any use now."<sup>65</sup>

This gives clues to understand what Karyanand actually thought. He had sensed that the agitation had gained ground and he could put pressure on the

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64. Ibid, p-159-160.

65. Home Dept. Fol(Sp) 29/39 p.14.

Government and the traditional Congressmen. It should be kept in mind that the Government and the Committee he was cursing were led by the Congressmen. He was an opportunist in taking advantage of the situation. He had at the same time promised to Cooperate with Arbitration Committee and incited the kisans by violent speeches and put every obstacle in the work of the Committee. He was preaching non-violence at one occasion and giving violent speeches inciting the kisans to loot the crops. Also, he did not condemn any of his associates like Anil Mitra and others who were openly supporting kisans taking violent means. Particularly objectionable was that the kisan leaders' propaganda was full of exaggeration and half truths. They had also changed their goals with time. one example can be the speeches of kisan leaders in the meeting at Batotare on 19 February 1939. Sahjanand said "In Monghyr the tenants of three villages have left their homes with their bags and baggages due to the oppressions of the zamindars.... the Congress Government has done nothing to remove their misery".<sup>66</sup> "He doubted very much the sincerity of Government and said that the satyagraha

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66. Notes on kisan meeting held on 19 February 1939, prepared by Second Officer, Home Dept. Pol. (Sp)., 29(VII)/39. p-95.

movement will continue till the tenants get the entire bakasht lands in the Tal area. He also said that Karyanand Sharma was their leader and they should obey him blindly."<sup>67</sup>

The kisan leader tried to keep the tempo of the agitation high towards the end of February 1939 and Nawal Kishore Dhawal, a Kisan Sabha leader led a march of hundred satyagrahis to Monghyr and blocked the gate of the Collector's residence on 3 March, 1939 in contravention of the assurance given by Karyanand Sharma on 2 March 1939.<sup>68</sup> This again showed that Karyanand Sharma did not care about his promises.

The kisans were induced to leave Monghyr by the Collector by assuring some relief to the kisans of some villages and he gave about Rs.eleven hundred to them.<sup>69</sup>

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67. Ibid, p-95,

68. On 2 march there had been a conference between the District Magistrate, Gokhale, Jay Prakash Narayan and Karyanand Sharma and it was decided that Karyanand Sharma would attend the committee on behalf of the kisans. Karyanand had promised every help to the Committee and said that there would be no interference on behalf of the kisans till the evidence was recorded by the committee. Karyanand Sharma had also given the assurance that the kisans would be sent back to their villages before reaching Monghyr. (Note of discussion with Jai Prakash Narayan and Karyanand Sharma on 2 March 1939, Prepared by E.K. Gokhale, the Collector, on 3 march 1939, Home Dept. Pol.(Sp) 29/(VII)/39. p-108-109.

69. Ibid. p-162.

On 4 March 1937 Krishna Ballabh Sahay, Parliamentary Secretary, visited Pali with the District Magistrate and advised both the parties to be peaceful and co-operate with the Arbitration Committee. Shortly after his departure Karyanand Sharma and some of the members of the Committee left Pali to attend the Tripuri session of the Congress. After their return from Tripuri Bacha Babu, the zamindar's representative, and Babu Chunkeshwar Das, the tenant's representative retired from the Committee on personal grounds and Babu Jagdish Prasad and Gabgasharan Singh took their places.<sup>70</sup>

The zamindars wanted the Committee to decide the matter immediately, according to Rajendra Babu award. But the Committee decided on 29 March that it would examine all the circumstances that existed prior to Dr. Rajendra Prasad's award. From 31 March to the 10 April the Committee took the evidence of several kisans and zamindars.<sup>71</sup> The evidence given by the tenants was not all helpful.<sup>72</sup> They repeated their "exaggerated demands" and did not disclose the actual area of land which they used to cultivate before 1936.<sup>73</sup> Karyanand Sharma never helped

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70. Ibid. p-162.

71. Home Dept. Pol (Sp) 29/39. p-15.

72. R.R. Ghosh's report, op.cit., p-162.

73. Ibid, p-162.

the committee either by any constructive suggestion or by supplying any list of tenants or the area of land cultivated by them before the agitation of 1936.<sup>74</sup> Commenting on his attitude S.D.O. wrote, "he was not at all anxious for a fair settlement through arbitration. On the other hand he started inciting the tenants of Rapur and to oppose the landlords at any cost and even sent a letter to the local authorities threatening intensive Satyagraha."<sup>75</sup>

In the meantime, it was decided in presence of K.B.Sahay on the 26 April '39 that the zamindars should be allowed to thrash the crops in Government Kalihan (i.e. the place of thrashing) . Karyanand Sharma agreed to it and the Officer were accordingly deputed to carry out thrashing of crops in each Khalihan.<sup>76</sup> Karyanand Sharma was, as earlier, not interested in a peaceful settlement and when thrashing of crops started, he sent an ultimatum to Sri Krishna Sinha, the Prime Minister of Bihar, and to the local authorities demanding that unless steps were taken to help the starving kisans of the Tal area he would led the kisans to Monghyr and by offering satyagraha stop all working of he court from 2 May 1939.<sup>77</sup>

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74. Ibid, p-163.

75. Ibid, p-163.

76. Ibid, p-163.

77. Ibid, p-163.

On 1 May was observed May Day. In that celebration large number of kisans of Barnaiya Tal and other places and the red shirt volunteers had assembled. As directed by Karyanand Sharma a batch of one hundred forty seven kisans under the leadership of Anil Mitra and Medni Prasad, got in the Gaya pasenger without ticket at Lakhisarai, for Monghyr.<sup>78</sup>

Their attempt was to flood the courts in the morning and to make the court work difficult with a view to compelling the Government to redress their grievances. As this was anticipated the fort gates were booked.<sup>79</sup> The Collector and the Superintendent of Police thought that Karyanand Sharma wanted to get his kisan follwoers arrested so that the agitation could be intensified. The authorities decided not to arrest the kisans.<sup>80</sup>

On 2 May 1939, the kisans attempted to force their way into the fort area through the northern and eastern gates but the cordon of the police posted there prevented them from going inside the fort.<sup>81</sup>

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78. Home Dept. Pol. (Sp) 29/39. p-16.

79. Home Dept. Pol. (Sp) 29/(V) p-3. (BSA) Also see p-16.

80. Ibid, p-5; also see p-16.

81. Report of the Superintendent of Police, Monghyr, 3 May 1939, Ibid p-18



The kisans then retired to the local Dharmshala. On 3 May 1939 there was again an attempt at the gates by the kisans under the Communist Kisan-Sub-leader Anil Mitra and Binod Mukherjee to rush inside the fort. They were pushed back by constables.<sup>82</sup> In the evening of 3 May 1939, Karyanand Sharma himself came with a batch of about hundred kisans including women and children.<sup>83</sup>

It was Karyanand's intention to march into the fort but he was informed by Anil Mitra that this was impossible. Then he decided to offer satyagraha in front of the gates.<sup>84</sup> The authorities waited till mid-day to see what Karyanand would do. At about 8 A.M. of 4 May he took out an unlicensed procession consisting of the kisans, his own wife and the kisan women and children. They moved throughout the town shouting slogans. They returned to the Dharamshala at about 9.30 A.M. and then Karyanand was arrested.<sup>85</sup>

In the afternoon of 3 May, Anil Mitra and others, had addressed a meeting in which they supported the revolutionary movement and the idea appeared to be that they were not sworn to the principles of non violence.<sup>86</sup>

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82. Ibid p-16.

83. Report of the Superintendent of Police, Monghyr, 3 May 1939, Ibid, p-18.

84. Ibid, p-18.

85. The Collector's letter to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar, 4 May 1939, Ibid, p-3.

It was suggested that if necessary, sabotage to the railway lines should be done, the telegraph and telephone lines cut and the Treasury to be raided.<sup>87</sup>

After the arrest of Karyanand Sharma, Anil Mitra took the leadership.<sup>88</sup> Anil Mitra with a group of seventy kisans including women obstructed the railway line at Monghyr in the morning of 5 May 1939 by laying themselves on the railway track near the level crossing. He was arrested and other kisans were removed in lorries and left near Sikandara, so that they might easily return home. Those kisans who were still coming in batches were stopped and induced to return home.<sup>89</sup>

Swami Sahjanand visited Monghyr and delivered a lecture. He took a conciliatory attitude, induced the tenants to return home and seek employment in the work which was proposed to be started by the local authorities in the Tal area. 'It seemed as if he was deprecating the action taken by Karyanand'.<sup>90</sup>

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86. The report the Superintendent of Police, 6 May 1939. Ibid, p-20.

87. Ibid p-20.

88. The Collector's letter to the Chief Secretary, 4 May 1939, Ibid, p-3. Anil Mitra was supported by Binod Bihari Mukherjee and "Lenin" (Sheo Shankar Sahay).

89. The letter of the Collector, Monghyr, to the Secretary, 8 May 1939, Ibid, p-38

90. Ibid, p-38

Later in the discussion with the Collector in a conciliatory note he raised a point that as the kisans do not have anything to eat during their return on the road to Barhaiya it would be advisable to provide them with some food.<sup>91</sup> The Collector refused to give money from Government funds.<sup>92</sup> Swami in his statement, has however, a different version. He wanted to give the agitators a sense of victory and attribute credit to Karyanand Sharma. he said, 'At first the kisans were not prepared to go back home leaving Karyanandji along with his colleagues in jail. But when I assured them that we would leave no stone unearned to get their revered leader in their midst in near future they accepted my advice and returned to their respective villages'.<sup>93</sup>

The members of the Committee after collecting further information from some of the zamindars and others and after full deliberation and consultation were also taken to arrange for the distribution of the crops according to this Award<sup>94</sup>. Steps were also taken to arrange for the distribution of the crops according to this Award.<sup>95</sup>

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91. Ibid, p-39.

92. Ibid, p-39.

93. The Searchlight, reproduced in Home Political(Sp) 29(V)/39, p-64.

94. R.R.Ghosh, op.cit., p-165.

95. Ibid, p-165.

The distribution of the crops could not be further delayed as the crops could be destroyed by the rain. The zamindars were also getting impatient. Swami Sahjanand and Karyanand Sharma agreed to have the distribution of crops finished quickly. Karyanand Sharma sent letters to Chunkeshwar Das and some other kisans to accept the crops distributed according to the Award peacefully.<sup>96</sup> A telegram was also sent by the SDO to the Magistrate stationed at Barhaiya to start distribution according to the award.<sup>97</sup>

There was not much difficulty in distribution of the crops once both the kisans and the zamindars agreed to the settlement on the basis of the Award. However, at one or two places, some kisans led by Jwala Prasad tried to put obstructions. The Magistrate however tackled the situation. By 24 May 1939 even the agitating kisan leaders realised their "mistake" of not accepting the Award.<sup>98</sup> The SDO in his report wrote "The kisans became disgusted with their subleaders and accused them for a wrong lead in the matter".<sup>99</sup>

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96. Ibid, p-165.

97. Ibid, p-165.

98. Ibid, p-166. By that time the local kisan leaders had received message from Karyanand Sharma to accept the Award.

99. Ibid, p-166.

By the Award eight hundred bighas of land were allotted to the kisans of eight villages.<sup>100</sup> An officials report acclaimed this settlement as "a great victory of the principles of arbitration" and repudiation of the communist principles of collective demand, which Karyanand Sharma was from the very beginning trying to introduce and to get accepted by the Committee<sup>101</sup>. It further added "The dream of Karyanand Sharma to make Barhaiya Tal the epic centre of agrarian revolution in the province has ben compeltely broken and the tenants are waking up to the realities."<sup>102</sup>

After the distribution of the eight hundred bighas of land to the kisans the agitation ended. The Kisan Sabha leaders however did not accept. In a meeting of the provincial Kisan Sabha held at Patna on 15 June Swami Sahjanand said that the Government was trying to crush Monghyr kisan movement by creating division amongst the kisan of the Tal and... (that) he had rejected the Award.<sup>103</sup> In the same meeting the Kisan Sabha deplored the tactics of "non-cooperation resorted to by the four

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100. Ibid. p-166.

101. Home Dept. Pol. (Sp) 291/1939, BSA, Cited by K.K. Sharma. Agrarian Movements and Congress Politics in Bihar, p-153.

102. K.K. Sharma. Op.cit., p-153.

103. Special Branch sub-inspector's report dated Monghyr 21 June 1939 (Home Dept. Pol Sp., 29 (VII)/39, p-170).

members of the Arbitration Board against Karyanand Sharma" and decried that under the circumstances it had nothing to do with the award of the four members of the Board.<sup>104</sup> But after settlement according to the Award the Kisan Sabha could never revive the bakasht agitation in this area.<sup>105</sup>

Before coming to conclusion, we should very briefly discuss what other scholars says about this agitation.

A.N.Das says "The most legendary peasant struggle in Bihar under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha was the bakasht movement in Barhaiya Tal which .... led to a great victory for the tenants".<sup>106</sup> The account of Rakesh Gupta who have used maximum archival sources related to this agitation writes in his conclusion, which is a summary of his understanding of the character of the agitation,- "in 1936 the memorialists had informed the Government that they would not perform "begari" for the zamindars., The 'raiyats' asserted their rights under the guidance of Karyanand Sharma. The 'zamindars' retaliated. For example

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104. The Searchlight, 18 June 1939.

105. The attempt made by Rakesh Gupta to link some village disputes over 60 bighas of 1946 with this agitation is hardly justified. See Rakesh Gupta, op. cit. 228-230.

106. A.N. Das. 'Peasant and Peasant Organisations' in A.N. Das, op.cit.,p.77

in Ulao estate at Lakhisarai the 'zamindars' let loose their amlas (agents) on the kisans. In 1937 they did not abide by the Prasad Award, which was given after the memorialists made a representation. In 1938 the zamindars indulged in widespread violence which led to broken heads and panic in the area. The agents of the zamindars did not spare women of the poor tenants. These women were subjected to violent assaults with spears and sticks and indignities. In 1938 a jatha of kisan workers going to attend the Monghyr District kisan Conference was violently attacked. This led to protest procession of the kisans. In 1939 their agents looted standing crops, attacked kisan travellers and harassed their women folk and killed many agricultural workers. The kisans retaliated by resorting to more active satyagraha. In face of zamindar's violence and repression the struggle was conducted on nonviolent lines"<sup>107</sup>. What is even more striking is his conclusion- "The struggle (Barhaiya Tal Struggle) was conducted on class lines in its ideology and consciousness, and strategy and tactics".<sup>108</sup> Two recent works, otherwise valuable, have also not done justice with this agitation's analysis. K.K.Sharma says that this struggle is significant for... their the Congressmen's

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107. Rakesh Gupta op. cit. p-231.

108. Ibid. p-233.

attitude towards the problem of the peasants, their lack of faith in their potentiality for sustained struggle against the tyrannical landlords, their pro-landlord leanings and their deep rooted anxiety to settle the mutually antagonistic and irreconcilable interests."<sup>109</sup> Vinita Damodaran says about the settlement in which eight hundred bighas were given to the kisans "Most of these cases were settled collectively and Karyanand Sharma's demand that collective bargaining should be followed was not accepted." Thus she concludes "In essence the Congress Award (sic) thus failed to meet the demands of large sections of the peasantry and this was well in line with the highly biased 'Compromise' tactics so much favoured by the Congress ministry and its local institutions".<sup>110</sup>

This kind of conclusion is based on the records in which the very important information have seemingly deliberately left out by Rakesh Gupta and A.N.Das. While Gupta extensively used the Government Records of 1938 he did not use the information contained in important files of 1939.<sup>111</sup> He used the source like Kisan Bulletin.

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109. K.K. Sharma, op cit, p-152-153.

110. Vinita Damodaran - Broken Promises p.128.

111. Here the file and compedium referred are Home Dept. pol. (Sp) 29(V)/39 BSA and 29(VIII)/39 (BSA). Gupta has used the SDO's report out he has left other important information contained in the compedium.



National Front, which represented the views of the prosocialist and Kisan Sabha forces. A.N.Das who concludes - the Barhaiya struggle symbolised the beginning of class action by different section of the peasants in different parts of Bihar,<sup>112</sup> banks heavily on interviews of "peasant activists who were interviewed in 1976."<sup>113</sup> One of the observation he makes on the basis of interview is "many Congressmen including Rajendra Prasad were drafted by the zamindars to silence Karyanand Sharma and when indirect Pressure did not succeed in this in 1938 Karyanand Sharma was arrested by the then Congress government. Slowly Karyanand too started recognising the real fces of Gandhians and Gandhism and became a socialist."<sup>114</sup> The account which has already been given in this chapter suggests something different. Some facts can be put which can hardly be disputed . Firstly, the bakasht struggle was started by the Congressmen in the leadership of "kisan cum Congress leader Karyanand Sharma. His efforts were noticed by Congress Leaders like Sri Krishna Sinha who took interest in the matter personally and tried to settle the issue amicably.The Barhaiya issue also reached the forum of the All India Congress Committee at Calcutta in October 1937<sup>115</sup>. Other leaders like Rajendra Prasad and

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112. A.N.Das, op.cit. , p-79.

113. Ibid,p.79.

115. The Statesmen, 19 June 1939.

Nand Kumar Singh went there, enquired into the situation and tried for a peaceful solution. Secondly, the change in the attitude of Karyanand Sharma came in 1938. This was the year he turned more militant in his approach. This was also the year he was defeated in the election for secretaryship in the district Congress body. There can be a link between these two. Thirdly, the Congress working groups at the local level were united with the kisans.<sup>116</sup> Fourthly, during the course of the agitation Karyanand Sharma tried to explain the principle of socialism in a crude way. He gave wild assurances to the kisans, played tricks to show himself the true champion of the kisan's cause and tried to avoid giving kisans true information.

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116. Rakesh Gupta, op.cit., p.226. Also see agrarian trouble, Policy in case U/S 145, 29/1939, which recorded "the district level Congress leaders participated in the Kisan procession and mass meeting in 1938...On 15 and 16 March 1939 Congress workers like...headed a jatha (a procession) with national flags and drums and moved through villages...they announced that they would boycott all those zamindars who hired labourers from outside to cut rabi crop - a demand made by Karyanand Sharma. On 16 March 1939 a jatha of kisans led by Congress leaders moved about the Surajgarh and shouted following slogans 'Mokarany zamin betai karo' and 'bhokh lagi hai roti do' cited by Rakesh Gupta, op.cit., p.226.

But as he had accepted that the Arbitration committee would settle the issue he found himself in problem. He wanted the agitation to continue as for him settlement of agrarian dispute by negotiation and award would have meant a strategic defeat. Once cornered in the Congress body by the traditional Congressmen he had found a solid political base as a kisan leader at Barhaiya. This political consideration became primary in the struggle which caused constant hindrances from kisan leaders in the process of a peaceful solution. There were many occasions when a peaceful and lasting solution could have been found but as the account of the struggle suggests the agitational leadership of the kisans was not interested. Karyanand Sharma either put impossible demands or tried to raise different issues. Fifthly, the Congress leadership was not anti-kisans. Led by kisan leader like Sri Krishna Sinha and Nand kumar Singh who were sympathetic to the kisan's grievances from early twenties and had highlighted them from their political platform for many years, all they wanted was a peaceful settlement at that time. They tried for it but once realised that Karyanand Sharma and other kisan leaders were trying to lead the movement on socialist' lines they stopped supporting this agitation. By 1939 when many Kisan Sabha meetings were organised

under the banner of CFI<sup>117</sup> one should not blame the Congressmen not to support the kisan agitation of Barhaiya under Karyanand Sharma.

Sixthly one can find that Karyanand Sharma and other kisan leaders can be blamed for intimidating speeches. Though they professed as the champions of non-violence they indirectly supported the use of violent methods by the kisans.

"If the (kisan) leader really professed non-violence they should not have made violent and intimidating speeches which directly incited the kisans."<sup>118</sup>

Moreover once the fight broke out they did not even bother to pacify their people; On the other hand they encouraged them.

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117. Home Dept. Pol. (Sp) 362/1939 p.26, cited by G.P. Sharma, op.cit.p.104.

118. Home Dept. Pol (sp)29(VII)/1939. cited by G.P.Sharma, op.cit., p.102.

"The illiterate kisans were swept by emotional tides which accounted for the many violent clashes.... Sometime fiery speeches of the leaders may have been wrongly interpreted by their followers." <sup>119</sup> We also find that in course of the Barhaiya Tal agitation Karayanand Sharma did not try much for a single voice of the agitating kisans. Particularly in the last stage of the agitation the agitating leaders spoke differently at different times. All this however could not go for a long time. Once kisans became aware of the realities they did not forward to rally behind Karayanand Sharma, who tried to revive the agitation in 1940. <sup>120</sup>

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119. Ibid.

120. Home Political (sp)121/1940. (BSA).

## CONCLUSION

The political mobilization in Monghyr began under the Indian National Congress in the twenties of this century. The activities of social reform movement leaders, the popularisation of the cult of militarism, the visits of the nationalist leaders were the main factors which prepared the ground for the spread of nationalism in this district. At least by the boycott movement days a section of intelligentsia in Monghyr both urban and rural had become influenced by nationalist ideas and had been drawn towards the Indian National Congress. The activities of these nationalists, however, remained confined to their respective localities. From the Non Cooperation days, more emphasis was given to the organisation of the Congress in different localities. After a lull in political activities between 1922-27 the Congress workers became very active again and their activities led to widening of the Congress influences.

By the early thirties the Congress had considerably spread its area of influence. Its mode of mobilization was such that it could get the support of a large section of the people. Alongside it, the most important contribution associated with the Congress was its role as an awakening force in society which channelised the energies of the

people and gave expression to the collective political will of the people. It also gave expression to the kisan's grievances and tried to bring them in the fold of the Indian National Congress. What is most important is the ways and means used by the Congress to rouse the national sentiments among different sections of society. The account gives us an idea as to how the Congress had hegemonised the political environment of Monghyr in the thirties.

The view popular among many researchers that the Congress as it was dominated by zamindar professional leadership got exposed once the issues of the kisan's were raised and their support got divided in late thirties, can not be supported. This study of the activities of the Congress suggests that the Congress remained popular in every part of the district throughout thirties. Many researchers suggest that the Kisan Sabha was very influential in Monghyr and it successfully launched kisan movement in Barhaiya. This study suggests that the strength of the Kisan Sabha depended largely on identification of its activities as an extension of Congress activities. The Congress also got strength from the works of the Kisan Sabha which had by focusing on kisan issues, become popular in some part of Monghyr. In fact, the Congress and the Kisan Sabha drew sustenance and

gave support to each other. This relationship of receiving strength from each other tended to break after 1935 which led to confusion among the people who had respected and supported Gandhi, Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Sri Krishna Sinha, Swami Sahjanand at the same time.<sup>1</sup> In fact, in the years after 1935 the Socialist influences got mixed up with the Congress led national movement in such a way that a section of leadership drew idealistic conclusions and in their enthusiasm they found in Congress 'compromising people not interested in removing the grievances of the kisans. All this however remained confined to their meetings and it could not be translated into people's imagination as a viable alternative of the Congress. The Congress remained the political voice of the people.

Against this background the Bakasht agitation of 1938 - 39 was launched by the Kisan Sabha leader, Karyanand Sharma who tried to mobilize lower caste kisan's against the zamindars. It received the support of lower caste kisans of the area. But too much should not be read from it. The attempt to read in it as the exposure of the

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1. A poem published in 1941 gives an idea how even in the minds of educated minds the socialist influences had got mixed up with the support of the Congress and its leaders. See Appendix III.



Congress leadership is not correct. This study based on the Government record suggests that the Congress had supported this agitation in its preliminary stages (1936 to 1938) and local Congress leaders strengthened the kisan agitation even when the District Congress leadership had distanced itself due to 'confrontationist' attitude of Karayanand Sharma even after 1938. This study also tries to argue that in actual process of mobilisation, Karyanand Sharma was an opportunist and adventurist and he was not interested in a peaceful settlement. This movement ended in a peaceful settlement and once the people came to know the realities they did not support Karyanand Sharma when he tried to revive the agitation in 1940.

In a nutshell, this study of the process of political mobilization in Monghyr suggests that the Congress had effectively hegemonised the political environment of Monghyr in the period 1934 and 1942 and its dominance increased with time. It represented the political will of the people and had developed its network very effectively. It had acquired social sanctity behind it. Any force which went against the Congress could not survive. It is amazing how the Congress could gain so much popular support and that without much trouble to its volunteers, followers and 'cheer guards'.<sup>2</sup> The Congress knew how to maintain its support base.

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2. The term used by M.Panjani for those supporters of Congress who came to attend meetings or took to wearing Khaddar only.

Appendix - I

POPULATION OF REVENUE THANAS AND POLICE-STATIONS BY RELIGION AND LITERACY.

REVENUE THANA.	POLICE-STATION	POPULATION.			HINDUS.																MUSLIMS.			
		Persons.	Males.	Females.	TOTAL HINDUS.		BRAHMAN.				DEPRESSED CLASSES.				OTHER HINDUS.				Number of persons.		Number Males.			
					Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.		
																							Number of persons.	Number Males.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
<b>MONGHYR</b>		<b>2,287,164</b>	<b>1,148,797</b>	<b>1,141,367</b>	<b>1,031,468</b>	<b>1,017,727</b>	<b>59,027</b>	<b>54,258</b>	<b>10,765</b>	<b>1,021</b>	<b>102,318</b>	<b>204,985</b>	<b>1,215</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>774,190</b>	<b>758,484</b>	<b>50,278</b>	<b>4,510</b>	<b>104,408</b>	<b>119,000</b>	<b>8,220</b>	<b>1,168</b>		
		<b>444,258</b>	<b>229,210</b>	<b>229,210</b>	<b>213,277</b>	<b>206,437</b>	<b>6,840</b>	<b>7,843</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>42,808</b>	<b>41,771</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>102,643</b>	<b>155,855</b>	<b>7,272</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>22,174</b>	<b>22,760</b>	<b>1,361</b>	<b>294</b>		
		<b>118,293</b>	<b>61,004</b>	<b>61,004</b>	<b>62,723</b>	<b>62,627</b>													<b>6,905</b>	<b>6,704</b>				
		<b>147,785</b>	<b>76,194</b>	<b>76,194</b>	<b>60,693</b>	<b>60,590</b>													<b>6,647</b>	<b>6,004</b>				
		<b>120,023</b>	<b>61,040</b>	<b>61,040</b>	<b>63,070</b>	<b>61,118</b>													<b>7,401</b>	<b>7,821</b>				
		<b>78,177</b>	<b>40,797</b>	<b>40,797</b>	<b>39,041</b>	<b>38,542</b>													<b>2,755</b>	<b>2,827</b>				
		<b>179,298</b>	<b>92,248</b>	<b>92,111</b>	<b>80,681</b>	<b>79,040</b>	<b>3,046</b>	<b>2,470</b>	<b>1,207</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>12,130</b>	<b>12,133</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>64,700</b>	<b>61,046</b>	<b>7,978</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>10,637</b>	<b>9,974</b>	<b>1,869</b>	<b>190</b>		
		<b>82,843</b>	<b>42,443</b>	<b>42,443</b>	<b>31,001</b>	<b>30,206</b>													<b>6,102</b>	<b>5,710</b>				
		<b>126,533</b>	<b>64,442</b>	<b>64,442</b>	<b>68,800</b>	<b>68,814</b>													<b>4,536</b>	<b>4,264</b>				
		<b>30,346</b>	<b>16,374</b>	<b>16,369</b>	<b>13,077</b>	<b>11,170</b>	<b>1,160</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>2,120</b>	<b>2,113</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9,788</b>	<b>8,307</b>	<b>2,402</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>2,004</b>	<b>2,292</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>80</b>		
		<b>75,898</b>	<b>37,399</b>	<b>37,604</b>	<b>34,602</b>	<b>35,103</b>	<b>2,260</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>6,414</b>	<b>6,727</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28,888</b>	<b>26,297</b>	<b>2,706</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>2,633</b>	<b>2,704</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>71</b>		
		<b>133,824</b>	<b>68,339</b>	<b>68,495</b>	<b>64,661</b>	<b>61,267</b>	<b>2,770</b>	<b>2,027</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12,372</b>	<b>12,061</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40,600</b>	<b>40,200</b>	<b>3,667</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>2,743</b>	<b>4,061</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>14</b>		
		<b>161,465</b>	<b>79,844</b>	<b>81,641</b>	<b>73,018</b>	<b>74,643</b>	<b>4,237</b>	<b>3,008</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>14,612</b>	<b>14,702</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>48,167</b>	<b>45,888</b>	<b>4,148</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>6,083</b>	<b>6,054</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>8</b>		
		<b>85,132</b>	<b>42,321</b>	<b>42,811</b>	<b>39,281</b>	<b>40,122</b>													<b>1,627</b>	<b>1,915</b>				
		<b>76,373</b>	<b>37,523</b>	<b>38,730</b>	<b>34,036</b>	<b>34,511</b>													<b>3,648</b>	<b>4,219</b>				
		<b>159,894</b>	<b>80,333</b>	<b>79,663</b>	<b>70,364</b>	<b>68,030</b>	<b>2,802</b>	<b>2,870</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16,027</b>	<b>16,062</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>52,489</b>	<b>49,117</b>	<b>4,276</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>10,048</b>	<b>11,614</b>	<b>1,058</b>	<b>163</b>		
		<b>108,401</b>	<b>53,513</b>	<b>52,068</b>	<b>40,237</b>	<b>41,714</b>													<b>7,176</b>	<b>8,274</b>				
		<b>53,585</b>	<b>26,020</b>	<b>26,026</b>	<b>24,061</b>	<b>23,326</b>													<b>2,869</b>	<b>3,340</b>				
		<b>222,629</b>	<b>114,164</b>	<b>114,146</b>	<b>109,021</b>	<b>104,506</b>	<b>12,750</b>	<b>11,027</b>	<b>1,806</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>17,700</b>	<b>20,264</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>72,402</b>	<b>73,476</b>	<b>4,210</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>11,454</b>	<b>13,603</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>80</b>		
		<b>411,606</b>	<b>201,242</b>	<b>210,363</b>	<b>190,250</b>	<b>185,447</b>	<b>12,800</b>	<b>12,010</b>	<b>2,160</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>31,104</b>	<b>33,446</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>132,242</b>	<b>130,448</b>	<b>6,828</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>50,234</b>	<b>54,504</b>	<b>1,131</b>	<b>176</b>		
		<b>191,311</b>	<b>94,727</b>	<b>94,584</b>	<b>86,074</b>	<b>84,706</b>													<b>4,742</b>	<b>9,071</b>				
		<b>104,390</b>	<b>49,608</b>	<b>54,602</b>	<b>51,060</b>	<b>46,373</b>													<b>7,644</b>	<b>9,619</b>				
		<b>118,905</b>	<b>57,014</b>	<b>61,447</b>	<b>62,322</b>	<b>60,040</b>													<b>6,901</b>	<b>8,218</b>				
		<b>117,081</b>	<b>58,116</b>	<b>59,546</b>	<b>61,740</b>	<b>62,201</b>	<b>1,474</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12,045</b>	<b>14,243</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>37,220</b>	<b>36,262</b>	<b>2,336</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>6,262</b>	<b>7,202</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>66</b>		
		<b>104,441</b>	<b>51,360</b>	<b>51,303</b>	<b>72,406</b>	<b>72,083</b>	<b>3,062</b>	<b>2,770</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17,728</b>	<b>18,755</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>63,018</b>	<b>62,158</b>	<b>2,911</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>7,044</b>	<b>7,189</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>12</b>		
		<b>187,716</b>	<b>90,187</b>	<b>97,667</b>	<b>71,688</b>	<b>69,002</b>	<b>2,084</b>	<b>1,744</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12,470</b>	<b>12,600</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>66,218</b>	<b>64,380</b>	<b>2,178</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>6,022</b>	<b>6,268</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>24</b>		
		<b>87,818</b>	<b>44,091</b>	<b>44,168</b>	<b>30,490</b>	<b>29,740</b>													<b>1,248</b>	<b>1,244</b>				
		<b>100,008</b>	<b>51,407</b>	<b>49,699</b>	<b>46,208</b>	<b>42,964</b>													<b>4,416</b>	<b>5,101</b>				

Source: Census of India, 1931, Vol. VII, Part II, p. 186.

## APPENDIX II

Some references to the activities of Arya Samaj, Hindu Sabha and other organisations.

### (1) Arya Samaj

The contribution of Arya Samaj in the formative stage of the development of nationalism in Monghyr has already been discussed in Chapter I. In the thirties also, it helped in spread of nationalism. The Arya Samaj aimed to work for the 'upliftment of Hindus' and it can be noticed that it drew nearer to Hindu Sabha during the 1930s. When Hindu Conference was held at Monghyr in 1933 it got the support of Arya Samaj.

Among the Arya Samajists of those days most notable were Nath Bihari Sharma, Santosh Sharma, Badrinath Sharma, Santosh Sharma, Badrinath Sharma and Mishrilal Sharma. In the city, in those days, Arya Samaj was very influential. It had started a women tailoring school at Guljarpokhar, an 'Anathalaya' and a 'Vanitashrani' at Dalhatta. In those days Arya Samaj Mandir of Bara Bazar was very busy an important centre of social workers.

In connection with the functions of the samaj several influential Samaj Leaders visited the town, among them were Ram Chandra Dehalvi and great poet and orator Tej Singh (the writer of Tejshatak ). About the latter a poet of national repute A.B.Mishra, says that he has not seen such an influential and popular post in his entire lifetime - Tej Singh used to recite vigorously his poems in Hindi, on the music of 'Jhai' and 'Dhol' and 'Mridang'. He used to narrate the meaning in between as well. Among the poems he recited at Monghyr few are still remembered. Among those one is - Saabak koi Hamse Seekhe Jawani Ka

1

Khele to rat gujar de, hanse to chhatte il Jayc  
Gar ghunsa prithvi par dhare, patal moin prithvi mil  
Jaye Sabak koi seckne....

2

Bin Lathi aur dande ke, Lakhon ke Jan nusmar Kare Bin  
Kevat aur Bere Ke, Sau meel ka dariya par kare. His  
choice of stories were the heroes and heroines of  
Hindu warriors like Alha Udal, Rahi Lakshmi ai, Kuar  
Singh. He was very emphatic in denouncing the  
orthodoxy in untouchability, the dominance of Brahminism  
and the Teck keeping etc.

## B. The Hindu Sabha:

The Hindu Sabha tried to mobilize Hindu support in Monghyr district in a big way. In fact, during 1933-1935 period it tried all tricks to muster popular support. But like other organisation it could not become a competitor of the Congress. Since 1935 however its activities reduced.

The Sabha had a considerable following in Monghyr among big landlords, Rajas and trading communities. Raja Dilip Narayan Singh, Raja Raghunadhan Singh, Sitaram Khemka, Kedarnath Goenka were among main leaders of the district.

In 1933, Monghyr Hindu conference was held which turned out to be a successful one. The Sabha's activities, society, its leadership etc. require detail investigations without which comments will be immature. But one episode demonstrates how far this organisation was ready to take advantage of "sentiments of the Hindus" for its political ends. This episode dealing with Chowk Bazar Temple should be discussed in some details.

There was a considerable loss of life and property in Chowk Bazar area of the Monghyr town during the great earthquake of the January 1934, due mainly to its

congested condition. The lands and roads were so narrow that there was no way of escape and the loss of life was considerable. In order to prevent an occurrence of such a disaster a town planning scheme for improving the housing and sanitary conditions of the area as well as for widening the roads and lanes it was found necessary and was sanctioned by the Government. Babu Mansukh Ram Khemka held a holding with an area of kattahs and eleven dhurs at the three head of the main bazar road where the greatest casualties took place due to the earthquake. By the purpose of road widening and for rounding off the corner an area of dhurs or .012 acre sixteen covered by the platform of his house was proposed to be taken up and the balance of the area was reallocated to him. A number of shops was settled by Babu Khemka on the above platform and least he was deprived of the income from these shops, from the very beginning of the town planning scheme has been opposing the taking up of his plot for the purpose of town improvement. He raised the plea that his house was not a residential one, but was a public temple and consequently no part of it should be resumed due to alleged religious sanctity.

From the Kabulfat executed by Babu Mansukh Ram Khemka and from the history of the holding it was found that the holding was a residential one and not a public temple. As

usual with many Hindus there were some family deities in the house for family worship. The plea of Khemka was rejected by the district judge.

The lesser himself did not take further steps but one Batvanarayan Maharaj sent a telegram to Minister of Local Self Government Department against the construction of the platform alleging that the building was a public temple which declined to interfere on 19 March, 1935.

Notices to Mansukhram to vacate were given but the orders were not complied with them it was decided to take up the work of the demolition of the portion of the platform on the morning of the 26 May, 1935. As the conduct of the lesser showed that he was likely to create disturbance through his man it was thought advisable to ask for some Police help. The District Magistrate and Superintendent of police and the town Engineer were

personally present in order to see that the demolition was carried out smoothly.

While the portion of the platform was being demolished a relation of the lesser pointed out that there was an image of Goddess Durga on the wall abutting on the platform. The District Magistrate found that portion of the wall was covered with a red cloth and when it was taken off by the relation of the lesser it was found that there was no image at all on the wall, but only a small and rough painting on the plaster of the wall consisting of a tree and some animal and some letters in Marwari character were written which did not exist before the earthquake. These paintings according to the District Magistrate told the relation of the lesser that the painting was not holy but if wanted to remain it he could keep Khemka. The District Magistrate to respect his wishes, sent the plaster on the wall on which the painting was made to the Ganges through four Hindu constables.

The lessee induced a few shopkeepers to close their shops but the majority of shops was open on the next day. There was a small meeting to protest against the government action.

After the incident the telegram addressed to several



newspapers was sent. it read as - "May 29th Monghyr. Influential representations and protests against demolition of portion of the old Hindu temple of no avail. Yesterday Hindu District Magistrate, Town Engineer, Police Super intendent, dozens of Police officer hundred and fifty about armed constables suddenly arrive on the spot and under orders coolies broke image of Sri Durgajee and broken image was carried under heavy police escort to Kasthaharnighat and immersed in Ganges Demolition of portion temple for road widening was absolutely unnecessary. Hindu feelings injured and wounded. Great sensation in prevailed how the Town observing complete Hartal. Public meeting this evening in Hindu Sabha Maidan."

A mammoth meeting was held a resolution was pas<sup>s</sup>ed which read -

'The Hindus of Monghyr assembled in a very largely strongly condemn the action of he government in dismantling a portion of the Thakurbari of 'Sree Nandjee Thakur with the help of local authorities and a large force of constables and armed police and breaking into pieces the image of Sree Durgajee installed and worshipped in the portion since time immemorial and carrying away the said image on the heads of he coolies and immersing the same in the river Ganges in utter

disregard of the feelings of the Hindu public and in spite of memorials and representations against such an action and also inspite of civil suit for permanent injunction against the Secretary of State restraining him from demolishing the said Thakurbari being still subjudice. <sup>1</sup>

The Hindu Mahasabha activities were intensified in Monghyr since 1939 again. The eighth session of the Bihar Hindu Mahasabha Conference opened under the Presidentship of V.D.Savarkar. About 10,000 Hindus attended the Conference. Sarvarar described the nationalism preached by the Congress as a perverse nationalism.

In January 1940 Dr.Moonje came to Begusarai where he criticised the claim of the Congress to be the national organisation representing the whole country and in putting forward the claims of Hindu Mahasabha to assume leadership the laid emphasis on the need of contesting the next election and on the formation of a Hindu Militia.

The April 1940 a circular sent by the All India Hindu Mahasabha to the provincial branches regarding the

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1. This account of the temple affair to based on Home Dept.Pol.(Sp) 170 II/1935 (BSA).

formation of a Hindu militia under the control of the Mahasabha. The militia was open to physically fit Hindus and was divided into two sections. (1) The 'Ramsena' for those aged more than 12 and (2) Bal sena. For those who were under 20 years.

(c) The other organisations:

The activities of communists, forward blocists were particularly successful among the students. Anil Mitra a communist who was by now a forward bloc supporter formed an unlicensed procession to visit the various schools in town and was responsible of bringing out as many of the students. He was prosecuted and sentenced to a term of Rs.200/- in default for month's simple imprisonment.

A largely attended Monghyr District Student Conference was held at Begusarai on 30<sup>th</sup> February 40 with Rahul Sankrityan<sup>ya</sup> in the chair. The principal speaker was S.C. Bose. Here resolutions were passed congratulating students on their behaviour on 'Independence Day' expressing resentment at attempts by Right Wing Leaders at compromise and urging the abandonment of the question of Hindu Muslim Unity which was impracticable while the British remained in India, in favour of preparation for the coming struggle.

The student's agitation continued at Monghyr and Begusarai. In D.J.College and Collegiate School, a large number of students were reported to be absent and there was fracas between the railway police and railway staff at Begusarai on the one side and the students of a local school on the other over the looting of a sugarcane from a railway siding.

Encouraged by the response from the youths the CPI revolutionaries were paying special attention to recruiting and preaching among the younger and impressionable students. Bihar Students' Conference held at Darbhanga on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April<sup>'40</sup> a proposal came for extensive political propaganda among the masses which was to be initiated during the summer vacation under the guise of mass literacy drive. Attempts were also made to link the student with ongoing leftist movement of Monghyr destruction under the socialists. A meeting of students was held to express sympathy with the strikers of the Monghyr Peninsular Tobacco Company Factory.

The Monghyr section of the Student's Federation took active part in the efforts to prolong the strike at Peninsular Tobacco Factory. These students displayed unmistakable communist sympathy. The Zilla school magazine showed

how a failed student became a national hero by becoming a nationalist while a first division student returned from England with high honours and nobody knew him. The students' activities continued in some parts of the district. A Youth League Conference was held at Lakhisarai on 18 August at which a resolution was passed rejecting any compromise with British imperialism.

In September '40 the distribution of community leaflets was noticed in schools and colleges in Monghyr. Raids made on bearding houses for students resulted in the seizure of a quantity of communist literature, prescribed books and other 'subversive' documents. Some of the Communist leaflets were found posted up at Barauni Junction.

The Communists organised anti-Japanese rallies and procession and formed propaganda squads in Monghyr.

APPENDIX    III

THE CALL OF THE KISANS<sup>1</sup>

BY

SHREE NANDAN

Publisher—Rajeshwari Prasad Singh, Congress Bhawan, Jamui,  
Monghyr.

Printer - Saraswati Press, Sabzibagh Road, Patna.

The Marching Song (Page 3)

March on O youths! March on O youths!

Carry the Red Flag of the Red Revolution.

Break into pieces the fetters of the slavery of the world

Destroy the darkness of imperialism

Bring to the world ruddy morning, red communism

Why let the earth become red with your blood

But O friends, stop all loot and plunder

Snatch away the crown and give the Kingdom to those who  
are denied food -grasses

Burn to death feudalism, class distinction and fatalism

Instill into every hart the love of universal brotherhood

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1. Home Dept. Pol.Sp. 197/41, BSA.

In the world, in our own country, Let all our thoughts  
unite into one.

To the Youths (Page 3)

O Youths, create an uproar of revolution!

Distressed are the peasants and the Wage-earners(not  
clear) Rouse up the dead with the refulgence of

lighting, O youths!

Eighteen crore rupees a year are paid as rent

O youths end this kind of exploitation.

The irrigation system is arbitrary. There is no end to  
oppressions

O youths end the tyranny of each tyrant

Ask not about the business of money-lending It has caused  
a terrible disaster

O youths work redemption from the clutches of capitalism

Under the British Government we have to waste unto death

O youths, do away such government

Take it O youths that landlordism, capitalism And the ruin  
caused by the British Government

Are the ailments of a suffering age.

Instil the principles of Karl Marx that are like the  
proverbial Sanjiwan Root and restore health

O youth, blow,blow, the bugle of independence.

As youths, lay down your life for the cause of the country

Be moved at the sight of the mother's face to sacrifice  
your body  
You are the descendants of Rama and Krishna, Remember your  
forefathers

Save your Mother

She has been deprived of her ornaments and clothes  
She is starving - has nothing to sleep on peacefully.  
Her body is chained, Such is her plight  
Still you cannot sacrifice your life. how shameful it is?  
For the cause of their wife, the Pandavas annihilated the  
Kaurawas

But in your case it is your mother  
That mother who has produced sons like Gandhi and Jawhar  
And in whose lap shines Subhas.  
Liberate her, free her from bondage  
She who is the source of happiness to 35 crores of her  
sons

Is crying in distress-liberate her.  
The Himalayas form whose pillow  
Whose feet are bedecked with jewels  
And whose heart ripples with the waters of Ganga and Jamna  
Liberate that mother  
The seven planets and the sky-being the arms-  
notwithstanding  
The mother is crying for help  
The Poet "Shri" says - It's shameful



Liberate that mother.

Dear Peasants! Rouse from sleep for the Swami is awaking  
you

Abandon the sleep that is carelessness

O my innocent brothers!

Awake and see the clique

A part has been concluded with the enemy

And what is your reward!

Attachment of fields and farms.

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