

**ASPECTS OF THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT
IN EASTERN U.P.**

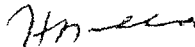
Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled "Aspects of the Quit India Movement in Eastern U.P." (Azamgarh, Ballia, Ghazipur) submitted by Radhika Singha is an original work and has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other university. We recommend that this dissertation be presented before the examiners for consideration of the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.



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P R E F A C E

This study deals with the response to the Quit India movement from three districts forming the eastern-most wedge of the United Provinces. The framework and time span has been kept loose so as to allow certain questions about the long term social development of the region to emerge.

On the one hand an understanding of the prevailing social environment of the area was attempted, on the other of the interaction between this and the wider context of 1942, a context which was uniquely shaped by the war situation. The economy of these districts made them particularly vulnerable to insecurities about food flows and emigre remittances created by the war. In addition, poor communications made the government particularly vulnerable to insurrection here.

A remarkable feature of the response to 1942 from this agrarian society was that it displayed little evidence of any internal social conflict in its form of confrontation with the colonial state. Chapter 2 tries to seek an explanation for this in the long term pattern of agrarian relations, though of course the nature of appeal in 1942 was also crucial to this dimension, in that it was completely concentrated on the anti-imperialist objective.

What is tentatively proposed is that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century a crucial shift in the form in which rural power was exercised was beginning to crystallise. This shift created stress at many points and forced the dominant landed communities to begin to reconstruct their ideology and culture. However, this shift did not give expression to clear-cut conflict on class lines. This was related to the continued cohesion at the the upper levels of rural society, and in their ability to maintain the dependence of the lower sections. This cohesion was based on the continuation of solidarities around status, even if these ties of status had been weakened. In addition conflict in the upper reaches was muted by privileged tenure and favourable rates of rent. On the other hand at the lower levels population pressure and a narrowing of opportunities tightened the dependency between those who controlled land and employment and low caste insecure tenants and labourers. At the same time this eroded the security of some traditional obligations. The penetration of the colonial state in the mediation of social relationships and forms of authority also required an ideological reconstruction of power and its obverse, subordination.

This reconstruction of ideology cannot be explained in isolation from larger patterns of political change. An important issue here is how changes in the forms of rural power meshed with trends in national and communal politics. In this study, however, communal mobilisation has only been marginally referred to. What has been examined is the forms in which the nationalist leadership challenged the authority of the colonial state over this society and its legitimacy as an arbiter of social relations. One form of taking power was the insurrectionary model advocated by that militant fringe of nationalism represented by various terrorist clusters. Their influence upon the student population of this region has been dealt with at some length. For them 1942 seemed to represent the long-awaited mass response to their visions. The pattern which, however, prevailed over the long term was that of a consolidation of social support through winning the right to mediate in social relationships on a nationalist and representative platform which challenged the legitimacy of the colonial state. How this was worked out in the countryside of Uttar Pradesh is examined at two points, in the 'truce' period inaugurated by the Gandhi-Irwin pact of 1931 and in the period of the Congress Ministry. It was the Ministry which made agrarian society in the eastern districts sharply aware of the establishment of

a new source of authority and aroused expectations of a greater security of tenure through its intervention in rural relations. Expectations aroused by the ministry form a crucial backdrop to the response to 1942 from districts where a strong peasant movement had never really emerged. In 1942 the peasantry rallied to express its identification with the hopes it had from Swaraj government. How far in fact the unrecorded low caste tenants and sub-tenants were able to benefit from the hope held out of agrarian restructuring is a different question. Nevertheless the decade 1936-46 did witness sporadic and localised attempts to actualise the hope of tenurial security in these districts.

Material for this topic was thin particularly for the movement itself. For the pattern of agrarian relations settlement records for Ballia and Ghazipur stopped at the 1880s. Azamgarh being under the temporary revenue settlement provided a useful bridge to this gap. A sense of political process in this region was conceptualised from a thickening of data around the Congress Ministry period. Particularly useful here were the weekly intelligence reports in the C.I.D. office, Lucknow. The records at the Commissioner's office Benares and at Ghazipur Sessions Court and Collectorate Record Rooms proved disappointing due to heavy weeding.

Some interviews with local activists were useful and these promise considerable insight if undertaken on a more sustained scale.

Special thanks are due to Mr. Paras Nath Mishra who gave me an insight into the world of the student activist drawn to insurrectionary mentalities. He also gave me typed copies of certain official records not otherwise available. I also thank the various other activists who gave me interviews.

I would like to thank Mr. T.M. Varghese who at very short notice has typed competently from a very muddled draft.

Ravi Shankar Vasudevan has shared the hardwon conclusions of his work on "Strategies in the Congress, 1934-39" before submitting his own thesis, and has allowed the deadline of my thesis to take priority over his. I would also like to thank my masi, Kaushallya, for sustained concern and affection despite scepticism over "the use of it all". G.M. also saw me through a disproportionate fuss over a small endeavour.

Above all I would like to thank my guide Professor Bipan Chandra whose own enthusiastic engagement with this discipline "firmed up" a wavering student and who outlined the logic of my arguments more clearly for me. Even if this work does not do it credit this student was shaped by the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.J.C.C.	-	All India Congress Committee
A.P.	-	Abhimanyu Pustakalaya, Varanasi
A.P.S.	-	Appreciation of the Political Situation, weekly intelligence reports
C.I.D.	-	Criminal Investigation Department
C.O.B	-	Commissioner's Office, Benares
C.S.P.	-	Congress Socialist Party
D.C.C.	-	District Congress Committee
D.G.	-	District Gazetteer
D.I.G.	-	Deputy Inspector General of Police
FRUP I & II	-	Fortnightly Reports for the United Provinces for the first and second fortnights of the month respectively
H.S.M.	-	Historical and Statistical Memoir, Ghazipur
H.S.R.A.	-	Hindustan Socialist Republican Association
K.N.P.S.	-	Kashi Nagri Pracharini Sabha, Varanasi
N.A.I.	-	National Archives of India, New Delhi
N.M.M.L.	-	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
N.W.P.	-	North Western Provinces
P.A.I.	-	Police Abstracts of Intelligence, weekly intelligence reports
R.A.R.	-	Revenue Administration Report, annual
R.R.R.	-	Rent Rate Report
S.I.	-	Sub-Inspector of Police
S.P.	-	Superintendent of Police
S.R.	-	Settlement Report
S.S.S.	-	Swatantrata Sangram ke Sainik, Who's Who of Freedom Fighters, Uttar Pradesh
S.W.J.N.	-	Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru
U.P.A.R.	-	United Provinces Administration Report, annual
U.P.S.A.	-	Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow.

Chapter I
THE LOCATION

In the United Provinces news of the Quit India resolution and the arrests of leaders sparked off processions and hartals which turned into attacks on Government buildings led by students. By the 12th of August, as leaders and students fanned out into the countryside, sabotage of communications, attacks on police stations, post offices, tahsils, and all government buildings began. By the 14th a pattern of response began to emerge in which it was clear that the movement was evoking a much stronger response from the peasantry of the eastern districts. "The general picture," so went the official report, "is one of organised gangs with a good deal of support working in the Eastern area on a roughly co-ordinated plan and of sporadic action in the West by small groups, probably moving from place to place and not rousing widespread support."¹ In the west the situation began to improve but, "in Azamgarh, Ghazipur, Ballia and on the borders of Banares outlying thanas were attacked by what can only be described as lashkars consisting of mobs of villagers and goondas led by

1. Home Department (Political) 18/8/42. Fortnightly Report for the United Provinces (hereafter FR UP) II, August 1942, Appendix I.

agitators."² Gandhi Baba had said "karo ya marro." This was how the peasantry of the eastern most wedge of the province between the Ganges and the Ghagra responded.³ They did so openly and eruptively with cries of "Gandhiji ki jai!"

What evoked this concentrated response - this chapter tries to find reasons for the location of the movement in these districts. In doing so some special characteristics of the movement emerge which are looked into in the other chapters. One feature of 1942 here is that the peasant response did not spring from any emergent programme of agrarian demands but kept to the goal of destroying the government and installing a Swaraj government in its place. Was there in fact any correlation between specific agrarian grievances in the preceding years and the location of the movement? The other characteristic is that no open expression of internal contradictions is displayed in the crowd of 1942 which was drawn from every strata of agrarian society.⁴ Even

2. Ibid.

3. Interview, Pabbar Ram, 29 June 1984, Ghazipur. Pabbar Ram was a member of the C.S.P. and the Kisan Sabha in Ghazipur and also took part in the underground organisation of the H.S.R.A. At the time of the movement, however, he was in jail under trial for a train hold-up. For the concentration of the response in Azamgarh, Ballia, Ghazipur and Benares see also FRUP I, September 1942, and R. Hunt and J. Harrison, The District Officer in India, 1930-47, London, 1980, p. 202.

4. See Chapter 4, "The Crowd and Parallel Government."

so, did the movement draw a stronger response from one particular section with a particularly sharp motivation? Lastly, was there a correlation between the location of the movement and the conjuncture of the war crisis and reverses on the eastern front? Did these districts have a special vulnerability to all the political and economic uncertainties springing from the war? Lastly, was there something which distinguished the political tradition of the leadership here and which might account for the location of the uprising?

Answers to these questions must in equal measure explain the other characteristic of mass response to the movement - its swift withdrawal once the Government began to re-invest itself with the use of troops and armed constabulary. The leadership found itself isolated. It was unable to develop a sustained underground movement with a nucleus of authority around which the loyalties of the masses could continue to focus.⁵ Of course the extent to which such underground authority can operate is also a function of terrain and ecology⁶ but there were

5. Ibid.

6. Poor communications made worse by the monsoons had helped to isolate this tract. One can conjecture therefore that the vulnerability of communications could have helped to sustain an underground movement.

areas for instance in South Gujarat⁷ and in Satara⁸ where Congress authority was longer lived than in these districts.

In eastern U.P. the movement peaked and collapsed in the course of ten days.⁹ By the 17th of August the Government claimed that it had recovered the initiative in Jaunpur and Benares and a relief expedition from Fyzabad had arrived in Azamgarh. By the 22nd, Marsh-Smith, Director Civil Defence, and Nethersole, Civil Liason Officer, Central Command, had converged on Ghazipur and a military force had reached Ballia from Gorakhpur. By the end of August most police stations had been reestablished.¹⁰

Reprisals on villages near railway tracks which had been uprooted or culverts which had been cut soon had their impact. Villagers began to prevent sabotage in surrounding areas, and in some cases handed over the saboteurs to the police.¹¹ There were one or two attempts

7. See David Hardman, "The Quit India Movement in Gujarat" Workshop on India in 1942, Calcutta, 1983, unpublished.

8. See Gail Omvedt, "Quit India in Satara," Workshop on India in 1942, Calcutta, 1983, unpublished.

9. See R.F. Mudie, then Chief Secretary, U.P. in Hunt and Harrison (eds.), op.cit., p.201.

10. FRUP II, August 1942.

11. FRUP II, August 1942; FRUP II, September 1942.

by villagers to resist collective reprisals but these were met with showers of bullets.¹² Lane who took over from Nigam as the D.M. of Ballia reported that such was the state of panic that collective fines levied in the district were quickly paid up.¹³ In Azamgarh, the D.M. who had fought off a massed attack on Madhuban thana noted that a "wave of patriotism" would seem to have swept the district in the wake of the movement. This was an ironic remark directed at the escalation in war subscriptions when he left the district.¹⁴ In Jaunpur district, however, a counter-terrorisation campaign directed against officials was sustained till about mid-1943, but this is accountable to a previous history of underground terrorist organisation.¹⁵ On the whole,

12. Two such cases are reported from Azamgarh, one at Patwadh where villagers surrounded a military lorry and another at Atraulia where a sabha was held to discuss ways of defending themselves. In both cases there was firing. Sriram, 1942 ki Kranti, Hindi, Gwalior, 1946, pp.62-63; R.H.Niblett, The Congress Rebellion in Azamgarh, 6 August-September 1942, Allahabad, 1957, p.45.

13. Hunt and Harrison (eds.), op.cit., p.202.

14. Niblett himself had acted as a moderating influence on reprisals. R.H. Niblett, op.cit., p.54.

15. The Jaunpur revolutionary group led by Ambika Prasad Singh was able to organise terrorist attacks on policemen and patwaris. A.P.S. 19 February, 2 April 1943, 3 September 1943, 29 October 1943. See Chapter 3 "The Leadership and the Context",^a for an account of the terrorist organisation in Jaunpur.

however, the Government was able to reinstate itself here more easily than in the neighbouring districts of northern Bihar.¹⁶

The other feature of peasant participation in this movement which invites comparison with the Non-cooperation and the Civil Disobedience Movements is that there was a concentration of purpose on the political target of destroying the government. There was no platform of demands about rent or tenure such as had enthused the peasantry in the Kisan Sabha and Civil Disobedience movements. The All India Kisan Sabha Council in its resolution of 7 August 1942 supporting the decision of the A.I.C.C. to launch a mass struggle had called upon Congress to include the agrarian demands of the Kisans in its programme.¹⁷ But because the movement was not conceived of in any sense as one oriented to economic demands but on a "Do or Die" political programme the initial spurt of pamphlets did not advocate a no-rent campaign or suggest that the peasant might use the situation to develop activity on agrarian issues. The concentration was on the capture of power. In fact it was advised that rents should be paid except where the

16. Stephen Henningham, Peasant Movements in Colonial India: North Bihar 1917-1942, Canberra, 1982, p.189; Orr in Hunt and Harrison, op.cit., p.203.

17. Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 10 August 1942.

zamindars were unwise enough to oppose the movement.¹⁸ After the initial upsurge had died down, it was reported in October that some attempts were made to start a no-rent and no-revenue campaign but these did not meet with any success.¹⁹ If there was a subterranean current of agrarian tension which determined the location of the revolt it was not expressed in that way. In September 1942 it was reported that land revenue collections were up to the previous year's mark and that in Azamgarh and Benares districts revenue had been collected in full.²⁰

Why were these districts not in prominence in the earlier agrarian campaigns? Was the form of peasant participation in 1942 a continuation of a specific pattern of response to nationalism and agrarian reform?

The Kisan Sabha Movement of 1920-21 had developed around the demand for fixity of tenure and for an end to nazrana, illegal cesses. This and the Aika movement which followed it in 1921-22 had been strongest in the districts of central and southern Oudh. Here the

18. P.N.Chopra (ed.), Quit India Movement (Reprint of Wickenden's Report on the Disturbances), New Delhi, 1976, p.252; Niblett, op.cit.. The Andhra circular which was supposed to contain instructions issued by Pattabhi Sitaramayya had said that if the zamindars did not join the movement they were to be boycotted and their ryots set up against them, P.N. Chopra, op.cit., p.254.

19. FRUP I, Appendix I-A, October 1942.

20. FRUP I, September 1942. This meant that the vast numbers of petty zamindars who had taken part in the movement were not resisting the payment of revenue.

peasants had taken considerable initiative in organising themselves around these demands.²¹ These movements had at a certain stage also incorporated the millenarian aspirations of the landless agricultural labourers.²² Government reported that as compared to Oudh tenant landlord relations had not been so strained in Agra Province²³ which includes the districts of this study. The thrust of agrarian agitation in the no-tax campaign of 1930-31 was also strongest in another taluqdari dominated area Rae Bareli, though Agra was the other storm centre.²⁴

In contrast incidents of zamindar-tenant tension in Azamgarh, Ballia and Ghazipur remained sporadic and localised during the two movements and no grass roots

21. Allahabad had also experienced a kisan movement but here the influence of the nationalists was stronger. Sabhas organised "from below" were more characteristic of the Oudh districts according to Siddiqi. M.H.Siddiqi, Agrarian Unrest in North India: The United Provinces 1918-22, Delhi, 1978, pp. 25-26, p. 122 and Appendix III, map.
22. In Partabgarh it began as a movement of tenants for the amendment of the law. "As soon, however, as the agitation was taken up as a political cry, many of the sabhas or tenants' associations came to be composed almost entirely of landless labourers who were led to believe that they were somehow in the promised swaraj to acquire land and wealth." U.P. A.R. 1921-22, para 22, p. xvii. See also Kapil Kumar, Peasants in Revolt: Tenants, Landlords, Congress and the Raj in Oudh 1886-1922, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 189-229.
23. U.P.A.R. 1921-22, para 18, p. xv.
24. According to Gyan Pandey the "economic" aspects of the agitation were stronger in Rae Bareli. Gyanendra Pandey, The Congress in U.P. 1926-34: A Study in Imperfect Mobilisation, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 170-71.

peasant organization emerged. Nor does one note here the emergence of any charismatic peasant leader in these years such as Baba Ram Chander of Pratapgarh or Madari Pasi of Hardoi.²⁵ Interestingly Swami Sahajanand who came from a zamindar family in Ghazipur seems to have shaped up as a peasant leader only when he shifted his activity from Azamgarh to Bihar.²⁶

One reason for the fact that no peasant movement emerged in these districts is the presence here of a very substantial strata of upper caste tenants with both security of tenure and a caste privilege in rents.²⁷ In the Oudh districts in contrast the rental privilege of the higher castes was not supplemented by security of tenure. In fact the high caste tenant in Oudh was the particular target of evictions because the low caste tenant was less likely to resist rent increases.²⁸

25. Siddiqi, op.cit., Kapil Kumar, op.cit.

26. In Azamgarh he had involved himself in an effort to get the Bhumihars (one of the dominant landholding communities here) accepted as Brahmans, but not finding the Bhumihars here very receptive he had shifted to Bihar where he founded the Kisan Sabha. Interview, Paras Nath Misra, 22 April Lucknow. Paras Nath was one of the college activists of 1942 with affiliations with the terrorist organisation.

27. The other reason is that the slump in prices had, according to official report, not hit the eastern districts so much as the western districts because of the large areas of cane and rice. It was the statutory tenant of Oudh who was worst affected by the consequences. U.P. Government Communique, 10 September 1931, Revenue (B) Dept., A.I.C.C. Papers, N.M.M.L. See also File No. 33/11/1931 and k.w. Home Poll. N.A.I.

28. M.H.S. Siddiqi, op.cit., pp. 55-56, 59.

In part this security was due to the fact that in the Benares division (to which the districts of Ballia and Ghazipur belonged) the permanent settlement of revenue prevailed and here there was a special category of fixed rate tenants who had a permanently fixed rate of rent as well as hereditary occupancy. The extent of fixed rate tenure added to the extent of occupancy right meant that the area under the tenant-at-will category was very limited. Table I compiled in the revision of records undertaken in the 1880s makes this clear.

Table I
Distribution of Holdings in the Benares
Division, 1886

District	Percentage of proprietary area to total area	Tenancy		
		% of total occupancy to total tenant area	% of fixed rate, ex-proprietary, maafi etc. to tenant area	% of tenant-at-will to total area
Benares	20	54	35	11
Mirzapur	18	32	45	23
Ghazipur	31	61	17	22
Jaunpur	18	30	59	11
Ballia	31	47	40	13
Total, Benares division	23	45	39	16

Source: Resolution of the Revenue Department on the revision of records in Ghazipur, Ballia, Jaunpur, Mirzapur and Benares, S.R. Jaunpur, 1886.

The association between "Duncani Bandobast"²⁹ and security of tenure was such that it had impressed itself upon the imagination of tenants in the neighbouring districts. A C.I.D. officer touring the trans-Ganges tract of Allahabad district in 1921 during the Kisan Sabha agitation there was asked whether he knew the Duncans and whether any of the family were now in India.³⁰ Baba Ram Chandra, the peasant leader of Pratapgarh, also used these districts as a point of comparison;³¹ and the Deputy Commissioner of Pratapgarh in a burst of hyperbole wrote that the peasant in his district was bound to draw a contrast between his situation and that which prevailed in Jaunpur, where "even a chamar is a fixed rate tenant."³²

It was quite usual to attribute security of tenure and low rates of rent to the Permanent Settlement³³ but in fact it was the strength and cohesion of the high caste tenantry which consolidated these rights for them. Of course the category of fixed rate tenants did have a

29. bandobast: arrangements, settlement; Jonathan Duncan, appointed Resident at Benares in 1787 who carried out a revenue settlement which ended in the declaration of the permanent settlement in 1795.

30. C.I.D. memorandum 1050, February 1921, Progs. No.13, N.A.I.

31. Report on Agrarian Disturbances in Pratapgarh, V.N. Mehta, 1920, File No.753, Box No.6, Revenue (A) Dept., U.P.S.A.

32. Ibid.

33. S.R. Ballia, 1887, p.30, para 40.

retarding effect on rent increases. Moreover, fixation of revenue in perpetuity meant that landlords had less justification for raising rents. Even so, in the neighbouring district of Azamgarh which was under the system of temporary settlement in which revenue was revised every thirty years, a high caste tenantry was able to resist evictions and sharp rent increases and achieve a considerable degree of security. The following table shows the extent of area under occupancy right and the percentage of rental increase between 1881 and 1908:

Table II

Increase in Rental Incidence Between the Sixth and Seventh Settlements, Azamgarh, 1881-1908

Description of holding	% of holding area in 6th settlement	% of holding area in 7th settlement	% of increase in rent incidence
Sir	32.58	35.20	
Khudkasht		5.81	
Exproprietary		1.08	
High-caste occupancy	16.44	16.08	7.5
Low-caste occupancy	21.13	26.37	12.0
High-caste non-occupancy	5.85	2.65	21.0
Low-caste non-occupancy	17.49	8.64	24.0
Grain rented	6.51	3.09	

Source: S.R. Azamgarh, 1908, p. 14, para 6, p. 25, para 5.

In the subsequent settlement forecast of 1940 the rent increase was 6.4 per cent for occupancy, 15 per cent for new occupancy and 28 per cent for non-occupancy.³⁴ The report commented that given the pressure on the land in the district the rents had not risen very high in contrast to districts less crowded and sometimes less fertile.³⁵

In the districts of Azamgarh, Ballia and Ghazipur the consolidation of a substantial strata of tenants was also evidenced in a greater ability to insist on legal rights and to take to legal recourse. It was because of this that the inhabitants of these districts were reputed for their litigious tendency.³⁶

In these districts, therefore, the practise of concealing rent through various devices, of not giving receipts and of charging large sums as nazarana such as were complained of in Oudh and Allahabad in the agitations of 1920-22 and 1930-31 were not as prevalent.³⁷ Of Ghazipur the 1886 Settlement Report observed that written

34. Calculated from Settlement Forecast, Azamgarh, 1940, U.P.Gazette, Part VIII, 28 December 1940, pp.3035-36.

35. Ibid., p.3032.

36. S.R.Ghazipur, p.91, para 175.

37. R.R.R. Parāna Zamana, Ghazipur, Allahabad, 1931, p.6, para 13; R.R.R. Parānas Muhammadabad Zahurabad and Dehma, 1929-30, p.6, para 16. Where nazrana was taken it was as a kind of compensation in cases where the landlord could not prevent conferment of occupancy right, R.R.R. Sikanderpur West and Bhadaon, 1929-30, Ballia, Allahabad, 1931, p.12, para 17; R.R.R. Phulpur, Azamgarh, August 1942, para 21.

receipts were nearly always demanded by and given to every tenant whose name appeared on the jamabandi.³⁴ In 1888 when rent and revenue were made payable by money order, a system which helped the tenant to maintain a record of payment, it was observed that this system had been longest in force in the Benares Division but had not yet taken root in Oudh.³⁵ Payment of rent by money order was in fact one form of tenant combativeness in Oudh in the 1930-31 agitation.³⁶

The strong position of the high caste tenant in these districts derived from a pattern of agrarian relations in which taluqdars had not been able to consolidate a position of supremacy over other members of the clan in lineage based estates. Such estates were a marked feature of this region.³⁷ The cohesion which the high caste lineages were able to display had in the past enabled them to consolidate a position of privileged landholding whether as tenants or as zamindars.

Even before the accession of these districts this ability to preserve privilege had been demonstrated. Raja Bulwant Singh of Benares (1740-70) had made a

34. S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, p.71, para 146.

35. N.W.P. and Oudh Administration Report, 1888-89, Allahabad, 1890, p.xiii.

36. In November 1931 it was reported that in one or two districts where landlords had tried to credit rent payments to arrears tenants had adopted the plan of remitting rents by money order or by depositing it in court. FRUP II November 1931.

37. See Chapter 2, "The Pattern of Agrarian Relations".

determined effort to destroy the independence of these lineages but even so zamindars who had been deprived of their right to collect revenue were sometimes left in possession of the resources of the village such as grazing, fisheries, forest produce, and with the right of taking a portion of traditional zamindari cesses such as abkaree, ghardewalee, khurgahee and rahdaree.⁴²

In the early decades after accession, when many Rajput and Bhumihar estates were put to auction purchase for default of revenue, a lineage which could put up a cohesive resistance to the auction purchaser continued in possession of their sir, usually the best land in the village. Furthermore on this land they insisted on paying low and fixed rates of rent.⁴³ As a result they continued in fact to control land as a resource and this along with their local power kept them in a position of dominance over the other low caste cultivators in the village or the estate.⁴⁴ This was reflected both in their own perception as well as in the perception of the other cultivators. In the estates acquired by the Raja of Jaunpur in Azamgarh through sale for arrears of revenue it was reported that the old owners "continued in

42. Cesses on spirits, houses, looms and roads, W. Oldhan, H.S.M. Ghazipur, Pt. II, 1876, p. 93,

43. See Chapter 2.

44. See Chapter 2.

possession of sayar, talked of their tenancies as sir and paid very easy rents with reluctance.⁴⁵ W. Oldham, one of the mandarin administrators of his time, noted in his memoirs of Ghazipur that dispossessed land owners were still called zamindars while the auction purchaser received the less dignified title of neelamdar.⁴⁶ In Ballia district too on many estates the landholding clans continued in possession as communities of privileged tenants. In the Doaba pargana where the Raja of Dumraon had acquired large areas after the accession the Rajput and Bhumihar tenants paid fixed rents and they mortgaged and sold their lands as freely as if they were proprietors.⁴⁷

Revenue policy in these districts had also favoured a pattern of landholding in which small and medium zamindars preponderated and in which taluqdars were not especially marked out for favour as they were in the Oudh settlement after 1857.⁴⁸ Thomson's 1837

45. S.R. Azamgarh, 1908, p. 10, para 1.

46. W. Oldham, H.S.M. 1876, Pt. II, p. 42.

47. D.G. Ballia, 1907, pp. 88-89; see Bernard Cohn, "Structural Change in Indian Rural Society 1596-1885" in R.E. Frykenburg (ed.), Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History, Delhi, 1979, pp. 53-123, for other instances of defence of privilege by coparcenars.

48. "In the North Western Provinces," wrote Baden-Powell, "...persons holding a superior position in the nature of a Taluqdari, were only occasionally settled with; more often they were granted a cash allowance and certain privileges while the Settlement was direct with the villages. In Oudh Taluqdars were always settled with wherever their claims were apparent." B.H. Baden-Powell, Land Systems of British India, Delhi 1973, p. 203.

report on Azamgarh had noted that there were not as many talukas here of the kind which existed in the western provinces and such as existed were of no great size.⁴⁹ In the Benares Division too settlement policy favoured arrangements with the village zamindars.⁵⁰ In these districts, therefore, the taluqdar-tenant divide of leftist historiography, could not really apply and the broad stratum of small and medium zamindars,⁵¹ not sharply separated from the strata of upper caste privileged tenants in terms of income, status, or power, formed dominant landholding communities which exercised a conservative influence on any expression of unrest on the part of the really wretched sections of agrarian society - the agricultural labourers and the sub-tenants of sir or, as was common here, also of tenanted land.⁵²

The incidence of sub-tenancy was quite significant in these districts though the extent of sub-tenancy was under-reported because the shikmi was usually not given receipts for the rents he paid.⁵³ Shikmi rents could be

49. J. Thomson^a, Report on the Settlement of "Chuklah Azimgurh", 16 December 1837, para 51, henceforth S.R. Azamgarh, 1837.

50. Baden-Powell, op. cit., p. 6

51. The Number of zamindars and percentage^{of} total district land revenue paid by each category, 1946-47, is shown in the table on the following page.

52. S.R. Ghazipur, 1886, p. 90, para 175.

53. S.R. Ghazipur 1886, p. 71, para 146, p. 190, para 175. The 1907 Ballia Gazetteer puts the incidence of sub-tenancy at about 26 per cent of the district, D.G.

Number of Zamindars and Percentage of Total District Land
Revenue Paid by Each Category 1946-47

District	Under Rs. 25		Rs. 25-250		Rs. 250-1000		Rs. 1000-5000		Rs. 5000-10000		Over Rs. 10000		Total land revenue
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	
Ghazipur	37,013	27.0	5,644	43.3	292	16.7	53	11.9	2	1.3	0	0.00	8,15,005
Ballia	31,596	28.4	3,121	31.6	216	14.9	30	8.3	0	0.0	1	16.8	6,18,233
Azamgarh	89,681	31.0	14,084	41.4	553	11.9	76	7.3	4	1.2	3	7.3	19,83,690

Source: Report of the United Provinces Zamindari Abolition Committee,
Vol. II, Allahabad, 1948, pp. 12-17.

subjected to sharp increases because the shikmi had no security beyond his inability to pose any threat to the landlord. The kind of exactions levied on the shikmi and his family were such that the distinction between the sub-tenant and the agricultural labourer who received a grant of rent free land in part payment for his labour, was not very clear.⁵⁴ Both arrangements represented a situation in which one party, in conditions of poor bargaining power and low social status, desired to secure a minimal subsistence. Both positions also implied a degree of personal subordination in the relationship.⁵⁵

With the Congress Ministry and the promise of tenancy legislation the issue of a record of tenancy became very important. The zamindars were anxious to have as much land on record as their sir and the tenant on the other hand was anxious to keep in possession whatever land he had under the impression that he would be given

53. (contd...)
Ballia, 1907, pp. 103-104. The 1886 Settlement Report Ghazipur puts the figure as 18.7 per cent of sir and 6.16 per cent of tenanted land i.e. about 10-15 per cent of cultivated area, p. 90, para 176. In Azamgarh in 1940 the percentage of sub-letting on sir and khudkasht was 28 per cent which works out to 9.8 per cent of holding area. Settlement Forecast, Azamgarh, 1940, p. 3037, para 13
54. Offg. Secretary, Board of Revenue to Secretary, Revenue Department, 25 August 1887, p. 11, para 20, S.R. Ghazipur, 1886.
55. Asiya Siddiqi, op.cit., pp. 39-40.

secure rights over it.⁵⁶ In such a situation the position of tenants of sir and of khudkasht was particularly vulnerable, especially when there was no record of this tenancy in the village papers. This was a position which had been accepted by sub-tenants because of their helplessness even when, as in Gorakhpur or in Basti districts, they had been in continuous possession of khudkasht land for a long time.⁵⁷ This section was particularly dependent for a verification of their tenancy on the patwari without whose cooperation their names could not be entered on the village

56. R.A.R. 1938-39, U.P. Gazette, Pt. VIII, 2303, para 7, p. 2311, para 22; The 1939 Tenancy Act allowed landlords paying more than Rs. 250/- annually as revenue to keep all the sir they had acquired before the Acts of 1921 and 1926 which had not been sub-let (emphasis added). This held whatever the area of the sir. If, however, a part of this sir was sub-let the landlord was allowed to keep 50 acres of sir in all. Smaller landlords, i.e. those who paid Rs. 250/- or less as land revenue could keep sir acquired before or after the 1921 or 1926 Acts. Tenants cultivating sir land which had ceased to be sir under the 1939 Act were to acquire the rights of hereditary tenancy. B.R. Misra, Land Revenue Policy in the United Provinces, 1942, pp. 177-78.

57. See below, p. 22

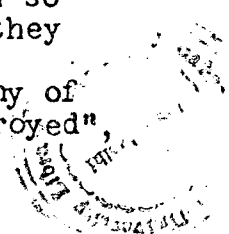
papers.⁵⁸ As illustrated later, in the course of the Civil Disobedience movement the tenantry in certain districts had begun to insist upon the observance of the clauses of tenancy law instead of accepting relations of customary deference. Recourse to the law was perceived by the zamindar as contumacy. This insistence widened further in the period of the Congress Ministry.⁵⁹

Zamindars responded by withdrawing certain customary rights of usage of pasture and fallow and forest which they had allowed their tenants, and to bring this land under the category of sir. They also began to withdraw grants of land made to harwahas, ploughmen, and artisans either for their services or for their residence, abadi.⁶⁰ Tenants also began to withdraw customary services and to refuse to vacate land that was registered as the khudkasht

58. The Zamindari Abolition Committee Report (1948) indicated that it was precisely in the sphere of determination of sir and khudkasht that the patwari could work the greatest mischief. Daniel Thorner, The Agrarian Prospect in India, Delhi, 1956, p.48.

59. ⁱⁿ 1936-37 it was noted that the concealment of rent which was prevalent in certain areas of the province was rapidly disappearing with the general awakening among the tenants. The distribution of slips in connection with grant of remissions had enabled tenants to know their recorded rents and to withstand payments in excess of the legal demand. R.A.R. 1936-37 Allahabad, 1939, p.16.

60. "Many zamindars are now attempting to stop privileges to tenants which were customarily given to them so far and the tenants are claiming rights which they did not possess at any time". R.A.R. 1937-38, Allahabad 1939, Appendix B, p.2; "...the harmony of the old village community has been partly destroyed", R.A.R. 1938-39, Allahabad, 1949.



of the zamindar. In this they were often encouraged by the local Congress activist who also encouraged them to get their tenancies recorded.⁶¹

Confusion in land records fell particularly hard on the vulnerable section of the tenants-at-will and sub-tenants because it afforded the possibility of concealing rent and of continuing to record as khudkasht tenanted land of long occupation. The Revenue Administration Report for 1936-37 had noted that land records were not satisfactory in Gorakhpur and in the Permanent Settlement area of Benares Division.⁶² Permanent fixation of revenue demand meant that the periodic updating of records attendant upon revision of revenue was not undertaken. The last revision of records for Benares division was undertaken in the 1880s.

61. In Ballia there was apprehension that the tenants would take the land from which they had been ejected. P.A.I. 17 September 1937. In Azamgarh tenants of the dewara (diara) area began occupying khudkasht under the impression that whatever land was now occupied would be theirs, P.A.I. 23 October 1937. In Basti, Indrasan Singh, a D.C.C. member told tenants they should sacrifice their lives for fields cultivated by them even if they were not recorded in their names. In Gorakhpur, Swami Sachitanand said that a patwari whose wrong entry had led to a case against some Chamars over a field dispute, deserved to be beaten, P.A.I. 21 May 1938. In Azamgarh Ram Sumer Singh said peasants should not give up sir and khudkasht in their possession and should beat the zamindars' karindas if they visited their fields and turn out the zamindars' ploughmen and bullocks. P.A.I. 30 July 1938. In Siswa Bazar, Gorakhpur, Shibanlal Saxena told kisans to cut whatever crops they had sown regardless of entries in Patwaris' records. P.A.I. 17 September 1938.

62. R.A.R. 1936-37, p.16. There had been similar complaints earlier too, see U.P.A.R. 1914-15, Allahabad, 1916, p 3, para 28.

In Gorakhpur it was in the terai region that the record of the area under various kinds of tenure was inaccurate. This was because cultivation in the terai region had started expanding rapidly only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and surveys and record operations had lagged behind this development. When this tract had been thinly populated landlords had rented out land in large parcels at a flat rate per acre in order to induce tenants to cultivate.⁶³ Between the revenue settlements of 1889 and 1919, however, population pressure had caught up with this tract and the landlord could now increase rents without fearing that his land would fall out of cultivation.⁶⁴ He tried to do so without at the same time having to pay a correspondingly higher revenue through the device of the varying bigha. In the village papers he continued to keep the rent recorded as that paid on the original bigha but in fact calculated the rent for the tenant on a much smaller bigha, the notorious "zamindari bigha".⁶⁵ In fact the

63. Report on the Revenue Settlement of the North-Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency under Regulation IX, 1833, Vol. II, Part I, Benares 1868, p. 502, para II.

64. S.R. Gorakhpur, Western tahsils, 1919, pp. 16-17, paras 44-45.

65. R.R.R. Tilpur, Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, 1915-16, pp. 13-14, paras 20-21. R.R.R. Maharajganj, 1940, U.P. Gazette, Part VII, pp. 382-83. R.R.R. Pharenda 1940, ibid., pp. 397-98, R.R.R. Hata 1941, p. 1505, para 6.

very possibility of concealing rents had the effect now of raising land value in the terai.⁶⁶ In addition in the terai large tracts of land were recorded or continued to be recorded as sir and khudkasht which had been in the cultivating possession of tenants. Tenants on this land were in a vulnerable legal position because their tenancy of this land went unrecorded. This therefore, rendered them open to the screwing up of rents and the levy of nazarana for fear of eviction.⁶⁷ When the Congress assumed office the expectations it had engendered in the tenantry led to the development of a movement in the terai tahsil of Maharajganj in Gorakhpur for the correction of sir and khudkasht entries.⁶⁸ This movement was led by the local Congress M.L.A. Shibbanlal Saxena and resulted in an escalation of agrarian tension which caused considerable problems for the Congress Ministry.⁶⁹ As a result of

66. R.R.R., Pargana Tilpur, op.cit., p.13, para 19. The price of land in Gorakhpur was accounted as higher than in any other district in the province. S.R. Gorakhpur, 1919 (western tahsils), p.15, para 58.

67. The tendency was observed in the 1919 settlements in the terai region of Basti and Gorakhpur and carried on thereafter. S.R. Basti, 1915-19, p.13, para 23, S.R. Gorakhpur, (western tahsils), 1919, p.19, para 24, R.R.R. Maharajganj, 1940, U.P.Gazette, Part VIII 17 February 1940, p.381, R.R.R. Pharenda, 1940, Ibid. p.396.

68. P.A.I. 9 October 1937; P.A.I. 7 May 1938.

69. See Hallet to Brabourne, 22 July 1938, Haig to Linlithgow, 25 March 1939, Linlithgow, Mss.Eur.F. 125/102.

this agitation, survey and record operations were conducted in Maharajganj tahsil during 1937-39. By August 1938 the survey showed that about 26 per cent of the area recorded as sir and khudkasht was actually under the cultivation of tenants.⁷⁰

In the districts of Azamgarh, Ballia and Ghazipur, though sporadic incidents over the possession of khudkasht land did take place,⁷¹ no movement as such developed for the recording of tenants of sir and khudkasht land. Why this was so is again related to the structure of agrarian relations here which created a divide between the high caste tenant and the low caste tenant and labourer, both due to the fact of a caste privilege in rents and because of the privilege of caste status. In the permanent settlement districts the high caste tenant with secure tenancy was quite as likely to sub-let his land as the zamindar.⁷²

In Maharajganj tahsil tenants had a greater commonality of interests against the zamindars and this enabled a joint front. In the terai tahsils privilege

70. Reply to a question put by Shibbanlal Saxena, 1 August 1938, U.P.L.A. Debates, Vol. VII, 1 August 1938, Question No. 39.

71. P.A.I. 23 October 1937; P.A.I. 30 July 1938; P.A.I. 6 August 1938.

72. S.R. Ghazipur, 1886, p. 90, para 175.

in rents for the high caste which prevailed in the southern tahsils of Gorakhpur and in the districts of Azamgarh, Ballia and Ghazipur was not recognised.⁷³ These districts had been cleared and colonised when landholding had become a matter of profit, not a means of dispensation of patronage. Rental profit, not the possession of retainers, was what determined rent rates. Secondly, occupancy tenants here also felt the pressure of the various stratagems which the landlords resorted to in order to raise rents without raising the rates recorded in the village papers.⁷⁴ In the Benares Division concealed rent was not a problem for the occupancy tenant.

Agrarian tension, therefore, for all these reasons took on a more fractured pattern than in certain other districts of the United Provinces. For that reason perhaps the Kisan Sabha organisation had never been very strong here. In August 1919 it was reported that a branch of the Allahabad Kisan Sabha had been set up in Rasra, in Ballia. Its agents were reported to be urging tenants to subdue the authority of the zamindars

73. S.R.Gorakhpur (western tahsils) 1919; R.R.R. tahsils Maharajganj and Pharenda, 1940, U.P.Gazette, Pt. VIII 17 February 1940, p. 384, para 8.

74. R.R.R. Eastern Haveli, Gorakhpur, 1914-15, p. 10, para 13, p. 17, para 27.

and to settle disputes by panchayat.⁷⁵ However, nothing is mentioned about its activities in official records, thereafter.

In the late thirties when the 1936-37 elections and the formation of the Ministry had given an impetus to all kinds of political organisation Kisan Sabha offices were opened in the headquarter towns of these districts also.

Under their aegis some activity against hari and begari and illegal cesses and for the recording of concealed tenancy was undertaken usually in the surrounding dehat area.⁷⁶ Socialists working through the Kisan Sabha did undertake some activity in the Rasra tahsil, Ballia, around Quasimabad in Ghazipur, and in the northern belt of the Azamgarh district along the Ghagra river.⁷⁷ However, such activity did not take on very significant dimensions and the Kisan Sabhas in Ghazipur and Azamgarh were used as a front organisations for the terrorist group which ^{was} reorganising itself in these

75. Note on the "Kisan Sabha or Tenant Association" C.I.D., United Provinces, File No.49/ January 1920, Home Poll. N.A.I.

76. Interview, Pabbar Ram, Kisan Sabha worker and terrorist party member who was beaten up in 1937 by zamindar's for trying to get tenants registered in Kundesar, Ghazipur; also interview, Jharkhand Rai, 3 March 1983, New Delhi.

77. Interview, Jharkhand Rai.

districts.⁷⁸ In Ghazipur the Kisan Sabha, set up in 1936, had among its prominent workers "Dada" Loknath Singh, Pabbar Ram and Ram Sundar who were also members of the H.S.R.A. Through them the H.S.R.A. won influence ^{over} the C.S.P. and Kisan Sabha cadres as well.⁷⁹

The terrorist groups in eastern U.P. had a significant impact on the student population but the fact that these districts did not generate any significant agrarian movement contributed to the reasons why the 1942 movement did not here develop a sustained form of parallel authority such as for instance was the case in South Gujarat where the movement was slow to take off but parallel authority more prolonged.⁸⁰ In Satara district, the prati sarkar carried on till 1944 drawing for its strength on the tradition of peasant militancy associated with the non-Brahman movement.⁸¹ In 1942 the response to the movement in Eastern U.P. did not have any significant correlation with pockets of agrarian unrest within these districts. For instance, in Madhuban circle, Azamgarh the peasant

78. Jharkhande Rai, Krantikariyon ke Sansmaron, Hindi, Delhi, 1970. Baldau Pandey, a prominent organiser of the 1942 movement in Ghazipur also records the impression that Kisan Sabha activity in the thirties was nominal. Interview, Ghazipur, 26 June 1984.

79. Jharkhande Rai, op.cit., pp.27-28.

80. David Hardiman, op.cit.

81. Gail Omvedt, op.cit.

mob which tried to take over thana was drawn both from Dubari diara to the north which had been notorious for agrarian trouble and the Misran to the south which was strongly pro-Congress.⁸²

Did the response to the movement in these districts spring from the special turbulence of a particular section of the peasantry? A confidential telegram sent by the U.P. Government to the Home Department in the thick of the movement reported that "much of the trouble is due to the local Ahirs who have distinct criminal tendencies."⁸³

The Gazetteer of Ghazipur had also described the Ahirs as being "of a somewhat turbulent disposition" and held them responsible for a large proportion of the agrarian crime.⁸⁴

In Ghazipur I was told that the Ahirs were noted for running akharas, and that it was from them that the zamindars sometimes recruited their lathials (musclemen).⁸⁵

Looking through files in Ghazipur Collectorate this researcher found one Bichhi Ahir who constituted one such bellicose type. Bichhi was "by habit a badmash who takes money from one party to join mar-pit against the other and

82. Niblett, op.cit., p. 10.

83. Telegram, Confidential Department, U.P. Government, to Home Dept., 20 August 1942, File XV-50.

84. D.G. Ghazipur 1909, p. 84.

85. Interview Baldu Pandey, 26 June 1984, Ghazipur.

damages crops of other persons and also threatens them."⁸⁶
 In certain cases dealing with the looting of a goods train at Nandganj, Ghazipur there is a goodly representation of Ahirs.⁸⁷ However, these cases represent just a handful of names among crowds which, by the prosecution evidence, sometimes swelled to twenty or thirty thousand.⁸⁸

The Ahirs in these districts did not own much land but formed a substantial section of the tenantry.⁸⁹ They came under the category of low but not ritually "polluting" castes. Some field work done by Bernard Cohn in a Thakur dominated village in Jaunpur in the fifties and by Rajendra Singh in the Basti district suggests that from about late thirties there was a development in which the "clean" low

86. The prosecution witnesses, "men of substance both zamindars and tenants", testified to this and Bichhi was required to execute a bond for good behaviour. Case u/s 110, C.R.P. 28 February 1942, Basta 1942-43, Ghazipur Collectorate, Criminal Record Room. It might have been the same Bichhi who on 2 January was sentenced for having looted the Government seed store at Nandganj on 19 August 1942, Case No.73, Basta 1942-43, Nandganj, *ibid*.

87. Cases No.6/7, 7/8, 19, 69, 71, 233, of 1943, *ibid*. These relate to the possession of cloth looted from the train and sentences passed were remarkably severe. In one of the cases relating to the looting of a grain dealer's boat during the movement by a gang shouting "Gandhiji ki jai", the seven found guilty were Ahirs and of the eleven let off, seven were also Ahirs. Criminal Appeal No.208 (G) of 1943.

88. *Ibid*.

89. D.G.Ghazipur 1909, p.84. In Azamgarh Ahirs held the largest proportion of tenanted land (22.6 per cent). D.G.Azamgarh, 1911, p.115.

castes allied with the "untouchable" castes to get a stronger hold over the land they rented from the dominant landholding castes.⁹⁰ Their research shows that it was eventually only the "clean" castes who were in a stronger position to benefit from the Zamindari Abolition Act of 1951.⁹¹ The fact that the Ahirs came in for special notice from officials does seem to suggest that they were a tougher lot than the other tenants. One of the prominent political workers of Azamgarh recalled that the C.S.P. did organise peasants in the northern belt of Azamgarh along the Ghagra in the period 1938-42 and accounts this again rather obscurely to the Ahirs being "somewhat criminal minded."⁹² This suggests the same thing.

90. In 1938 the Chamars of "Madhopur" made their first large scale attack upon Thakur domination by allying with the Noniyas, a low but clean caste, who were asserting their legal rights to permanency of tenure. Bernard Cohn, "The Changing Status of a Depressed Caste", and "Madhopur revisited", in A.R.Desai (ed.), Rural Sociology in India, pp.354-363, 372-77; Rajendra Singh "Peasant Movements in U.P.," in M.S.A. Rao (ed.), Social Movements in India, Vol.I, Delhi 1978, pp.91-148.

91. In fact Cohn found that the Chamars who were mainly shikmis (sub-tenants) were worse off because now they could not get land to rent. Ibid., pp.372-74.

92. Interview, Jharkhande Rai. In October 1937 it was reported that tenants of the diara area in Azamgarh were occupying khudkasht land. P.A.I. 23 October 1937. See also Niblett, op.cit., p.1 for a reference to agrarian trouble along the Ghagra in the period of the Congress ministry.

Though there are, therefore, indications that the period of the ministry aroused the expectations of the tenurially insecure peasantry of these districts the response to the 1942 movement was not drawn from them alone but from every section of agrarian society.⁹³

Turning now to the years immediately preceding the movement there are two issues on which the Congress was active on the kisan front. One was the issue of the price of cane and the other was the use of certain sections of the 1939 Act to evict tenants.

The intervention of the Congress in the relations between the sugar factories and the grower had started in the early thirties when mills began to be set up in Gorakhpur district. In Ballia, Ghazipur and in Azamgarh the indigenous sugar industry had declined by the late nineteenth century due to the import of foreign sugar.⁹⁴ In Azamgarh in particular the indigenous sugar industry had been a very important source of income. In the thirties when modern sugar factories were set up in Gorakhpur they also began to attract cane from the cis-Ghagra districts.⁹⁵ In particular cane formed an important kharif crop in Azamgarh and provided the

93. See Chapter 4, "The Crowd and Parallel Government".

94. Shahid Amin, "Notes Towards a Comparative Analysis of the Sugar Economies of Colonial Eastern U.P. and Java," unpublished.

95. R.R.R. Parganas Sikanderpur West and Bhadaon, Ballia 1929-30, p. 9, para 20. Shahid Amin, Sugarcane and Sugar in Gorakhpur, Delhi 1984, p. 296.

cultivator with the cash he needed to meet rent and revenue payments.⁹⁶ However, it was in the sub-Himalayan tract of eastern U.P. particularly in Gorakhpur and northern Bihar that the dependence on mill off take of cane was particularly acute. A crisis of over-production would, therefore, hit these districts very hard because they could not divert surplus cane into gur and khandsari production as cane growers in western U.P. could.⁹⁷ The cane grower here was, therefore, very dependent on mill offtake and fluctuations in the price paid by mills hit him very hard. In the season 1940-41 the cane growers faced an acute crisis because factories cut down both on price and offtake.⁹⁸ Congress intervened on this issue and the socialists were reported to be making an effort to revive the Kisan Sangh and to reactivate the peasantry on this issue in early 1941.⁹⁹

96. Settlement Forecast, Azamgarh, 1940, op.cit., p.3034
para 7, R.R.R.Tahsil Phulpur, 1 August 1942, op.cit.,
p. 1283.

97. Shahid Amin, op.cit., pp. 103-109.

98. In the season 1939-40 large stocks of sugar priced rather high had accumulated. U.P.A.R. 1940, p.15. In the subsequent season, therefore, the price of cane had been fixed low and factories allocated a certain quota for the amount of cane they were to crush. This had left the cultivators with large stocks of uncrushed cane.

99. However, by February it was noted that the attempt to enroll fresh members by the Kisan Sangh had met with little success. A.P.S., 1 January 1941,
21 February 1941, FRUP II, January 1941.

The cis-Ghagra districts must also have been affected by this crisis but the following figures for utilisation of cane in the year 1940 given by Shahid Amin suggest that a large portion of the cane here was still made into gur.

Table III

Utilisation of Sugar Cane Crop in 1940

Districts	Absorbed by producers before market- ing %	Sent to sugar factories %	Made into gur %	Made into raab %
Banaras	11.0	9	80	-
Ballia	11.5	36	52	0.5
Ghazipur	13.0	30	55	2.0
Gorakhpur	15.0	63	15	7.0

Source: Shahid Amin, op.cit., Appendix 4.8, p.296.

Moreover, the correlation between discontent over the price of cane and the level of response to 1942 does not hold good for, in an area like the Doaba pargana of Ballia, where practically no cane was grown, large crowds were mobilised. In fact if the level of agrarian discontent had been ^{the} main cause in 1942 then Gorakhpur should have been the storm centre for there was unrest over the revision of records, ejectments and the price of cane. In fact the Congress leaders in the period after resignation had made this district the special focus of their

attention and in June 1942 the Government had expressed the opinion that any new move from Congress would open with an attack in Gorakhpur.¹⁰⁰ In actual fact, though there were riots and railway sabotage, Gorakhpur never went completely out of control and not a single police station was abandoned.¹⁰¹ Moreover, by the next year, i. e. the 1941-42 season the quantity of cane sown had decreased. The market for sugar improved, cane prices rose¹⁰² and the situation in this respect became less tense.

The other issue around which there was agrarian discontent in the period after resignation was the operation of a certain clause of the tenancy Act - Section 171 - which allowed a landlord to evict a tenant who had been sub-letting his land in a way which violated the provisions of the Act. The Agra tenancy Act of 1926 had in such a case allowed the tenant one month to get his land vacated to escape ejectment. The Oudh Act did not have this provision and it had been overlooked in

100. File No. 1240/1941, Box No. 82, Police Dept., URSA, FRUP II June 1942.

101. According to the S.S.S. volume for Gorakhpur plans to "take over" were made only on the 21 August and apart from Ghosi-Basantpur there was not much to report from Gorakhpur. S.S.S., Vol. 35, Gorakhpur, pp. 24-25.

102. U.P.A.R. 1942, Lucknow 1943, p. 21.

the 1939 Act.¹⁰³ Congressmen alleged that the Act was being misused in a way which had never been intended and the fact that the Advisory Government did not amend it strengthened their contention. The figures given for ejection of tenants and sub-tenants under Section 171 by the Zamindari Abolition Committee report do not give a district wise break up though protest meetings against the use of this section seem to have been particularly frequent in Gorakhpur and Meerut. Since subletting by

Table IV

Figures for ejection of Tenants and Sub-tenants under Section 171

Year	Total no. of cases disposed of	No. in which ejection was actually ordered	Area in acres from which ejection actually took place
1939-40	2,172	664	709.3
1940-41	16,083	7,536	6,306.77
1941-42	42,051	21,142	31,458.43
1942-43	50,257	24,859	38,148.43
...	46,610	24,174	32,200.46
Total	1,57,173	78,368	

Source: Zamindari Abolition Committee Report, Vol. I, Allahabad 1948, p.351.

high caste tenants was quite significant in the districts of this study this section was probably applied here too. Though under the Permanent Settlement the fixed-rate tenant had been allowed to sub-let without restriction.

Overall, however, the area affected by the application of this section was not very large and there is no evidence that it applied to these districts with special force. In general, therefore, there is no indication of a sharp swell of agrarian tension in these districts stemming either from a challenge to the existing structure or from a more general grievance. It is in this context that the significance of one aspect of crowd activity must be examined in this chapter itself¹⁰⁴ the burning of land records. The first point to be noted is that land records were not specially selected for destruction. All official papers whether at a post office or railway station or thana were burnt. Taking the total of the figures for both partial and total destruction of land records the highest incidences in the province are reported from the following districts

Table V
Combined Figures for Partial and Total Destruction of Land Records

District	No. of villages
Ballia	130, in addition all records in Bansdih tahsil record room were destroyed.
Benares	47
Ghazipur	39 in addition all records in Muhammedabad tahsil record room were destroyed
Gorakhpur	38
Meerut	14

Source: FRUP II, September 1942, Appendix I-A. See source for the tally for other districts.

104. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of crowd behaviour.

In Azamgarh land records were partially destroyed in only two villages.¹⁰⁵

Significantly the tally is highest for precisely those districts where land records were earlier reported as in a state of confusion¹⁰⁶ and where this confusion fell hardest upon those tenants whose occupation of sir and khudkasht land went unrecorded. This also fuelled resentment against the keeper of land records, the patwari, who had considerable power over the making of entries in the village papers and made this a source of extortion and harassment. The correlation seems to be of significance. However, there is no evidence that the attack on land records and on patwaris came specially from this section. All official authority whether in the form of papers or functionaries came under attack. The destruction of records was in fact occasionally led by the student element and in one instance it was the son of a patwari who was accused of leading a gang of school boys to seize papers from four patwaris in village Bala Khurd, Ghazipur.¹⁰⁷ On the whole, therefore, the destruction of records and the attack on patwaris falls into a

105. FRUP II September 1942, Appendix I-A.

106. Land records had been found unsatisfactory in Gorakhpur district and in Benares division R.A.R. 1936-37, p.16.

107. Criminal Sessions Trial No.61(G) of 1944 consolidated with Criminal Sessions Trial No.52(G) of 1944, Basta Ordinance Case 1944, Ghazipur Sessions Court Record Room.

pattern in which the thrust is anti-government. However, the problems associated with inaccurate land records in these districts probably gave a special impetus to this form of attack.

Shifting now to the war situation to explain the location of the August movement, it becomes clear that the general poverty of the eastern districts, as reflected in the precariousness of their food economies and their link to the agro-commercial flows of eastern India as well as their dependence on emigrant remittances from the east made them especially vulnerable to currents of political and economic unease flowing from the war. In a general manner, this factor was also recognised by the official mind.¹⁰⁸

The picture of precariousness is briefly drawn in the following facts - the eastern plain region was the most densely populated,¹⁰⁹ the most rural in terms of demographic distribution and in ratio of agricultural to

108. Among other reasons cited by the government for the location of the movement was the density of the population, the fact that holdings were so small that even districts which were almost entirely rural had to import their food and the stoppage of remittances from Burma and Malaya, FRUP II August 1942. Niblett accounts the movement to the "grinding poverty of the masses, the lack of outlook for the educated and the unrest concomitant with all ineffective wars, the urge to throw off foreign rule". op.cit., p.55

109. U.P.Census, 1951, Vol.II, part I-A, Report, Allahabad 1953, p.24, Table 26, Variation in density by natural divisions, 1901-51.

non-agricultural classes,¹¹⁰ and with the smallest average holdings in the whole province.¹¹¹ Azamgarh was a significantly food-deficit district¹¹² and there is some indication that Ballia and Ghazipur too might have imported food on balance.¹¹³ The food position in Azamgarh, Ballia and Ghazipur was related to the agro-commercial flows of Bihar and Bengal which were linked to the Burmese rice market in a very crucial way. Bihar and Bengal were food deficit provinces, the U.P. only slightly deficit in rice. In 1940-41 there had been some shortage of rice in U.P. and Bihar.¹¹⁴ In 1941-42

110. Ibid., p.114, Table 90, Rural and urban population by natural divisions. The East Plain also had the highest ratio of persons of agricultural classes (82.8 per cent) to persons of non-agricultural classes (17.2 per cent). In the West Plain which had a high degree of urbanisation and industrialisation the proportion was 66 per cent and 34 per cent respectively. Ibid., p.206, Table 169.
111. Ibid., p.223. Table 191, distribution of 1000 agricultural holdings according to size of holdings by natural division.
112. Settlement Forecast, Azamgarh, 1940, op.cit., p.3031, para 2.
113. Though I have not been able to get evidence for Ghazipur and Ballia for the period under survey, the 1886 Settlement Report for Ghazipur contains the following passage: "The best informed mahajans say there is no export trade in these grains (wheat, barley, gram and rice). On the contrary they assert that grain is imported." S.R.Ghazipur 1886, p.121, para 232. The 1907 Gazetteer for Ballia lists the chief articles of commerce on the Ganges for Ballia as rice, coal and timber from the markets of Bengal. In these two districts as in Azamgarh substantial emigration started taking place from the 1891-1900 decade. See Chapter 2.
114. Famine Enquiry Commission, Report on Bengal, New Delhi, 1945, pp.17, 24, 42.

Bihar had sub-normal rice crops and in U.P. the crops were poorer than in previous years.¹¹⁵ However, in 1942, till June, it was the prices of wheat and barley which kept rising and shortages were experienced in wheat particularly in the central districts of U.P. Dacoity figures for these districts began to increase.¹¹⁶

As long as the possibility of imports from Burma remained then, despite poor harvests, there was little speculative activity in the rice markets, and the movement of rice prices was more subdued than that of wheat. With the fall of Burma, however, (Rangoon was evacuated on 7th March) this flexibility was destroyed. It was the diversion of demand formerly met from Burma to the Indian markets which started the price rise for rice in the summer of 1942.¹¹⁷

Prices of rice had begun to rise in Calcutta from the beginning of 1942 and the Government of Bengal decided to fix maximum prices with effect from 1 July 1942. The Bihar Government decided to fix their own maximum prices in parity with them. But the price of

115. Ibid., p. 17.

116. FRUP I, March 1942; Government attributed the rise in dacoity figures in February and May 1942 in the central districts to their position between the "rice eating East and the wheat exporting West," FRUP I, June 1942.

117. Famine Enquiry Commission, op.cit., p.24, p.79.

rice rose suddenly in U.P. and large quantities of rice began to be exported from northern Bihar to adjoining districts of U.P.¹¹⁸ This upset the markets of North Bihar and prices rose. To try to keep prices in Bihar in parity with those in Bengal the Bihar Government prohibited the export of rice to any market outside the province except under permit.¹¹⁹

This situation was bound to have an impact both in North Bihar where there was insecurity about the export of scarce rice to the U.P. and in the adjoining food deficit districts of U.P. which now faced uncertainty about supply and where the price of rice was rising sharply. In Champaran district Bihar there were seven cases of looting of hats in the second half of June.¹²⁰ In June the U.P. government also reported that dacoities were high in the east and a connection with high prices and food grain shortages was suggested.¹²¹

118. Ibid., p.24; FR Bihar II June 1942.

119. Famine Enquiry Commission, op.cit., p.26.

120. FR Bihar II, June 1942.

121. FRUP II June 1942. In a speech at a police parade, Lucknow, 27 November 1943, the U.P. Governor Maurice Hallet had said that even before the disturbances there had been some increase in crime due to the unsettling effect of the war. Hallet Mss Eur.and E, 251/39, LOR, Pos.2899, microfilm, U.P.S.A. Surprisingly, however, the local activists one talked to in Benares and in Ghazipur did not mention this as a factor in the unrest.

The prohibition on exports from Bihar linked with the cutting off of the possibility of rice imports from Burma probably created a scarcity situation in these eastern districts. In Azamgarh the Collector had taken note of such a tendency:

Just before the rebellion I had sent out a contingent of clerks to the various railway stations. They had reported that in the year ending 31 March no less than 20 million maunds of rice and 18 million maunds of wheat had been imported into the district. The imports of rice from Burmah and Behar had quite ceased some time previously; and now owing to the rupture in communications, wheat was also not available.¹²²

Though the poorest sections of the population consumed cheaper food grains like barley rather than rice the pressure on rice probably put pressure on the supply of the cheaper food grains too.

The precariousness of the economies of these districts in terms of food supply was not balanced out by any income generating industries. The indigenous sugar industry, which had been particularly important in Azamgarh had been thrust into decline by the competition first of foreign imports and then by indigenous mill-made sugar.¹²³ Weaving, which had been a very important

122. Niblett, op.cit., p.5.

123. D.G.Ghazipur, 1909, pp.33-34; D.G.Ballia 1907, pp.36, 54; D.G.Azamgarh, 1911, p.58.

industry in Azamgarh, had managed to survive but was under intense pressure from mill cloth.¹²⁴ In Ballia and Ghazipur the production of finer cloth had disappeared.¹²⁵

The income flows which kept thousands of peasant families afloat were generated not within the district but from wage labour in the mines of Chota Nagpur, the industries of Calcutta and the tea plantations of Assam.¹²⁶ The money order represented the tie which linked the seasonal or long term migrant to the minimal security of the family farm and thereby also to the moneylender who had helped to meet the expenses of the journey:

The Hooghly, with more than double the demand of Bombay for factory labour is surrounded by the heavily populated districts of Bengal but does not draw the bulk of its factory workers from them... The bulk of jute mill labour comes from the west of Bihar and east of the United Provinces, a tract lying from 300 to 500 miles away.¹²⁷

124. D.G.Azamgarh, 1911, p.62.

125. Some coarse cloth was still woven, D.G.Ghazipur 1909; p.64; D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.53.

126. ...the land is crowded; even with 30 per cent of its area growing rice, the district imports rice in large quantities; paying for its requirements to some extent by exports as of linseed, but to an even greater extent by emigration and remittances received ...," Settlement Forecast, Azamgarh, 1940, p.3031, para 2; D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.107; D.G.Ghazipur, 1909, p.53.

127. Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India, Calcutta, 1931, p.11. For the continuing importance of the village connection to the emigrant and the role of the money lender in financing emigration, see ibid., pp. 14, 19.

A report of 1940 observed that the money orders which came into Azamgarh were one and a half to two times the land revenue annually.¹²⁸ This crucial income flow was thrown into jeopardy with the Japanese advance in the east.¹²⁹ The Japanese invasion of Burma led to the return of emigrants from there, and the bombing of Calcutta and the panic in Assam led to the return of larger numbers. Emigrants would tend to return whenever the situation steadied but an element of uncertainty had been introduced. The return of the emigrant contributed to the pressure on food supply.

The movement back and forth of migrant labour from areas closer to the war front also brought to these districts first hand news of British reverses and images of impending collapse and withdrawal drawing upon the situation in Malaya and Burma.¹³⁰ The 1942 movement here was very strongly related to the war conjuncture.

The war had, right from its inception, put a pressure on the incomes of the labouring population of

128. Settlement Forecast, Azamgarh, 1940.

129. Niblett the Collector of Azamgarh estimated the amount flowing into the district in money orders from abroad at 30 lakhs annually and estimated that in the first eleven months of 1941, 10,000 migrants returned home. Niblett, op.cit., p. The return of the emigrant from Burma and Malaya was permanent but the return from places like Assam and Calcutta was probably a more fluctuating phenomenon.

130. See Chapter 3, "The Leadership and the Context," for an account of the political impact of the war.

these districts and of those marginal farmers and tenants who were dependent on wage labour to buy grain in the lean inter-harvest period.

Population pressure and the lack of employment outside agriculture had made Eastern U.P. a low wage zone within the province.¹³¹ The total period of agricultural employment in the year also decreased from west to east, with maximum employment available in the canal irrigated tracts of the North West region or the wheat tracts of the North West and the Central regions.¹³² The relation, therefore, between the labourer and the employer was one in which the labourer looked to "tradition" to determine his minimum subsistence, in the form of supplements in kind or a grant of rent free land if he was a ploughman.¹³³ From the point of view of the employer, usually drawn from the dominant high caste landholding community¹³⁴ "tradition" meant that a high caste employer would pay a low caste labourer less than a high caste labourer. The

131. Rural Wages in the United Provinces, 7th Quinquennial Inquiry into Rural Wages, December 1944, Allahabad 1947, p. 118, Table No. 42.

132. Ibid., pp. 114-16.

133. Ibid. "Tradition demands that sufficient grain should be given." Introduction, S.K. Rudra, p. iii. Also p. 72, Table 21.

134. Shridhar Misra, "Agricultural Labour in U.P." The Indian Journal of Economics, July 1947, No. 108, p. 110. This enquiry covered some districts in eastern and southern Oudh and in the eastern Sub-Himalayan tract.

caste factor and the tie of patronage whether of debt or of a subsistence plot made the phenomenon of "influenced wages" almost universal here.¹³⁵

The onset of the war caused an upswing in prices but wages lagged behind.¹³⁶ Between June and September 1942 prices registered a sharp upward spurt¹³⁷ which probably hit the agricultural labourer here very hard indeed. Agricultural wages began to catch up with prices only in 1943.¹³⁸ After that when prices began to fall from August 1943, wages did not record a proportionate fall and so could be at a higher level than prices in 1944.¹³⁹

Table IV suggests two tendencies. Firstly that the lag between wages and prices seems to develop earliest in the eastern zone. Secondly as the wage census observes the rise in wages during the war had in fact increased the disparity between high and low wage regions.¹⁴⁰ As compared to the labourer in the North West of U.P., the

135. "They (influenced wages) were found so common in Eastern districts, namely Azamgarh, Ballia, etc. that the other type which may be called "free" labour wages was at many places non-existent." Ibid., p. 17.

136. Ibid., p. 97.

137. U.P.A.R. 1942, p. 19.

138. Quinquennial Inquiry, 1944, op.cit., p. 97.

139. Ibid.

140. Ibid., p. 94.

Table IV
Regional Indices of Prices and Wages of Unskilled
Labour with the Year 1911=100

Regions	1939		1944	
	Prices	Wages	Prices	Wages
Province	133	134	345	379
North West	128	138	351	571
Central	130	129	344	394
<u>Eastern</u>	<u>142</u>	<u>134</u>	<u>377</u>	<u>384</u>
Plains	131	134	356	465
Bundelkhand	123	136	319	486
Hill tract	121	133	231	424

Source: Quinquennial Inquiry, 1944, from Table No.35, p. 99.
(The price series here takes into account only agricultural commodities and not other consumable articles).

labourer in Eastern U.P. oriented himself to accepting lower wages to maintain the tradition of "subsistence".

He could not afford the insecurity of "free competition".

The cultivators who did have a surplus to sell benefitted from the war time boom in prices, which diminished money obligations.¹⁴¹ Of course it was often the commercial intermediary rather than the small cultivator who was in a better position to wait out the post-harvest glut for higher prices.¹⁴²

141. A fact which had been of considerable value to the government in 1942 disturbances as the economist V.K.R.V.Rao commented. War and Indian Economy, Allahabad, 1943, pp.59-60.

142. See Sangharsh, 8 December 1941, p.12 and 15 December 1941, p.10 for complaints that with the pressure to pay in rent before May farmers had not been able to hold onto stocks and only baniyas were benefitting from higher prices of grain.

The return of the emigrant, the sudden spurt in the price of rice, the insecurity about future supply and the presence of a vast impoverished stratum who felt all these pressures most acutely created in these districts a great sensitivity to uncertainties portended by the war. The Government was to remark that the movement had roused the "dangerous cupidity of the peasant mobs"¹⁴³ and despite reservations on the part of some Congress leaders, the looting of government property - this included goods trains and seed stores - was held permissible. This does not, however, mean that only the low caste labourers took part in the loot or that they were enticed into the nationalist programme only by the opportunity of loot.¹⁴⁴ The other fact which has to be explained is why, if this was their intention, they did not turn to the looting of private property and this leads us then to an examination of the pattern of agrarian relations within which this response to "Quit India" was evoked.¹⁴⁵

Before concluding this enquiry into the reasons for the "location" of the movement in the United Provinces one may point out that there were a few "tactical" factors

143. Some Facts About the Disturbances in India, 1942-43. Government of India, 1943

144. See Chapter IV, pp. 209-211.

145. See Chapter II.

which made the attack on state authority easier here - factors which also operated in North Bihar.

As in North Bihar, communications were very poor. The monsoon month in which the movement took place rendered this area even more inaccessible¹⁴⁶ once a few key communication points were sabotaged. Inability to keep communication open accelerated the collapse of administration as rural police stations began listening to rumours.¹⁴⁷ Facing the prospect of mob attacks without hope of swift reinforcements the thanedar often tended to surrender swiftly or ^{to} come to some prior arrangement with local Congress leaders.

In Bihar budgetary restrictions springing from the permanent settlement of revenue were held responsible for the inadequacy of the police force. The United Provinces were compared favourably with Bihar in this respect but perhaps the backwardness of this particular tract and the fact that urban centres were not so dense here also had its repercussions in the administrative sphere. Disguised unemployment had created the myth of

146. FRUP II, August 1942. See File No.3/15/43, Home Poll. N.A.I., for Bihar.

147. G.Waddell, D.I.G. "Congress Rebellion Range E", a personal narrative, note for 16 August 1942. "Rural police stations listening to rumours and sending frequent S.O.S. for help". A typed copy of this report was given to me by Shri Paras Nath Mishra.

the laid back "Purbia" which rather amusingly was utilised in one of the administrative explanations for the location of 1942. "The truth is," wrote Nethersole, "that eastern districts are unpopular with all officials whose home is not in these parts, and there is a gradual precipitation of Purbias, a sort of 'Drang Nach Osten' - to these districts. The populations are enormous, and the staff is inadequate and weak as compared with that of the western districts; the districts are generally starved of good officers..."¹⁴⁸

The conclusions derived then from this chapter are that the location of the 1942 movement was not created by a peasant movement oriented towards specifically agrarian demands. The pattern of agrarian relations was such that the really depressed strata of agrarian society, the low caste shikmis and agricultural labourers, could not effectively challenge the dominant landholding castes. However, as will be elaborated in the next chapter, these dominant castes were themselves subject to various stresses springing from the press of population and the predominantly rural nature of the tract. The election campaign of 1936-37 and the Congress Ministry raised expectations in almost every section of agrarian society and brought the power elite in rural society face to face with a new political reality to which the ideology of nationalism also drew them.

148. Personal diary of M.H.B. Nethersole, I.C.S., from 26 August 1942 to 4 September 1942. A typed copy of this was given to me by Shri Paras Nath Mishra.

The context of the war was crucial both for the sense of economic insecurity as well as for the impression of collapse which it created. Chapter 3 deals with the political impact of the war.

Lastly, the location of the revolt was also influenced by the political tradition of the region, one strand of which - the terrorist idea of relentless militant confrontation - was of particular influence with the student population. This is one aspect which will be given particular attention for it offers the social historian a vantage point for understanding the intellectual formation of the educated strata of this region.

Chapter 2

THE PATTERN OF AGRARIAN RELATIONS

In trying to explain why the Quit India movement drew a stronger response from these districts than previous movements had, the limitations of a five year span soon became obvious. It was difficult to evaluate how nationalism was perceived by rural society on the basis of a movement of so short a duration moreover one in which the peasantry had presented no agrarian demands. Nor did this region offer a previous history of the interaction between agrarian movements and nationalist mobilisation. Such an interaction has in other districts of western and central U.P. given the social historian insight into rural society at a crucial conjuncture. It became evident that if the impact of a national and communal ideology on this society was to be evaluated it would have to be done over a longer period and through the slow sifting sand of cultural change.

Ballia and Ghazipur were ceded in 1775, Azamgarh in 1801. Accession was marked by a period of turbulence from local power holders supported by their retainers. 1857 marked another point of stress for the dominant landholding communities but the form in which they exercised power was already in the process of transition, and the crushing of the revolt closed one epoch very definitively. After this upheaval these districts

remained a sleepy backwater till the cow-protection movement and the riots which accompanied it in the 1890s.¹ The gaurakshini movement seems to mark a coalescence of tensions which were opening out rural society to wider communal and national platforms.

Generally, however, the pattern of unrest which was characteristic of these districts in the entire period after cession was one of mar-pit, the agrarian riot,² limited in time and area, very often taking place between members of the high caste share holders of an estate in a dispute over proprietary right, with their low caste followers ranging themselves on the side of their patrons.

In the first two decades or so after cession the agrarian riot usually took place over the dispossession of a body of coparcenars either by the state for default of revenue or by the auction purchaser, who could be an "outsider" or a more powerful co-parcenaar. The resistance put up to sale of estate for revenue default led to a shift away from the idea of holding all coparcenars jointly responsible for the payment of the revenue. As the revenue collection process evolved

1. "Ballia, a little sleepy hollow, supposed to be the easiest of district charges, was the seat of the worst trouble." W.Crooke, The North Western Provinces of India, London, 1897, p.187.

2. D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.127.

towards the delineation of individual possession and therefore, of individual liability for revenue, another avenue of conflict was opened up. Disputes between co-parcenars over share-lists and proprietary right began to erode the solidarity which they had earlier displayed. Recording of right also brought disputes over the boundaries of various estates. By the time of the revenue settlements of the 1870s and 1880s the extent of individual ownership had been more clearly demarcated³ but the ecology of the region continued to involve land-owners in contests of ownership through riot. Large tracts of alluvial land along the rivers, immensely fertile sometimes as in the Doaba Pargana of Ballia and yet susceptible to dramatic fluvial change, kept claimants busy with litigation. Claims lost in court were reasserted with lathis.⁴ "Possession," remarked Crooke of Ballia, "is here more than the proverbial nine points of the law. The rude bludgeon men of the riverine villages need little provocation to turn out and resist rival claimants."⁵ In August 1931 due to the frequency of agrarian riots in Ballia, particularly in the Doaba, the use of spears without licence was prohibited.⁶

3. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, pp.47-48, para 116; S.R.Ghazipur 1886, p.69, para 143.

4. S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, Appendix XX, p.100; D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.126.

5. W.Crooke, op.cit., p.24.

6. D.G.Ballia, Supplementary Notes and Statistics, 1931-32, Allahabad, 1935,

Till about the late nineteen thirties the agrarian riot in one context or the other erupted over issues which concerned the landholding rights of the high caste coparcenary communities. From the 1880s disputes over tenant right are also mentioned by settlement reports as coming to the fore.⁷ These probably involved low caste cultivators as well but very often the contestants for tenant right were the same coparceners who had lost proprietary status but put up a fight for a privileged position as tenants. In general the low caste tenants were given a docile profile in the settlement records.⁸

However, low caste tenants were also acquiring occupancy rights, though the rent increases for low caste tenants were higher than for high caste occupancy tenants.⁹ Moreover, concealed rent was not a problem in these districts for cultivators with a record of their tenancy in the village papers.¹⁰ Significant incidents

7. S.R.Ballia, 1887, p.30, para 41; S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, p.90, para 173, p.149, para.278.

8. S.R.Azamgarh, 1908, p.15, para.6, p.25, para,5.

9. Rent incidence per acre for high and low caste occupancy and non-occupancy tenants between the revenue settlements of 1877 and 1908, Azamgarh.

	1877 (Rs.)	1908 (Rs.)
High caste occupancy	4.11	4.42
Low caste occupancy	5.19	5.83
High caste non-occupancy	4.20	5.08
Low caste non-occupancy	4.53	5.63

Source: D.G.Azamgarh, 1911, p.111. (Occupancy land was generally of better quality than non-occupancy).

10. R.R.R.Pargana Zamania, Ghazipur, 1931, p.6, para 31; R.R.R.Parganas Muhammadabad, Zahurabad and Dehma, Ghazipur 1929-30, p.6, para 16.

of tension between zamindars and cultivators seem to develop only in the late 1930s when the issue of the recording of tenants of sir becomes very important.¹¹

Tenants of sir were in these districts usually not recorded in the village papers and they were the ones with no security of tenure and paid the highest rents.¹²

In many cases as pointed out the distinction between the sub-tenant and the agricultural labourer was not clear because the labourer was given a part of sir land for his own subsistence as payment for year round work on the farm.¹³ In 1946 in the eastern districts of U.P. there was another phase of tension over the recording of tenants of sir and khudkhasht land.¹⁴

It is argued in this chapter that one way of entering the social history of this region might lie in examining changes in the power nexus and in the cultural world of the high caste zamindari communities over the nineteenth century. Over the nineteenth century the

11. See chapter I. However the data on which this study is based is thin for the period from the late nineteenth century to about 1930. In part this is because in the permanent settlement records, the last revision of records dates back to the 1880s.

12. The average rent rate per acre for Ballia in 1905 was Rs.3-13 for fixed rate, Rs.4-1-10 for occupancy and tenant at will, and Rs.7-2-6 for sub-tenanted land. D.G.Ballia, 1907, pp.104-5; see also R.R.R. Pargana Zamania, Ghazipur, 1931, Allahabad 1931, p.6, para 13.

13. See Chapter I

14. Rajendra Singh, op.cit.; see also Weekly Reports of the Political Situation for week ending 24 May 1946, 1 November 1946, 8 November 1946; The Hindustan Times, 28 September 1946, 13 December 1946, p.6.

internal cohesion of the lineage based communities was eroded. This erosion threatened the continued participation of many co-parcenars in a structure of power and patronage and this was one source of stress in rural society. The disassociation of the lineage community from certain forms of state power as the Raj built up more centralised *authority* than previous region states also weakened lineage cohesion. This was perceived by cultivators outside the co-parcenary biradari as well and encouraged them eventually to look to authority outside the lineage power structure. Perception of a weakening of power at the level of the co-parcenary community was one of the reasons which encouraged certain low caste cultivators to make claims to higher social status. Not all low caste cultivators were successful in doing so. Nor is it the contention that zamindari power or the social domination of the high castes was weakening. The argument is that the content of this domination was changing. This excluded the weaker members of the zamindari community from the real core of power though caste status remained open as a status resources for them. Caste status, however, was something which, without the requirements of lineage reciprocity and patronage, was a "cheaper" resource for the power elite. Vis-a-vis the low caste cultivators and the labourers, these who controlled land were still in a position of dominance because they owned the most valuable resource,

particularly in an economy in which alternative sources of employment were in fact shrinking by the late nineteenth century while population was pressing ever more heavily. Land control was something which in the course of the nineteenth century was not so dependent on lineage cohesion as on establishing a clear individual proprietary title. As the mud forts of the lineages were destroyed, and as the Company consolidated the work of concentrating armed power in its own hands which the Benares Rajahs had begun, the criteria for local power began to need redefinition. Solidarities derived from kinship identity and from the constant need for a "corporate pugnacity" were eroded. Power which had been based pre-eminently on a personal domination over "men" had in the eighteenth century given control over land. In the course of the nineteenth century power was pre-eminently based on individual ownership of land.¹⁵ This individual ownership did not, however, crystallise in the hands of a class of large zamindars but in a substantial small zamindar community. Fixed-rate tenants in the permanent settlement districts also belong to this category because they had what was in effect a sub-proprietary right.

15. See J. Pouchepadass for the shift from land control as entirely a function of dominance to land control as a right acquired by sale and purchase. J. Pouchepadass, "Land, Power and Market: The Rise of the Land Market in Gangetic India," in P. Robb (ed.), Rural India: Land Power and Society under British Rule, London, 1983.

This chapter will also take up the question of how this shift in the nature of rural power was to encourage the greater penetration of the institutions of the colonial state into rural society and of how dominance over low caste cultivators and artisans was affected by a loosening of ties between shareholders.

The first section will deal with the impact of the armed might of the Company on the lineage estate and on the extent to which the Company was able to enforce its revenue demand at the expense of the land-holding rights of the high-caste co-parcenary communities. It was because of their lineage cohesion that coparcenary communities were able to put up a highly successful resistance to the sale of estate for default of revenue. Collective resistance enabled them both to resist a high revenue demand, or ^{not} to allow the auction purchaser to really profit from the purchase of estate at public sale for revenue arrears. Even so the process of individual delineation of proprietary right in the lands controlled by the lineage had begun and started loosening the tie between lineage and land control.

Preconditions for the changes brought about in the nineteenth century were undoubtedly present in the eighteenth century. The Rajahs of Benares starting with Balwant Singh had begun the process of building up a more centralised state by breaking into the

autonomy of lineage structures of power.¹⁶ Balwant Singh began by destroying the authority of lineage chiefs of pargana level authority.¹⁷ The Company was able to build upon this policy as well as upon the deepening monetisation of the economy to centralise its authority.¹⁸ The Company was able to go further than the rulers of the regional states in cutting through the constraints of beneficence and patronage in building up a stronger bureaucratic authority.

One aspect of this change which offers a fascinating case study for further work is the way in which Brahmin acquisition of land through exercise of their religious pre-eminence was weakened. The Duncan records mention instances in which Brahman cultivators and zamindars would displace low caste cultivators and themselves refuse to pay a similar revenue demand. If pressed for payment of revenue Brahmans, particularly

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16. A. Shakespeare (ed.), Selections from the Duncan Records, Vol. I, Benares, 1873, 14 June 1789, p. xi, henceforth, S.D.R.; H.S.M. Pt. II 1876, pp. 93, 100, 103.
17. For instance Bulwant Singh was successful in breaking the hold of the Rajputs of the Hayobans clan and their rajah in Ballia pargana, D.G. Ballia 1907, p. 91. The village proprietary bodies were for the most part allowed to remain in possession, H.S.M. Pt. I, 1876, p. 106.
18. C.A. Bayly, Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 463-64.

those of Bhudohee and Nuggur would resort to self-mutilation or put an old female member of their family to death so that the guilt of having brought injury to a Brahmin would fall on the revenue collector. The Rajah of Benares was also, it would seem, seeking ways around this problem without a frontal attack by using Muslim Revenue collectors in such places. Duncan tried, though also with a degree of caution to check such practises by passing decrees against self-injury to such ends. By about 1860 such practises were so obsolete that no law was required.¹⁹ With the destruction of the lineage forts and the assertion of a monopoly of armed force by the Company the practise of maintaining armed retainers declined. This also affected other castes who had made up the armed strength of the local rajahs such as the Pasis, the Dosadhs and the Ahirs,²⁰ but it also affected the weaker members of the lineage whose claim on the generosity of the chief had sprung from his need for their arms. If the rajah or the more powerful clansmen were to count on their kin following then they had to help them to maintain their "gentility" and their

19. S.D.R., Vol. I, pp.62-64, p.106, 154.

20. See T.R.Metcalf, for a reference to the use of low caste retainers as foot-troopers, Land, Landlords and the British Raj: Northern India in the Nineteenth Century, Delhi, 1979, p.9; M.R.Gubbins, The Mutinies in Oudh, London, 1858, reprint, New Delhi, 1978, p.52.

ritual status through grants of land and assistance with the expenses of marriage and other rituals.²¹ Even when the clan was sharply stratified the fact that power depended upon lineage following meant that weaker members of the clan were nevertheless participants in the domain of rank and power. This cohesion had made it difficult for the Benares rajahs to bypass all privilege and tax each cultivator directly and at the same rate. Even when the amils of the Benares Rajah had pressed heavily on the lineage estates in the second half of the eighteenth century, revenue was not collected directly from every cultivator but through a lower level of privilege - through the village headman, the moccudum²² or through what Duncan termed the "under-renters", who might represent a minor lineage or a defeated one or a subordinate unit of privileged landholding originating from some service grant. Duncan noted that though the rajahs of Benares had wanted to humble the zamindars they were still "from the natural necessity of the case," permitted to contract for the revenue of most of the villages as annual farmers, subordinate to other under farmers.²³ Even when the right

21. R.Fox, Kin, Clan, Raja and Rule, California, 1971, p.50

22. Raikes who conducted the 1841 survey of Ghazipur said that this term had been used from Duncan's time to describe the Jeth ryots who "were connected with the soil and generally Rajputs", S.R.Ballia 1887, p.48A, para 14. Metcalf points out that where the zamindari lineage was widely dispersed and close to the soil the post of moccudum might be held by a member of the proprietary body, Metcalf, op.cit., p.12, f.n.23.

23. Revenue regulations for the fuslee year 1197, 14 June 1789, S.D.R., Vol.I.

of the zamindari community to collect revenue was taken away they retained the right to a lower rate of assessment on their sir. If they managed to prevent a survey of the amount actually under sir cultivation this right could represent a considerable measure of privilege with the burden of revenue being thrown upon the other cultivators. They were also left in possession of grazing, fisheries, forest produce and part of traditional zamindari dues such as abkaree, ghur dewalee, khurgahee and rahdaree.²⁴

If the village zamindars could not meet the revenue demand they were replaced in their revenue collecting functions by the amil or the farmer appointed by the amil. If they were recalcitrant they would be beaten or tortured to realise the revenue but the only way in which they would actually be uprooted was if they were put to the sword. Usually, as one settlement officer put it, the intervention of the amil "was a temporary one and did not affect their dominion, as I prefer to style their inchoate proprietary rights before the permanent settlement."²⁵ The Company made the payment of revenue the criteria of proprietorship and since all the coparcenars were made jointly liable for the payment of revenue

24. Cesses on spirits, houses, looms, and roads, H.S.M. Pt. II, 1876, pp. 93

25. S.R. Ballia, 1887, p. 181, para 13.

inability or refusal to pay meant that entire estates were put to auction for arrears or default. "The point," noted the same officer, "which the landholders failed to appreciate was that if the obligation to pay the revenue was transferred the proprietary right was transferred with it... in transferring a proprietary right which it had created by sale the Government confiscated a cultivating right which it had not created."²⁶ A high revenue demand and the resistance of zamindars led to a period of turmoil which Oldham puts as between 1795-1810. During this period all the largest estates in Benares Province were sold by auction or confiscated for rebellion.²⁷

As Reid, one of the most insightful of settlement officers was to remark, the sale of estates as a punitive measure for recovering revenue was futile even more than it was impolitic.²⁸ The ex-proprietors would claim the best lands in the estate as their sir, resist any independent survey of the holdings, refuse to pay rent for sir or only very low rents, with the result that the auction purchaser would be unable to make the estate pay. The revenue would have to be renegotiated with the

26. Ibid., p.21, para 18.

27. H.S.M.Ghazipur, Pt. II, 1876, p.150.

28. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.190, para 32 and footnote to para 32.

original zamindars or the estate sold back to them.²⁹

One such instance of protracted and ultimately successful resistance is that of the Kaushik Rajputs of taluqas Chit and Firozpur in Ballia who lost their estate by auction when revenue was increased on it in 1837. They were able to repurchase their property in November 1858 after a period in which the purchaser's agent was murdered in 1840 and the Kaushiks joined the rebels in 1857-58.³⁰

Even if the estate was sold off and the purchaser was able to continue in possession the cohesion of the co-parcenars often allowed them to consolidate a position as communities of privileged tenants, paying only low and fixed rates of rent.³¹

The condition of successful resistance to the state or the auction purchaser was also effective domination over resident low caste cultivators so that if the co-parcenars wanted to resist they would allow land to fall out of cultivation. The purchaser then would have to meet the revenue demand without income accruing to him from the estate. Where the purchaser could replace former

29. Ibid.; S.R. Azamgarh 1837, p.38, para 90.

30. S.R. Ballia, 1887, p.21, para 18.

31. S.R. Azamgarh, 1908, p.10, para 2; D.G. Ballia 1907, pp. 88-89.

zamindars with low caste cultivators or threaten them with actual eviction, and the clan was not sufficiently strong or cohesive to meet this challenge, then the former zamindars could be reduced to the position of other cultivators. This was the case on some estates where more powerful shareholders used the new situation to consolidate their power in terms of individual proprietary right. Sometimes those shareholders who took an undertaking to pay the revenue on behalf of the community recorded themselves as the sole owners of the estate. Sometimes they engineered default so that they could step in and acquire title by individual purchase.³² With the aid of new weapons at his disposal - the Company's troops and the law courts - the powerful shareholder could even succeed in extracting high rents from former co-parceners when he came into possession. The archetypal case is that of the Bharbhaiyas of Surajpur³³ taluqa in Azamgarh who acquired the area of Koranga when the holders, members of their biradari, fell into arrears for revenue. Government troops helped them to gain possession of their purchase and they were powerful enough to extract high rents from tenants who belonged to the same stock.³⁴ Stronger shareholders or

32. S.R.Azamgarh, 1837, p.29, para 60; S.R.Ghazipur 1886 Appendix XX, p.104.

33. Big brothers; their less prosperous relatives were known as Chotbhaiyas, younger brothers, S.R.Azamgarh 1881, p.48, para 146.

34. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, pp.47-48, para 116, p.79, para 251; Assessment Report, Pargana Ghosi, tahsil Ghosi Azamgarh, 1905, Chapter III, p.7, para 2.

outsiders could also use the process of litigation to wear out and ruin smaller shareholders. In taluqa Sherpur Reoti in Ghazipur the shareholders had thwarted the efforts of a powerful and machinating shareholder Udwant Rai to get his name recorded as purchaser by auction of half the estate. At one point they had abandoned all cultivation so that he would not be able to pay revenue. However relentless litigation did ruin some coparcenars who had to leave the districts.³⁵

The difficulty of enforcing joint liability for the payment of revenue and the association of revenue payment with proprietary right developed towards the demarcation of individual ownership of the estate in terms of actual plots and fields. The necessity of sorting out who was responsible and for how much led to the drawing up of individual sharelists on the basis of ancestral share lists or³⁶ on the basis of actual possession. Over the issue of who was to be vested with proprietary right and on what system of reckoning revolved

35. S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, Appendix XX, pp.99-100.

36. Ancestral share represented the principle of an equal share to all the sons in the family though on some estates the principle of jethansi, a larger share to the eldest son was recognised. Inheritance through the female line or through adoption was strongly disapproved of as it deprived collateral relatives in the male line of their share,
S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, Appendix XX, p.104, VII;
S.R. Azamgarh 1881, p.79, para 251, p.85, para 298.

the major tension within agrarian society in this region till the end of the nineteenth century. In the process of establishing individual possession the lineage estate was subjected to innumerable partitions and lineage cohesion as an essential of land control lost its content though it still had a symbolic value as a status reference. Commenting on these developments Reid remarked:

...the preceding Government had left the people to settle the disputes (over land rights) for themselves. The British Government established police and law courts. But apparently none of its officers conceived that it would be necessary, both in order to ensure the regular payment of the revenue and to prevent people from harming themselves, to hold a scrutiny and form a record of all the rights and tenures, landholders and tenants in every estate.³⁷

It was not Company Raj which of itself introduced stratification into the coparcenary communities. There were always co-parceners who, it was clear, were more influential, more prosperous, in a better position to lend money or grain to others. Company Raj put these in a better position to use the revenue settlements and the institutions of law and the courts to more firmly consolidate their individual standing. For instance the discrepancy between ancestral share and actual possession of land was already evident on many estates. Reid attributed this to some sharers being allowed to cultivate without adherence to right by descent. It could also, he said,

37. S.R. Azamgarh, 1881, pp. 190-91, para 32.

be due to the misfortunes of some sharers which forced others to pay their share of revenue or to strangers acquiring bits of the village from the proprietors.³⁸

The advantage of ancestral share vis-a-vis actual possession rested on the balance between the revenue demand and the profits of cultivation. If the revenue demand was heavy then a shareholder who held less than what he could claim as his ancestral share would prefer to pay revenue according to actual possession. If the revenue demand was low then a shareholder would want to have full possession of the land or the profits which were due to him from his ancestral share.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century when the necessity of collective resistance to a high revenue demand or to the auction purchaser prevailed, the members of the co-parcenary estate had reason to make common cause. But as the nineteenth century progressed and the revenue practise of putting up the whole estate to auction was abandoned the necessity for cohesion against the state became weaker. Cultivation expanded and land values rose in a marked fashion in the period after the 1857 revolt.³⁹ (Records for the earlier decades are unsatisfactory for this point). The

38. S.R. Azamgarh, 1881.

39. Between 1837-47 the price of land in Azamgarh was Rs.13-9-0 for land sold at private sales. From 1859-74 it was Rs.30-6-0, D.G. Azamgarh, 1911, p.131.

crushing of the revolt demonstrated that the ethos of rule had changed. More important than ruling men was the importance of having clear proprietary title to land.

The state made provision for the demarcation of individual liability for revenue to facilitate collection. The period in which this process was worked out was from about the 1830s to the 1880s. The settlements of the 1830s tried to demarcate individual rights either on the basis of actual possession or ancestral share but not with entire success. In the settlement of Azamgarh under Regulation IX of 1833 the share-lists contained only the names of heads of pattis or families.⁴⁰

By the time of the revision of the records some forty years later the association of individual ownership with a particular piece of land was, or could be, more clearly established.⁴¹ The necessity for joint accounting of profit and loss and the collective payment of revenue declined and formal partitions of estates stepped up.⁴² The recourse to the power of perfect partition given by revenue law was made use of both by weaker shareholders who might want freedom from the manipulation of

40. patti, subdivision of an estate; S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, pp.47-48, para 116.

41. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, pp.47-48, para 116; S.R.Ghaziipur 1886, p.69, para 143. In theory, however, joint responsibility was still upheld by the government.

42. D.G.Ghaziipur, 1909, p.94.

the estate accounts by the more powerful⁴³ and by the more prosperous who would not want to be held responsible for the default of others in the payment of revenue. Clearer demarcation of individual possession would in any case help them to extend their share through purchase and mortgage. As the state took over the duties of protection of life and possessions the need to look to lineage cohesion for ^{this} also declined.

It was in the determination of who was to be vested with proprietary right and whether on the basis of ancestral share or actual possession that the state began to arbitrate in the sphere of rural power relations. Settlement Officers and the law courts began to mediate in the relations between co-parceners. This intervention further eroded the collective nature of control over land. Factions within co-parcenary units had always been a feature of tension within their collective control. The presence of factions now created feeling in favour of the intervention of the settlement officer⁴⁴ or of the

43. "As soon as squabbles about profits and sir land begin, the weaker sharers, being convinced they can now stand alone safe in the protection of the courts, have recourse to the power of perfect partition given by the revenue law." S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, p.69, para 143.

44. Thus in 1840-41 of pargana Lakhnesar, Ballia held by the Sengar Rajputs, noted for being one of the most cohesive of communities, the settlement officer noted that disputes were handed over to panchayats but these did not work well because they were not impartial, people preferred the decisions of the settlement officer, S.R.Ballia, 1887, p.78, para 21. Of Azamgarh too it was reported that the people preferred that the settlement officer decide disputes of ownership of waste land, tanks and marshes, S.R.Azamgarh 1887 p.200, para 2.

courts⁴⁵ in the disputes over proprietary right.

Anand Yang has argued that local control institutions in the permanent settlement province of Bihar were organised from the estate of or the village beyond the reach of Government institutions. He draws this conclusion, however, only from an examination of the institutions of patwari and chaukidar, from the fact that they could not be completely incorporated into the administrative apparatus of the Raj.⁴⁶ However, the intervention of the settlement process and of the law courts in the relations between the holders of local power also has to be considered in examining the penetration of the colonial state.

How far did the sense of lineage estate persist after all these changes. To assess this it must be noted that the idea of ancestral right was one which transcended the actual control over land assets. It entitled the shareholder to a share in the decision making activity of the community and in that sense, despite the inequalities which prevailed in the division

45. Describing the Rajputs of the Doab (between the Ganges and the Jamuna in Allahabad) a mid-nineteenth century account remarked that in "old times right gave way to might, now the disputants set off for the Collector's cutcherry." "Notes on the Landed Tenures in the North-Western Provinces II.", The Benares Magazine, IV, July-December 1850, p. 266.

46. Anand Yang, "Between British Raj and Saran Raiyat: The Development of Local Control Institutions in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in P. Robb (ed.), op.cit., pp. 166-77.

of assets it made every co-parcenar a member of the power stratum. This sense of special right was still evident at the time when Thomason made his report on settlement operations in Azamgarh in 1837. Thomason noted the distinction observed between the co-parcenars' share in terms of specific fields (khet-khut) and his ancestral share, khoont-khut. A man might mortgage his khet-khut but would mortgage his khoont-khut only as a last resort.⁴⁷ Even if the zamindar lost his sir land he could still on the basis of his ancestral share lay claim to participate in the boojharut, the annual reckoning of accounts of the estate between members of the community.⁴⁸ Even if this ancestral right was mortgaged the individual's right to redeem this mortgage was recognised as a "matter of keeping faith" among Rajput communities.⁴⁹ The sense of changing times was, however, felt by this observer for, he added pessimistically, the courts would soon change this code of conduct.⁵⁰

47. S.R.Azamgarh, 1837, p.30, para 65.

48. Ibid., p.28, para 59.

49. Ibid., p.31, para 67.

50. Ibid., p.31, para 67; of pargana Lakhnesar in 1841 it was observed that the record of mortgage was kept up by oral tradition and not infringed except by "men of bad character". S.R.Ballia, 1887, Appendix No. 14, p.52A.

Ancestral share associated the holder with a past redolent of power. Even if the estate was partitioned the fort and the fort area continued to be held in common.⁵¹ In the past legends associated with a common ancestor had kept up the sense of community. In the case of the Sengar Rajputs of pargna Lakhnesar a shrine at Rasra kept up the worship of a remote ancestor Nath Baba. The upkeep of this shrine was met by a contribution from each Sengar zamindar at the rate of one pie in the rupee of land revenue demand. The sentiment associated with this shrine remained strong because when the Government directed in 1873 that this payment should be a voluntary one the zamindars were unanimous that contributions were to be maintained.⁵²

Even if within an estate some other scale of rights had intervened, within the subdivision ancestral right was again the measure of interest.⁵³ Ancestral share also entitled the holder to share in the profits of sayer and waste land.⁵⁴ He could use the same right to demand a share in newly formed alluvium. As population pressed upon the land such claims could constitute a

51. In Sherpur-Reoti, sharelists were drawn up on the basis of actual possession but the site of the fort was recorded as jointly held with the share list determined according to ancestral share. S.R. Ghazipur, 1886, p.78, para 161.

52. D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.228; S.R.Ballia, 1887, p.80, paras 27-28.

53. S.R.Azangarh, 1881, p.92, para 322.

54. S.R.Ballia, 1886, Appendix 14, p.52A.

valuable right. For these reasons it was noted that the "...people never forget their right by descent from the common ancestor. If it has been set aside they appeal to it whenever opportunity offers."⁵⁵

As a unit of joint accounting, however, the lineage estate was disintegrating. As the extent of individual liability was worked out and as the practise of auction sale of the whole estate was abandoned⁵⁶ there remained little incentive to deliberate jointly over the payment of revenue or to pay it through a common representative. It is perhaps for this reason that Reid writing forty years after Thomason's observation about boojharut declared that an annual conclave of village proprietors to audit and adjust the accounts of the mahal existed only in theory.⁵⁷ Each proprietor in these districts, therefore, preferred to collect his rents and to pay his pertion of the revenue directly.⁵⁸

Such a process naturally encouraged formal partition of the mahal. Due to constant subdivision

55. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.92, para 322.

56. Act I of 1841 confirmed the principle of joint responsibility but allowed government to proceed again against individual members. It became the case that the property of the individual defaulter was brought to sale. Metcalf, op.cit., p.129.

57. S.R.Azamgarh 1881, p.94, para 333.

58. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.94, para 333; S.R.Ghazipur, p.81, para 166.

the mahal came to consist not of a compact territory but of a sum of scattered fractions of mauzas. The physical dispersion of the mahal would be further accelerated as a market in land developed and as proprietors began to mortgage and sell plots of land. In 1911 Moreland contrasting the sense of a mahal in western U.P. with that in the eastern districts and in Oudh made the following observation:

Small landlords in the east habitually mortgage and sell their land field by field, while those of the west mortgage or sell by the minimal fraction of the mahal... more generally, the sense of the community of the sharers and of the unity of the mahal seems to be more definite in districts like Meerut than in the east.⁵⁹

As will be clear, however, repeated partitioning of these estates did not mean a physical dispersion of the members of the lineage. Through a variety of exchange, lease and mortgage arrangements to the same family could continue to cultivate the same lands. It was also noted that transfers of land through sale or mortgage generally tended to take place within the co-parcenary community. Co-parceners who engaged in grain dealing and in money lending were in a particularly favourable position to acquire land.⁶⁰ Therefore, the caste distribution of

59. W.H. Moreland, The Revenue Administration of the United Provinces, Allahabad, 1911, p.90.

60. D.G. Ballia, 1907, p.107.

landholding communities would persist, despite a scattering of individual ownership over several mauzas.

Lineage cohesion, therefore, as a means of land control, was on the decline in the course of the nineteenth century. Caste, however, continued to hold all members of the coparcenary community in a common status position, and a close distribution of high castes in certain areas gave them the weight of numbers.

It is now proposed to examine how the loosening of lineage ties between shareholders changed the forms in which they exercised dominance over the other cultivators on the estate.

When the British began to establish their authority over these districts the high caste zamindari communities presented a pattern of land control which could extend over an entire pargana, or just over a village. To employ a very useful description made by Stokes: "The Chhatri population probably bunched at certain points, forming what were termed bhaiachara tenures, while their settlement elsewhere was of a lighter more lordly pattern."⁶¹

The Rajput lineage estate was distinguished by a main village site with a fort which marked out the initial

61. Eric Stokes, The Peasant and the Raj, Delhi 1978, p.79. This description would apply to other landholding castes as well.

centre of settlement and the focal point of lineage ascendancy.⁶² The lower castes who were settled as cultivators, village artisans etc. occupied scattered hamlets around the village.⁶³ However, these low caste hamlets could be older settlement and origin than the fort. As the clan multiplied subsidiary sites were formed. The lineage would also set up a market place and levy ground rent on the shopkeepers and a tax on the looms of the weavers who settled or were settled there. The inhabitants of such nodes of lineage power, therefore, lived under the shadow of clan domination.⁶⁴ Control over the economic life of such centres was also expressed through the levy of ganjdari, market dues. The weighman was very often one employed by the zamindar who used to charge a weighing fee for this facility.⁶⁵

63. R.R.R. pargana Zamania, Ghazipur, 1929-30; custom, noted Reid, compelled some low castes to live apart. S.R. Azamgarh, 1881, p. 825, para 92. In western U.P. village houses concentrated at one point, in the east the village site was more open and took the form of dispersed hamlets. Crooke attributed this to the necessity for defensive grouping in the west against Sikh and Maratha raids. Reid lays greater emphasis on "the large proportion of the population is agricultural, and the minute subdivision of the land among them." W. Crooke, The North Western Provinces of India, London 1897, p. 40 and S.R. Azamgarh, 1881, p. 25, para 92.

64. R. Fox, op. cit., pp. 51-52; S.R. Azamgarh, 1837, p. 10, S.R. Ghazipur, 1886, p. 177, para 348, for a reference to parjaut, a ground rent paid to zamindars on houses occupied by non-agriculturists.

65. S.R. Ghazipur 1881, p. 176, para 347. In Fatehpur bazaar the zamindars of pargana Zamania charged a cess for granting a shop-site, on every bullock load of grain, on grain sold, on gur and on buyers. Ibid., p. 178, para 352.

It has not been possible to undertake an examination of the change in the economic life and the power matrix controlling such urban centres in the course of the nineteenth century. This line of enquiry would be vital for any study of change in rural power relations and might also offer more satisfactory explanations for communal conflict in these districts.^{65a} Perlin has argued that early colonial rule led to a reduction in the level of monetary life - small market towns decayed, village based residential complexes of lords administrators and a garrisons of soldiers tended to disappear together with local mints and complexes of market-oriented craftsmen.⁶⁶ Did this loosen the ties of patronage between zamindars and craftsmen in urban centres?

Control over natural resources and hence over those who derived a supplementary or primary livelihood from them was another expression of power and patronage

Many of the lakes in the plains support a large and industrious community of fishermen and bird-catchers, growers of the Singhara or water nut, diggers of edible roots, planters of the Boro rice on the slushy banks as the water recedes.⁶⁷

65a. G.A. Bayly has examined changes in local power relations between 1700-1860 as creating the pre-conditions in the social structure for sustained communal violence. G.A. Bayly, "The Pre-History of Communalism? Religion, Conflict in India 1700-1860", Modern Asian Studies, April 1985 9(2), pp. 177-203.

66. Frank Perlin, "Proto-Industrialisation and Pre-Colonial South Asia," Past and Present, February 1983, 98, pp. 78-79.

67. W. Cooke, op.cit., pp. 42-44.

The zamindar took fees from each boat, or half the amount of fish, or wild fowl or wild rice, he also derived an income from the tar trees from which toddy was extracted, and from the pruning of twigs for fuel.⁶⁸ Groves, mostly of mango trees, whose fruit constituted an important item in the diet of the poor when in season,⁶⁹ were another resource controlled by the zamindar.

Such cesses represented the control of the zamindars over the natural resources of the estate. Other cesses expressed his power over the person of the resident low caste cultivators and artisans. Such were the claims to tribute made on the occasion of a marriage both within the zamindar's family as well as within the cultivator's - biahu, mandwana, shadiana.⁷⁰ Dues payed to the zamindar also meant an acceptance of the protection of the zamindar, rapacious though the price of this was for the most powerless. Thomason says that khurgahee the due paid by weavers also represented the protection of the zamindar over the weaver.⁷¹

68. S.R.Azangarh, 1881, p.219, para 20.

69. S.R.Azangarh, 1881, p.209, para 20; W.Moreland, op.cit., p.106.

70. If the tenants daughter got married, the tenant payed mandwana, if his son got married then shadiana. If the zamindar's child got married then offerings of sugar and sweetmeats were made, S.R.Ghazipur 1886, p.176, para 437; G.A.Grierson, Bihar Peasant Life, 1885, reprint, Delhi, 1975, p.317.

71. S.R.Azangarh, 1837, p.10, para 13.

According to Irfan Habib the kernel of zamindari right probably lay in the imposts which the zamindars levied over and above the land revenue assessments, i.e. the claims made by zamindars were originally distinct from the land revenue but the division blurred because the zamindar was assigned a role in the Mughal revenue system.⁷² Such cesses represented a domination both over resources and over men and were perceived of as an indication of zamindari haq. Thomason noted that in Azamgarh the enjoyment of "the spontaneous products of the soil" was advanced as proof of proprietary right.⁷³ In taluqa Madurna, pargana Ballia, in 1833, village headmen represented that their zamindari right was proved by their receiving presents on the occasion of a marriage.⁷⁴ That the Benares rajahs had to allow the village zamindars to continue to levy such cesses⁷⁵ was an indication that at this level their zamindari haq was hard to break.

Zamindari power was exercised in a network of relationships varying in the degree of reciprocity and

72. Irfan Habib, in Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib (eds.), The Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol. I, c.1200-c.1750, Cambridge 1982, pp.244-45.

73. S.R.Azamgarh, 1833, p.

74. Asiya Siddiqi, op.cit., p.29.

75. S.D.R., Vol. I, 14 June 1789.

in the kind of service or tribute expected in recognition of zamindari haq. The image used to convey this idea was that of the raja-praja, ruler-subject, relation. This represented a model of patronage and dependency in which reciprocity increased higher up in the scale and services became more demanding and general lower down.

Where the dominant landholding community was Rajput the term used was raja, where Bhumihar, the term was babu.⁷⁶ From this study of Basti district (adjoining this region to the north-east) Rajendra Singh points out that the term praja incorporated a high degree of differentiation.⁷⁷ Within this category were those of the higher castes who in return for their support as retainers, whether for military fitual or managerial services were allowed to cultivate land at a favourable rate of rent.⁷⁸ There was also another distinction within

76. As for the babus of Surajpar, Azamgarh, Assessment Report, Ghosi 1905, Ch.II, para 5. The term more generally used over the province was malik, E. Whitcombe, Agrarian Conditions in Northern India, Vol. I, The United Provinces Under British Rule 1860-1900, New Delhi, 1971, pp.39-41.

77. Rajendra Singh, "Peasant Movements in U.P.", in M.S.A.Rao (ed.), Social Movements in India, Vol. I, Delhi, 1978, pp. 103-108.

78. Rajendra Singh, op.cit., pp.103, 108; Thomason seems to refer to this kind of patronage when he describes the ushraf as having a tie of religion or relationship or friendship with the zamindar and paying less rent than other cultivators, S.R.Azamgarh 1837, pp.39-40 paras 392-95. As will be elaborated later, the term ushraf/ashraf (genteel) seems to signify a more general status category, whereas raja-praja hinges on specific ties linking members of the praja to the dominant community.

cultivators who paid only a fixed rate of rent and those who had to pay a number of petty dues and services as well.⁷⁹ The payment of mandwana, shadiana, and the liability to hari and begari applied only to the lower castes and not to the higher castes, Brahmans, Bhumihars and Kayasths.⁸⁰

The same differentiating relation marked the cesses levied on non-agriculturists. Bayly notes that prajawat, a lordship due, levied on mercantile and artisan communities resident in the market, varied according to the dignity and the importance of the groups involved. This meant that the richest and most powerful paid the least.⁸¹

Resident low caste cultivators were that category of the praja for whom the "patronage" of the zamindar in terms of protection, or assistance, or the giving of a house site, abadi, came at a higher cost in terms of rent or services than for the upper castes. That is, perhaps the reason why the term praja in some accounts is equated with the resident low castes.⁸² The non-resident low castes, the pahikasht paid only a fixed rate of rent.⁸³

79. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.86, para 303.

80. Grierson, op.cit., p.317; In Lucknow, village expenses were not levied on Brahmans and Thakurs, or on bhala manas "respectable men", Whitcombe, op.cit., p.44.

81. C.A.Bayly, op.cit., p.100.

82. As is done by Reid, S.R.Azamgarh 1881, p.86, para 303.

83. Ibid., p.86, para 303.

What was the nature of the tie which bound the lowest ranks of the praja to the raja section of the village or estate? From Gorakhpur there is some evidence that in the eighteenth century in a situation of labour scarcity caste restrictions were sought to be applied to prevent untouchables from taking up land on their own account so as to enable zamindars to keep ploughmen and labourers. These restrictions were according to Buchanan who toured Gorakhpur in 1814, removed with the imposition of British rule and the ashraf, the genteel, had since then found it more difficult to get labour.⁸⁴ Asiya Siddiqi, however, feels that this tying down of labour to sir land might have been unique to Gorakhpur.⁸⁵ Thomason (whose description of the urzal, base-born, corresponds to that of the lower rung of the praja) described their position in the pre-accession era as that of "predial slaves, who were beaten without mercy for misconduct, and liable to be pursued and brought back if they attempted to escape."⁸⁶ Nevertheless it is generally accepted that the zamindars did not have very effective means to tie down cultivators

84. See Montgomery, Martin's compilation of Buchanan's notes of 1807-15. M. Martin (ed.), The History of Antiquity, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India, Vol. II, London 1838, reprint, Delhi, 1976, pp. 535-37.

85. Asiya Siddiqi, op.cit., pp. 40-41.

86. S.R. Azamgarh, 1837, p. 39, para 94.

by force and to prevent one zamindar from enticing away the cultivators of another.⁸⁷

The most effective tie then when land was in plenty was that which linked dependency to the requirements of working capital and credit and succour in times of hardship. In an era when lineage authority was supposed to provide the framework for policing, crime prevention etc.⁸⁸ the umbrella of the raja's protection was also a binding tie. This right of protection could also be extended to the marauding activities of low caste dependents outside the estate particularly on the river reaches of Bihar and Bengal. In the Doaba pargana of Ballia, the Dosadhs, described as "mostly ploughmen, labourers and swineherds, ranking little higher than Chamars",⁸⁹ were known, in the early decades after cession, for their criminal attacks on the lower reaches of the Ganges. However, sometimes such raids on boats

87. Habib, op.cit., p.246; Asiya Siddiqi, op.cit., p.40; One of the arguments used by the colonial administration of the early nineteenth century against allowing maafi (revenue free land) was that the holders of this were able to tempt tenants away from revenue paying estates by offering better terms. The latter then fell into waste, S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.193, para 41, footnote.

88. D.G.Ghazipur, 1909, p.135.

89. D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.78.

were led by zamindars with their low caste dependants getting only a small share of the booty.⁹⁰

From low caste cultivators who had their own plough cattle the zamindar demanded a certain number of days ploughing in the ploughing season which was termed hari.⁹¹ This was an onerous exaction because the rice seedlings of the cultivator might dry up in the meantime if the rains stopped. From those cultivators who depended on the zamindar for loan of plough cattle and seed grain,⁹² i.e. those who did not have the means to take up cultivation on their own, the zamindar claimed begar, unpaid labour for weeding hoeing, tending cattle, irrigation etc.⁹³ These dependents could be categorised either as sub-tenants or as harwahas when they received a plot of land from zamindar's ^{the} sir for their own subsistence. In both cases the

90. "The Brahmins and Rajpoots, who were most active in the robbery, are entirely lost sight of; while a few poor chumars and mullahs have their houses searched". "Confessions of Ramdeenaco Bhur" in The Benares Magazine, Vol. IV, July-December 1850, p.456. The chumar, leather worker, usually an agricultural labourer, and the mullah, boatman, also increasingly engaged in agricultural labour and cultivation as river traffic began to decline.

91. See S.D.R., Vol. I, 13 July 1790, Appendix C. I, for a reference to a practise in Sheopoor and Kuttehar in which each ryot had to give one plough for one day to the zamindar of that village.

92. Elliot mentions a category of seed loan called Bhat, used in Benares and in eastern Oudh, which means seed loans to ploughmen without interest, Elliot, Glossary of Indian Terms, Beames edition, Vol. II, p.235.

93. S.R. Azamgarh, 1837, p.39, para.94.

allocation was seldom recorded in the village papers and the labour of the sub-tenant as well as of the harwaha and his family was generally on call⁹⁴

...the border line between real sub-tenant and a mere servant is very slight. If it is sir the sub-tenant is most likely a Bhar or Chamar who acts as a ploughman or herd. Neither party thinks the fact of the man holding some land worth recording.⁹⁵

Dependency for subsistence on the part of this section of the praja and ^{an}unspecific demand for services on the part of the raja was held to constitute a tie that was a personal one and the obligations were held to be hereditary. Sale or mortgage of the plot of land on which the dependent worked did not transfer the claim to services arising from this bond.⁹⁶ According to Reid sale and mortgage of the dues rendered by the praja was not unknown.⁹⁷ The personal nature of the tie, meant that partitions of the estate led to violent disputes over the distribution of the praja.⁹⁸ Praja allocated to one sharer remained solely his even though the man

94. Ibid., p.28, para 55; S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, p.11, para 20; Asiya Siddiqi, op.cit., p.40.

95. S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, p.11, para 20.

96. S.R.Azamgarh 1837, p.40, para 95.

97. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, pp.86-87, para 303.

98. "In the partition of an estate each Puttee keeps its own Ryots and sometimes the most violent disputes exist as to the right to certain Ryots."
S.R.Azamgarh, 1837, p.40, para 95.

might cultivate land under another sharer and not cultivate any belonging to his superior.

From the point of view of the praja the essential aspect of the relationship was the provision of succour. The zamindar would, however, insist on the weight of past obligation even when he was unable to provide the same patronage in the present. An interesting instance of the way in which the relationship was viewed from both sides is provided by Thomason. Shareholder A of an estate which was being partitioned claimed an Ahir as his asamee⁹⁹ on the grounds that his ancestors had located the man in the village, given him his house and drawn upon him for services such as the first day's ploughing of the season, the first day's use of bullocks, and for petty offerings of grain, mollasses etc. The Ahir had dug a well using credit from a mahajun but his master had not been in a position to help him pay back the loan. He had, therefore, applied to another shareholder who now claimed him as his asamee. The Ahir said that because of A's inability to support him his services were transferred to B. The shareholders of the estate, however, judged that it was A alone who could transfer the Ahir's services and, therefore, the Ahir was his. B might claim in payment of his loan only whatever/else

99. Blunt translates asamee as client, usually tenant of land, E.A.H. Blunt, The Caste System of Northern India, 1931, reprint, Delhi, 1969, p.357.

the Ahir could do.¹⁰⁰ In other words the shareholders insisted on the hereditary nature of the tie and came to a conclusion which put a greater burden on the Ahir. The Ahir, as is clear, had had his own ideas about the essence of the relation. Whereas the raja-praja idea distinguishes the pre-eminence of the core landholding group, extending their patronage and domination over the rest of rural society, there also existed broader status^a distinction which marked out all those who were considered of high status, whatever their material position or their place in the power hierarchy. This was the sharif-razil or ushraf-urzal, genteel-base distinction. (In some accounts, however, this is used in the same way as raja-praja).¹⁰¹

The distinction is one which is expressed in Urdu rather than in Bhojpuri and in conception spanned Muslim and Hindu status ranking.¹⁰² Within the ranks of those counted as sharif were the Brahmins, the Bhumihars, the Rajputs and Kayasthas.¹⁰³ Among Muslims the groups included the Milkis (Sheikhs and Sayyids) Mughals, Valayati and Indian Pathans.¹⁰⁴

100. S.R.Azamgarh, 1837, p.40, para 96.

101. As by Thomason, S.R.Azamgarh, 1837 and by Buchanan, op.cit.

102. According to Reid, however, the term ashraf originally applied to Brahmins, Bhumihars and Chhatris (Rajputs), S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.85, paras 300-301.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

In its most formal aspect the distinction hinged on whether one touched the plough or not, this being considered a most demeaning task.¹⁰⁵ The distinction was expressed as a claim upon the revenue levying state or the rent levying zamindar for a certain concession on the grounds that this would enable the recipient to maintain a ploughman. This claim to a concession in rents was in fact termed in one rent report as haq sharafat, the right of the genteel.¹⁰⁶ Did this concession in rents derive from the status criteria alone or from a special connection between particular high castes and the zamindar? Whitcombe argues that it was the special relationship to the maliks which accounted for the privilege in rent. Thus within the Brahmins of a village the rent paid by one family could be lower than the rent paid by another.¹⁰⁷

105. Ibid., p. 85, para 300. This raises a whole range of interesting questions about the plough as the point of status reference extending also to the relationship between men and women. If touching the plough was considered ritually polluting, why then do kings of myth draw the plough in times of drought as in the famous incident in the Ramayana when Janak the Raja of Mithila ploughs a field. Valmiki, Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, 118/26.

106. R.R.R. Pargana Muhammadabad and Mau, Azamgarh, 1905, p. 15, para 3. In a description of crop-sharing in Gorakhpur around the 1820s it was noted that before division an allowance of one-sixth was made for the expenses of a ploughman for those tenants whose caste did not allow them to touch the plough. Selections from the Revenue Records of the N.W.P., 1822-23, Allahabad 1872, p. 128, para 368.

107. Whitcombe, op. cit., pp. 44-45; see also Thomason, S.R. Azamgarh, 1837, pp. 39-40, paras 92-95.

If the phenomenon of high caste privilege in rents derived only from the need on the part of the zamindars to maintain a tie of kinship or of military or ritual service then, over the course of the nineteenth century, as land became scarce and lineage patronage less important than land ownership,

caste privilege should have been ignored in new rented land. Certainly, in the northern tract of Gorakhpur which was cleared and cultivated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a caste privilege in rents was not given.¹⁰⁸ But in these districts a caste privilege in rents prevailed for the tenant-at will too and also for the category of ex-proprietors of sir which was created by the Act of 1873.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps in these districts the zamindars could not entirely overlook patronage obligations in order to retain some measure of local muscle and local support against contending shareholders as well as against the lower castes.

108. S.R.Gorakhpur, Western Tahsils 1919; R.R.R.Tahsils, Maharajganj and Pharenda, 1940, U.P.Gazette, Pt.VIII 1940, p.384, para 80.

109. This led the settlement officer of the 1886 Jaunpur settlement to conclude that privilege in rents was related both to the connection with the zamindar as well as to caste status, S.R.Jaunpur, 1886, p.95, para 109. From Rasra, Ballia, it was reported that even high-caste sub-tenants paid less, R.R.R. Pargana Sikandar pur Bhadaon, tahsil Rasra, Ballia, 1930, p.22, para 27.

Another point which, however, tends to favour the argument that haq sharafat was an expression of the tie with the landholding community rather than of caste status per se is that high status Muslim cultivators received a concession on rents only on the estates of Muslim zamindars.¹¹⁰ This could be because the Muslims clustering on estate could represent a branch of a Rajput clan who had converted to Islam or because the Muslim zamindar gave them privilege to build his network of support and power on somewhat the same lines as that which underlay the power of the Rajput or Bhumihar lineage estate.

These constructs raja-praja, sharif-razil, were to come under stress as the cohesion of the zamindari communities loosened and lineage solidarity weakened. Not so, as has been argued, the idea of caste solidarity, a more status oriented reference.

Two reasons for this stress were the erosion of the material position of many of the co-parcenars as population pressure and lack of industrial development affected the upper strata of rural society as well.¹¹¹ As zamindars were driven closer to the soil their ability

110. For instance in Rasra, Ballia, rental privilege to Muslims was mostly confined to estates in which Sheikhs or Pathans were zamindars. R.R.R. Rasta, 1930, p. 82, para 23; so it would seem that on the individual estate the sharif-razil category was not a ranking which spanned both Hindu and Muslim tenants.

111. See below.

to maintain a certain style of life as well as to dispense the patronage which was an essential underpinning of the raja-praja construct was threatened.

Secondly, the consolidation of tenurial right and the development of a market in tenurial right meant that gradually the decision about who was to till shifted out of the sphere of zamindari right for those who were not powerful enough to prevent this. Erosion of material status was related to this - litigation to evict a tenant was expensive and the small zamindar often chose to allow occupancy rights to accumulate taking only some nazarana for the recognition of occupancy in preference to legal process.¹¹² The difficulty of suing for a rent increase or for an eviction would also be compounded by a situation in which a number of shareholders had an individual share in the rent proceeds of the tenancy.¹¹³ When the crops of a tenant had to be distrained or a portion of his field to be taken into possession by order of Government to recover rent it was likely to lead to disputes among all those to whom the tenant owed rent.¹¹⁴ However, if

112. R.R.R., Tahsil Phulpur, Azamgarh, August 1942, para 21. R.R.R.Pargana, Pargana Muhammadabad Zahurabad and Dehna, 1929-30, p.6, para 16.
Of course in the case of low caste occupancy tenants rents could be forced up without recourse to legal process.

113. The practise by which rents in a legally undivided estate were allocated among one or more owners was called phat bandi, S.R.Ghazipur 1886, p.69, para 143.

114. Ibid., p.69, para 143. The difficulty of getting a number of plaintiffs to sue for rent is also noted in R.R.R.Sikanderpur West and Bhadaon, 1929-30, p.12.

the low caste tenant was faced by a group of high caste coparcenars determined to get the land back under their cultivation he would find it very difficult to resist.¹¹⁵ High caste tenants were in a better position both to secure their tenancies and to resist a rent increase.

The consolidation of tenant right as was pointed out drew its strength from the cohesion of co-parcenars who had lost proprietary rights but continued to cultivate the same land as tenants. It was also probably founded upon the customary rights of the khudkasht tenant. In the period when land lay waiting for cultivators the main distinction between cultivators outside the zamindari body had been between resident, khudkasht and non-resident, pahikasht cultivators.¹¹⁶ The distinction obviously could apply to cultivators of the sharif or razil orders. According to Moreland the position of the pahikasht tenant was purely contractual.¹¹⁷ The customary rights of the khudkasht tenant probably emerged to induce the pahikasht to stay on and to invest his labour in improvement of the land. Both khudkasht and pahikasht cultivator paid a certain customary rate of rent, but the khudkasht tenant

115. S.R.Ballia, 1887, p.28, para 35.

116. Grierson, op.cit., p.327, para 1215.

117. W.H.Moreland, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1929, reprint, Delhi, 1968, p.161.

also had a hereditary right to cultivate the land he engaged for.¹¹⁸ Of Gorakhpur district in the 1820s it was observed that khudkasht cultivators did not have to pay anything for their houses and had the free use of trees planted by themselves and their ancestors.¹¹⁹

Thomason also describes this process of acquiring customary rights by low caste cultivator:

There are, however, many varieties of this class (the urzal). In proportion as they are good cultivators and raised above the menial castes they acquire by prescription rights which at length become valuable.¹²⁰

The reference to the condition of being "raised above the menial castes" suggests that among the low caste villagers there were also castes for whom it was very difficult to acquire customary cultivating rights. These castes performed menial tasks in the village and cultivated land not on their own account but as ploughmen, who received a service plot of sir, or as casual labour. Such were the Binds, the Lunias, the Dusadhs, the Musahars and the Chamars.¹²¹

118. Asiya Siddiqi, however, argues that the khudkasht cultivator was not necessarily entitled to hold the same land year after year, op.cit., p.36.

119. Board of Revenue, 30 January 1824, Selections from the Revenue Records of the N.W.P., Allahabad, 1872.

120. S.R.Azamgarh, 1837, p.41, para 97.

121. D.G.Ghazipur 1909, pp.84-89; In Benares district Chamars seldom held land in tenant right, occupying generally the position of agricultural or general labourers, D.G.Benares, 1909, p.96; Bhars in Ghazipur were mostly ploughmen and could "rarely attain even the dignity of cultivators", H.S.M. Ghazipur, Pt. II, 1876, p.50. In the settlement of

As long as land was available for cultivation the main distinction in tenant right was between the khudkasht and the pashikasht cultivator. Regulation LI of 1795 had provided for the issue of pattas, lease agreements, between zamindars and cultivators fixing the amount due. However, pattas were not particularly favoured by tenants at this stage because they wished to keep themselves free to negotiate more favourable terms if possible.¹²² It was noted that rents did not increase despite lack of written lease agreements.¹²³

Even by mid-century when Act X of 1859 made the fixed rate occupancy, distinction within the category of resident tenants it had little effect on rent enhancement especially where the tenants were strong.¹²⁴

121. (contd.)

pargana Saidpur Bhitri in 1834, Lushington distinguished between cultivators who considered themselves entitled to occupy their jots (cultivation) at a fixed rent and the shikmi-asami who had no rights at all. S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, Appendix I, p.6.

122. D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.100; S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.182 para 22; H.S.M.Ghazipur, Pt.II, 1876, p.163. According to this regulation khudkasht tenants were not to be ejected as long as they paid their rent, pahikasht tenants could be removed only after expiry of the lease, D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.100.

123. D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.100.

124. S.R.Ballia, 1887, p.28, para 34. The rents of fixed rate tenants were fixed in perpetuity, those of occupancy tenants could be enhanced under certain conditions - i.e. if the occupancy rent was below the prevailing rental, or if the value of the land and its produce had increased other than by the efforts of the cultivator.

In 1873 Act XIX of the N.W.P. Rent Act further widened the distinction between occupancy and fixed rate tenure by making occupancy rights non-saleable and by limiting succession to these rights by inheritance.¹²⁵ This time the legislation had an impact because it oriented itself to the market in tenant right¹²⁶ which developed in conflict with the desire now of the zamindar to tap the increasing value of land through increasing rents or by bringing land under his own cultivation. Increase of rent no longer led to abandoned fields and with population pressure and sub-division affecting the holdings of the zamindar the small zamindar was intensely interested in expanding his sir.¹²⁷ The fixity of the revenue demand and the strong position of high caste tenants made tenant right in a situation of increasing pressure on the land as valuable a commodity as zamindari right.¹²⁸

125. S.R.Ballia, 1887, p.29, para 40.

126. "The permanency of settlement, the absence of any element of uncertainty in the Government demand has increased the value of every vestige of right over the land and made it readily marketable." S.R. Jaunpur, 1886, p.30, para 42.

127. Ibid., p.87, para 105.

128. In Ballia the average price per acre for proprietary right between 1865-1883 was Rs.55 per acre for sale and Rs.56 per acre for mortgage. For cultivating right it was Rs.113 and Rs.96 respectively. Even after making allowances for the fact that tenant transfers were for cultivated land only, the settlement officer asserted that the value of tenant right exceeded the value of proprietary right. S.R.Ballia, 1887, pp.53-54, paras 89-91. Zamindari right without a substantial proportion of sir fell in value. S.R.Azamgarh, 1908, pp.14-15, para 6.

Act XIX of 1873 gave the zamindars a handle for it affected the credit-worthiness of those who were categorised as occupancy tenants.¹²⁹ However, according to the evidence given by one witness to the Banking Enquiry Commission in 1929, the occupancy tenant in fact continued to mortgage cultivating possession of his land though this was not recognised by law. However their credit was less than the fixed-rate tenant who could borrow on the same terms as the zamindars.¹³⁰

The result of this development was that the earlier indifference to classification of tenant right disappeared, and claims to fixed rate and occupancy tenure were heavily contested in the settlements of the 1880s.¹³¹ The shift in the axis of tension is noted in the following paragraph:

...from a perusal of the correspondence of 1839-42, it would appear that contest then arose almost entirely in regard to zemindari rights, and that tenant right was rarely, if ever, a subject of dispute. This forms a great contrast to 1880 when disputes about tenancy have been more numerous than those about zamindars.¹³²

129. D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.101.

130. Evidence of Babu Jawahir Lal Sinha, United Provinces Provincial Banking Enquiry Commission, Vol. IV, 1929-30, p.233.

131. S.R.Ballia, 1887, p.30, para 41; S.R.Ghazipur 1886, p.90, para 173-74.

132. S.R.Ghazipur 1886, p.149, para 278.

From a situation in which the zamindars determined who settled and cultivated in the village,¹³³ and in which khudkasht cultivators had only the weapons of flight or abandonment of cultivation, there now existed the possibility of a tenant disposing of his fields, being the means of introducing new cultivators into the estate and contesting his zamindar's rights and authority in court.

The second way in which the raja-praja relation was put to strain was due to the fact that subdivision of land and population pressure eroded the material position of many small zamindars, limiting the degree of credit, succour and employment they could offer. In such a situation the tie of authority over the praja would weaken. This did not mean that the most depressed sections of the praja could become very assertive. Population pressure also affected their position adversely, forcing them to accept any terms of employment as the land-man ratio eroded their bargaining power. In fact this phenomenon allowed considerable leeway to the small zamindar in his ability to employ agricultural labour despite his own worsening position. Hard pressed zamindars could press even harder on their labourers and sub-tenants. The following table begins to illustrate the picture.

133. T.R.Metcalf, op.cit., p.10; Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, Bombay 1963.

Table VI

Variation in Population Density, 1881-1931

Natural division	1931	1921	1911	1901	1891	1881
United Provinces	442	415	428	432	425	400
Sub-Himalayan West	109	101	103	93	90	80
Sub-Himalayan West	442	411	441	437	430	490
Indo-Gangetic Plain West	542	508	539	545	499	492
Indo-Gangetic Plain Central	555	528	551	572	565	521
Central Indian Plateau	214	197	211	201	220	215
East Satpurus	180	166	166	168	180	181
Sub-Himalayan East	651	602	584	564	563	497
Indo-Gangetic Plain East	753	710	707	748	804	765
Districts of Indo-Gangetic Plain East:						
Benares	930	871	857	848	890	860
Jaunpur	797	745	746	776	816	780
Ghazipur	634	600	606	659	739	695
Ballia	742	675	687	802	808	792
Azamgarh	710	691	675	700	790	733

Source: United Provinces Census, 1931, Pt. I-- Report from Subsidiary Table III - Variation in relation to density since 1881, p.112.

The population pressure which kept density in this natural division the highest for the province was accompanied by an increasing dependence on agriculture as certain traditional occupations and industries declined. Spinning, and to a lesser extent weaving, declined as English yarn and mill cloth replaced handloom products.¹³⁴ The indigenous sugar industry also declined due to competition from imported mill made sugar.¹³⁵ An important service industry which used to give employment to low castes such as the Kewats and the Mallahs was work associated with river traffic which declined with the development of rail traffic. These boat-men castes now increasingly had to take to agriculture.¹³⁶ Another indigenous industry, the manufacture of salt-petre

¹³⁴. S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, pp.127-28; D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.52; D.G.Azamgarh, 1911, p.62.

¹³⁵. In 1882 in Ballia there were 571 refineries, the 1907 Gazetteer reported only 250, D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.52; The number of sugar refineries in Azamgarh declined by about a half in somewhat the same period, between 1877-1911, D.G.Azamgarh, 1911, p.58; The decline in weaving and sugar manufacture in Mau and Mubarakpur in Azamgarh was believed to have led to a decline in purchasing power according to one witness for the 1898 Famine Commission, Evidence of Lala Baldeo Narayan Baksh, Azamgarh, Indian Famine Commission, 1898, Appendices, Vol.V, p.151.

¹³⁶. See D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.60 for the decline of traffic on the river Sarju; S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.22, para 87, for the decline of traffic on the Gogra including the decline in the export of sugar to Calcutta. U.P. Census 1911, Subsidiary Table VIII, p.429 shows the overwhelming dependence of the Kewats and Mullahs on agriculture for a livelihood.

carried out by the Lunias, a caste usually engaged in earth-work, was hedged about with restrictions in 1861 to protect the government monopoly over salt.¹³⁷

By the end of the nineteenth century another avenue which was closing off for the low-caste cultivators of this region was emigration to the less densely populated tracts of the terai region in Gorakhpur and Basti in the sub-Himalayan tract adjoining the eastern Indo-Gangetic plain to the north. In the 1830s and the 1840s lease-holders of jungle tract in the terai had drawn upon this region for supplies of labour to clear and cultivate the land. On the Lehra estate in northern Gorakhpur the lessee began his activities in the 1830s by importing labourers from Jaunpur and giving them an incentive in the form of leases on the cleared land at very low rates.¹³⁸ On the Birdpur estate in Basti cultivators had to be brought in from Azamgarh and from Chota Nagpur in Bihar to grow and manufacture indigo. In the Dulha grant in the same district the jungle had to be cleared by importing labour from Jaunpur.¹³⁹ In the census of 1865 too there is reference to emigration

137. D.G.Ballia, 1907, p.53.

138. S.R.Gorakhpur, 1891, p.60, para 218.

139. D.G.Basti, 1907, p.98.

from Jaunpur and from Azamgarh where rents were being enhanced to the more labour scarce district of Gorakhpur.¹⁴⁰

By the end of the nineteenth century, as cultivation expanded in the terai and cultivators eager to rent up land, this avenue also closed off for the land hungry population of the eastern districts.

A constriction of income was also experienced by small zamindars whose holdings were becoming inadequate. On certain estates the pressure on resources is noticed very early on in the century. In the 1840-41 survey of pargana Lakhnesar in Ballia, Raikes observed that because of the extent of precarious rice tract and the degree of subdivision the Sengar zamindars were "in poor circumstances and seek employment in service."¹⁴¹ But one important avenue of service commensurate with the status aspirations of these communities had begun to shrink as the Company began to concentrate armed power in its own hands, and to disband the private armies of the local power holders. In the aftermath of 1857 recruitment from certain districts stopped. This affected locations in eastern U.P. such as the eastern part of pargana Zamania, Ghazipur which used to send a large number of recruits to the Bengal army,¹⁴² and Jaunpur where recruiting of

140. N.W.P.Census 1865, Vol. I, p. 56, and Note IV, p. 109.

141. S.R.Ballia, 1887, Appendix 14, p. 52.

142. S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, Appendix p. 38, para 89.

Brahmins and Rajputs practically stopped.¹⁴³ Whitcombe remarks on an extremely interesting consequence for the internal unity of the lineage estate of this end to recruitment in the armies of the Nawab of Oudh, powerful taluqdars and the Bengal Army.

The spread of conflict amongst warring clansmen over their respective shares in the fruits of local power was checked by the "safety valve" provided by opportunities for service under the Nawab or the neighbouring British administrative establishments, or in British Indian regiments. Younger brothers and cousins enlisted and left their families to the protection of an elder brother who managed the family estate and to whom they fed back the greater part of their pay.¹⁴⁴

When the situation changed there was no option but to return to the land, a fact which also led to the erosion of prestige.¹⁴⁵

Other castes also suffered from the disbanding of retainers. The Pasi though usually a swineherd used to be entrusted by the zamindar with the duties of village watchman and guard at the fort gate. Because of their low caste, however, they were excluded from the Bengal Army. Gubbins recalls that during the Mutiny the great number of the taluqdars retainers were Pasis "And good reason have we to remember the repeated war cry of "Ali", "Ali", "Ali", with which they disturbed our nights."¹⁴⁶

143. N.W.P.Census, 1865, Allahabad 1867, Note LV, p.109.

144. Whitcombe, op.cit., p.55.

145. Ibid., pp.139-40.

146. M.R.Gubbins, op.cit., p.72.

Describing the position of the small proprietors in Azamgarh in his evidence to the Famine Commission of 1898, Lala Baldeo Narayan Baksh said that:

The so called landed proprietors are an impoverished class of people. Their shares are very small. Their stock of grain is nil. Their resources lie in the production of their fields. With the loss of their harvests their production disappears also.¹⁴⁷

He also said that he had never seen any grain pits in the district and that generally landowners and cultivators had no surplus stocks of grain.¹⁴⁸

As the fortunes of the small zamindars declined, so did their ability to extend patronage whether to kinsmen, other high castes or to low castes dependants. Of Azamgarh in the 1881 Settlement Report it was noted that the privilege in rents extended to the sharif now tended to be disregarded whenever the law did not require its recognition.¹⁴⁹ The Settlement Officer of Jaunpur district also heard this view being expressed.¹⁵⁰

However, the balance of the evidence suggests that some caste privilege in rents was still being granted. In times of scarcity the ability to grant succour would

147. Evidence of Lala Baldeo Narayan, op.cit., p. 151.

148. Ibid.

149. S.R. Azamgarh, 1881, p. 86, para 302.

150. S.R. Jaunpur, 1886, p. 95, para 109.

decrease, and there would be no particular incentive to do so because of the plentiful supply of labour. In 1878 Crooke was reporting on a process in Gorakhpur which must have set in even earlier in the more densely populated districts of Azamgarh, Ballia, and Ghazipur. Crooke noted that before 1857 the master was bound to treat his labourers with some degree of consideration to retain them. But now the harwaha's remuneration was only barely sufficient to support him during the time agricultural work was going on and during the slack times of the year he was thrown on his own resources.¹⁵¹ Officials handling famine relief were worried that instead of supporting their dependents zamindars would throw them onto public relief works. This, according to Crooke, would lead to zamindars lowering wages.¹⁵² Anxiety to ensure that tenant right did not accrue on sir land would also erode the security of the shikmi or the harwaha. The 1886 Settlement report of Ghazipur noted that land was seldom let to the same man continuously.¹⁵³

By the last decade of the century the precariousness of the economy of these districts was reflected in

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151. W.Crooke, Memorandum on Famine Relief, 31 October 1878, Famine Commission, 1878, N.W.P.& O., p.2.

152. Ibid.

153. S.R.Ghazipur 1886, p.11, para 20.

the demographic picture with the Eastern Indo-Gangetic Plain registering a sharp population decrease of 7.1 per cent between 1891 and 1901.¹⁵⁴ This population decrease continued into the next decade, 1901-1911 with a population decrease of 5.5 per cent.¹⁵⁵ The Census reports explained this development to the precariousness of agriculture in large tracts of rice growing, to the decline of the sugar and indigo industries and in the 1901-1911 decade to plague also.¹⁵⁶ The other reason cited was emigration.¹⁵⁷

The 1911 Census noted that the Eastern Indo-Gangetic Plain sent out the largest number of emigrants in the category "emigration to non-contiguous parts of other provinces".¹⁵⁸ This implies that migration was taking place for fairly long spans. The importance of emigre remittances for these districts has already been noted in Chapter I. The important point to note here is that emigration was taking place right across the status spectrum. In the 1908 Settlement Report of Azamgarh it

154. U.P.Census, 1931, Pt.I, op.cit., Subsidiary Table III, p.1120.

155. Ibid.

156. N.W.P. & O., Census 1901, Allahabad 1902, pp.36-37; U.P.Census, 1931, op.cit., p.101.

157. Ibid.

158. U.P. Census, 1911, op.cit., p.92.

was noted that population decrease had fallen heaviest on the Chhatris, then on Bhars and Ahirs, which meant that the agriculturalist no less than the labourer was being forced to look abroad to supplement his income.¹⁵⁹ Muslim weavers of Azamgarh and Ghazipur went to Bombay and sent money home.¹⁶⁰

Apart from consequences of impoverishment for the status of the small zamindar institutional changes in the course of the nineteenth century also shifted certain spheres of authority from the dominant lineage to the intrusive and centralising colonial state. The impact of the centralisation of armed power and of the settlement process and the law courts has already been noted. One indication^{of} the balance of authority tilting towards "power over land" rather than "power over men" was that in the settlements of the 1870s and 1880s cesses which derived from a personal domination over low caste cultivators, such as mandwana, shadiana, etc. were done away with.¹⁶¹ Of course whether they continued to be paid

159. S.R.Azamgarh, 1908, p.7, para 9, p.8, para 10; Migrants sought jobs in "...mill labour, the coal fields of Burdwan and Manbhum, earth work, palki bearing, service as peons, doorkeepers and clerks and agricultural labour..." U.P.Census, 1911, p.91; see also D.G.Ghazipur, 1909, p.79.

160. D.G.Ghazipur, 1909, p.78; Indian Famine Commission, 1898, N.W.P. & O. Appendices, Vol. IV, Evidence of Commissioner, Gorakhpur Division, 23 March, 1898, p.66.

161. Under the N.W.P. Revenue Act XIX of 1873, cesses "deriving from the occupation of land were to be

or not was a matter of local power relations.

The other sphere in which the state had eroded the authority of the zamindari community was in the way in which it had taken away policing functions from the zamindar and incorporated the patwari, the village accountant, as the lowest rung of the revenue administration. The charge of policing had early been lost¹⁶² but the zamindars had continued to employ the village goraits, chaukidars, paying them through a grant of rent free land (jagir) or through a charge on revenue paid. In 1871 in Ballia these jagirs were resumed and settled with the zamindars and the amounts assessed on these lands were treated as a local cess for the payment of the goraits through a monthly cash wage disbursed by the government.¹⁶³ In effect the zamindars were still paying for the chaukidars but control had shifted out of their

161. (contd.)

included in the zamindars rent, but miscellaneous sayer revenues were done away with. Whitcombe, op.cit., p.154. In Ghazipur the Board of Revenue did away with mandwana and shadiana but recognised the claim to the produce of trees and the levy of charges for fishing. S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, p.176, para 347.

162. D.G.Ghazipur, 1909, p.135.

163. D.G.Ballia, 1907, pp.123-24. Act I of 1892 brought village watch and ward more closely under the supervision of the District Magistrate. The power of appointing, determining the number and fixing the salaries of chaukidars were transferred to the D.M. and the village funds were replaced by a district fund.

hands. The village chaukidar was usually drawn from the lowest castes in the village, the Dom or the Pasi, and had been very dependent on the zamindars for his livelihood. Now in theory at least he had been constituted as the eye and ear of the Raj, an idea which must have been galling to the zamindars even if, in practise, they continued to exercise an unofficial influence over the chaukidars. (As late as 1921 it was reported that the zamindars of Bandish tahsil in Ballia were still realising chaukidari dues.)¹⁶⁴ In the 1902 Police Commission report the Superintendent of Police in Ballia was complaining that "the zamindars keep gangs of blackguards and the police very seldom manage to get a man convicted against the wishes of the village zamindar."¹⁶⁵ In other words the association of patwari and chaukidar with the administration of the Raj had created ambivalence in a relation which in the past had fitted comfortably into the raja-praja construct. The patwari, who formerly was associated with the keeping of the records of a particular mahal, or of individual coparcenary families, and received a grant of land for this, now became a functionary of the

164. United Provinces Legislative Council Debates, Vol. III, 1921, p.47.

165. Indian Police Commission, 1902-03, U.P. Papers, answers to printed questions.

Raj, paid by a local cess.¹⁶⁶ Being of higher caste, usually Kayastha,¹⁶⁷ and literate, the patwari was better able to take advantage of this reinforcement. The tradition of literacy also helped sons of patwaris to take up jobs in the lower ranks of the bureaucracy and in the legal sphere created by civil and criminal jurisprudence. Though the patwari did not suddenly become immune from zamindari influence the relation does seem to have registered a subtle shift. His office constituted a visible intrusion of the colonial state into the world of the dominant elite and his position was now strong enough for him to play off one proprietary faction against another.¹⁶⁸ He was the agency for government loans, and the authority which would make assessment for revenue remissions on account of flood, hailstorm, alluvial fluctuation etc. What

166. B.Cohn writing of the Benares region in the eighteenth century says that the patwaris though technically part of the Mughal administrative structure were the employees and servants of the dominant lineage in the taluk. B.S.Cohn, "The Initial British Impact on India," Journal of Asiatic Studies, XIX, 4, 1960, pp.418-31. See also; S.R.Ballia, 1887, appendix 14, p.59A.

167. In the United Provinces and in the Central Provinces the post of patwari was "practically monopolised by Kayasthas". E.Blunt (ed.), Social Service in India, London, 1938, pp.80-81. Honorary patwari was one of the titles it could please the raj to bestow.

168. Hence his reputation for encouraging disputes. Thomason said that the patwaris possessed the power to foment disputes between shareholders over the estate expenses and profits. S.R.Azamgarh 1837, p.29, para 61.

the Raj offered to the zamindar in return for the "lordliness" which it took away was the office of the lambardar. In the early nineteenth century one of the arguments used against allowing all coparcenars to engage for revenue was that a class of men above the rent could be of aid to the government.¹⁶⁹ In these districts as explained earlier there was no incentive to pay revenue through a representative once the share of each individual proprietor had been worked out. In these districts each proprietor preferred to collect his rents and pay his portion of the revenue directly.¹⁷⁰ The settlement report of 1886 in fact notes the "almost entire absence in this district, of suits by co-sharers for accounts and profits".¹⁷¹ Eric Stokes has argued that the rewards of such external office were attractive when an unremitting revenue demand forced down all ryots into an undifferentiated mass with the exception of the revenue managers.¹⁷² Here in the eastern districts the revenue demand was fixed in perpetuity for the Benares

169. Board of Revenue, 30 January 1824, Selections from the Revenue Records, N.W.P. 1822-23, Allahabad, 1872, pp. 147-48.

170. S.R. Azamgarh, 1881, p. 94, para 333; S.R. Ghazipur 1886, p. 81, para 166; D.G. Ghazipur 1909, p. 94.

171. S.R. Ghazipur, 1886, p. 81, para 166.

172. Eric Stokes, "Privileged Land Tenure in Village India in the Early Nineteenth Century," in E. Frykenburg (ed.), Land Tenure and Peasant in South Asia, New Delhi, 1977, p. 61.

division. The rewards of lambardari office were not attractive and the lambardar was often one of the poorer sharers unable to exert much influence.¹⁷³ Such changes as have been outlined in the forms of power exercised in rural society also encouraged certain lower castes to challenge the line at which the sharif-razil divide was drawn and to seek a higher caste ranking. In this context some cultivating low castes who were in a position of relative prosperity draw particular attention. Between some cultivators of these castes and the more depressed members of the proprietary group the only difference often was caste status.

However, aspirations to higher status cannot be crudely linked to upward economic mobility alone. Castes not noted for their prosperity, for instance, the Lunias¹⁷⁴ could also aspire to higher status, encouraged perhaps by a perception of the erosion of lineage power and the presence of an authority over and beyond it. It could, possibly, also arise from a process of general cultural reorientation which encouraged the knitting together of low castes with higher castes in a reconstituted concept of Hindu community.¹⁷⁵

173. S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, p.81, para 166.

174. See Sandria B.Freitag, "Sacred Symbol as Mobilising Ideology: The North Indian Search for a "Hindu" Community," Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol.22, 1980, pp.597-625.

175. Ibid.

The description of low caste cultivators said to be more prosperous and independent is remarkably similar. The picture is one of sufficient land to make intensive inputs of family labour yield a fairly secure living. The intensive use of family labour is revealed in the kind of crops grown, for instance in the market gardening for which the Koeris were famous,¹⁷⁶ in practises of intensive manuring and irrigating,¹⁷⁷ and in the use of their own womenfolk for work on the fields.¹⁷⁸ Work in the field meant that such peasant women could not observe strict purdah. The low caste cultivator who aspired to a degree of independence from the zamindar had to have secure possession of a sufficiently viable plot of land and the money to provide working capital such

176. S.R.Azamgarh, 1837, p.41, para 97; W.Crooke, Natives of Northern India, London, 1907, p.171.

177. Reid describes the Zamindars as "parsimonious", "industrious" and "skillful" and noted that "the embankments, wells and fences in their villages will generally be found in good order," S.R.Azamgarh 1881, p.35, para 125; "Every Kurmi cultivator commits to memory a large number of sayings on different agricultural subjects... Ghagh, the originator of most of these sayings is said to have been a very intelligent Kurmi cultivator." "The Kurmi Cultivator" in W.Burns (ed.), Sons of the Soil: Studies of the Indian Cultivator, Calcutta, 1944, p.50.

178. Zamindara women could move around and carry food to the men in the fields. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.35, para 125. Kurmi women did not observe purdah and widow remarriage was common. W.Burns, op.cit., p.48; Was this because of the premium placed on their work? Of course even Rajput women, kept in seclusion, laboured in the processing of grain, the care of cattle and in spinning. The Benares Magazine, Vol.IV, July-December 1850, p.263.

as seed, plough cattle and wells. The average size of holding of the high caste tenant was larger than that of the low caste cultivator,¹⁷⁹ so the latter had to follow more intensive methods of farming and meet the labour requirement entirely from his family or from pooling arrangements with fellow cultivators. Castes which in the description of settlement officers were "good" cultivators of this sort were the Kurnis,¹⁸⁰ the Koeris¹⁸¹ and the Zamindaras,¹⁸² a Muslim cultivating caste.

Such castes

pargana where the Kurmis owned land was Nathupur, 16.09 per cent of it in 1906, and here they called themselves Mals. The Settlement Officer remarked in the 1906 assessment report that they had of late been "setting up claims to be of high caste and wear the sacred thread of the high born."^{183a} The Zamindaras classified themselves as Sheiks, Mughals or Pathans, deeply resenting the use of the word Rautera to describe them, or any suggestion that they were different from the other Muslims.¹⁸⁴ They resisted the idea they belonged to the category of the razil.¹⁸⁵ When Reid is describing the kachchi riaya as low caste cultivators who were generally more amenable to the will of the landlords and had less hesitation in flitting the village when hard pressed, he specifically excludes the Zamindaras from this category.¹⁸⁶ Like the high caste tenants the Zamindaras would pay only a fixed rent and not any other petty dues and services.¹⁸⁷ In

183a. Assessment Report, Pargana Nathupur, Tahsil Ghosi, Azamgarh, 1906, p.4, para 6.

184. S.R.Azamgarh 1881, pp.35-36, paras 125-126 and footnote to para 125.

185. S.R.Azamgarh 1908, p.8, para 10.

186. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.86, para 303.

187. Ibid., p.86, para 303.

addition, from among the low caste cultivators the Zamindaras owned the largest percentage of land in Azamgarh.¹⁸⁸ The 1908 settlement report observed that they had also taken to trade and professional occupations.¹⁸⁹

A simple equation, however, between upward mobility in material standing and the aspiration to high caste status¹⁹⁰ is not always borne out by the evidence. Firstly, even a caste group like the Luniyas generally associated with earth work and agricultural labour could, in the words of a settlement officer, lay claim to "magnificent traditions" and believe that they were of Chhatri origin.¹⁹¹ The settlement officer was applying the same weapon against their pretensions as the high castes, ridicule.¹⁹² Secondly, in many cases the castes

188. Between 1877 and 1908 their proprietary holdings had increased from 5.28 per cent to 6.7 per cent of the district. S.R.Azamgarh 1908, p.11, para 3.

189. Ibid., p.8, para 10.

190. In his article on the cow protection movement in east U.P. and west Bihar between 1888-1917, Gyan Pandey suggests that it was because of their improved circumstances that the Zamindaras and the Mals became resentful of their classification in the ranks of the razil, and that many who belonged to low status groups like the Ahirs, Koeris and Kurmis were occupancy tenants who were gradually working their way into a competitive position and fighting for equal rights and an end to oppressive zamindari practises." Gyan Pandey, "Rallying Round the Cow: Sectarian Strife in the Bhojpur Region, 1888-1917," in Ranajit Guha (ed.), Subaltern Studies, Vol. II, Delhi, 1983, pp.74, 114.

191. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.34, para 119.

192. Banai Mal bigarai Kunbi: the making of a Mal is the ruination of a Kurmi, ibid., p.33, para 113. The

which were listed as laying claim to higher status could in fact trace whatever proprietorship of land they had to the pre-accession era, and the passage of the nineteenth century had meant the erosion rather than the augmentation for them of such rights.

Most of the land held in proprietary right by Ahirs, Kunbis, Koiris and Lunias was held or managed by their ancestors before the cession of the district... but with a few exceptions, the communities of these castes have either got rid of their proprietary rights or are in difficulties.¹⁹³

One group of Ahirs who had converted to Islam and claimed the rank of Sheiks (a form of status mobility not to be observed here in the nineteenth century) owned at the time of the Permanent Settlement the town of Ballia and its neighbourhood but, notes the Gazetteer of 1907, much of that land had now passed to others.¹⁹⁴ It seems important to keep in mind that the same factors which could lead to an erosion in the material position of the high caste proprietors i.e., the press of numbers and subdivision could even more lead to impoverishment amongst these castes. Prosperity depended upon farm

192. (contd..)

Muslim landed aristocracy, the Milkis also enjoyed a sneer at the expense of the Zamindaras, ibid., pp.35-36, para 125.

193. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, p.64, para 199.

194. D.G.Ballia, 1907,

size and in some cases upon diversification into other professions which gave additional buoyancy.¹⁹⁵ Lastly the claim to higher status ranking was not always without "validity" even in terms of the norms laid down by the higher castes. The Zamindaras of Fakhruddinpur in Azamgarh owed their origin to the conversion of one branch of the Bisen Rajputs of Athaisi.¹⁹⁶ According to legend, the Mals of Nathupur, the Bisens of Salempur Majhauri (Rajputs), the Bagaunchia Bhumihars of Tamkuhi and Kowari and the Misrs of Peasi (Brahmans) were all descended from a common ancestor, Maiur Bhat, and all four sets of descendants accepted the legend.¹⁹⁷ In other words the claim put forward by certain low caste agriculturists to high caste status could as well be related ^{to} a perception of the erosion of the lordly authority of the dominant communities as to economic mobility.

Certain other castes such as the telis (oil-pressers), kalwars (liquor distillers), kandus (sugar-manufacturers) and the Halwais (confectioners) were

195. Reid noted that the prosperity of the zamindaras was generally in proportion to their population and the size of their mahals. Some individuals had been able to add to their property, but some old communities had lost land. S.R.Azamgarh, 1881, pp.71-72, para 242. Of the Mal Kunbis of Nathupur the Settlement Officer noted in 1906 that they "...were holding their own but nothing more. Their communities are crowded, and not always as prosperous as might be expected." Assessment Report, op.cit., p.2, para 1.

196. Ibid., p.52, para 160.

197. Ibid., p.29, footnote to para 101.

also aspiring to higher status within the Vaishya varna¹⁹⁸ and they were also buying into the land market created by sale and mortgage of plots belonging to distressed proprietors, especially in the vicinity of towns. However, the general picture in this region is that of members of the traditional landholding castes themselves buying up land through their money lending activities,¹⁹⁹ whether from less fortunate relatives and co-parcenars or other proprietors. Powerful co-parcenars who in the eighteenth century had operated through informal controls, possession over and above that which was theirs by ancestral right, and through mortgage deals²⁰⁰ could^{now} make full use of legal title to individual possession. On some estates this led to sharpening stratification; on others to a sinking down of nearly all coparcenars due to the sheer weight of numbers. The evidence does not allow one to come to a clear demarcation of the overall trend but the impression one receives is that of small proprietors under

198. This process had started in the eighteenth century. See C.A.Bayly, op.cit., pp.31, 340.

199. "Money lending far from being a monopoly of trading castes is largely engaged in by well-to-do Rajputs and Brahmans", S.R.Ballia, 1887, p.53; para 88. In the densely crowded taluqa of Gahmar, Ghazipur, money-lending was carried on by well-to-do members of the proprietary community, S.R.Ghazipur, 1886, p.109, para 212. Oldham refers to many Bhumihar zamindars having an extensive cultivation and lending money and grain, HSI, Ghazipur, Pt.II, 1876, p.43.

200. S.R.Azamgarh, 1837, p.30, para 64.



pressure and able to keep afloat only if sur was sufficient and if income could be derived from subsidiary occupations such as money lending or service outside the village.

In conclusion, by the end of the nineteenth century the political world of the kinship estate had been opened up to an intrusive state and to an intrusive market in land rights. This affected relations not only with low caste tenants but also with high caste dependents who would also become more independent as the lineage core of power became weaker. However, all co-parcenars and all high castes dependants in the village continued to share caste status. Some groups of low caste cultivators sought inclusion into this status ranking but they also accepted at one level the cultural symbols of what constituted high caste ranking.²⁰¹ At one level the high castes ridiculed such attempts or met them in more aggressive fashion. At a local level as so many studies have shown, this challenge was also one of tenants to the zamindari power of the high caste landlords. But at another level, as the cow protection riots showed the landholding communities had to come to terms with the necessity of exercising leadership in a changed political context. This required an acceptance of an equality or commonality at a certain

201. See Sandria Freitag, op.cit., p.601.

level and this was through the identification with the idea of a Hindu community. On the whole, in this region this commonality came to overlap culturally with the idea of a national identity. But this remains a subject of future research. There was a barrier to the integration not only of Muslims but also to the integration of untouchables into this wider community.

After 1918, the student sons of those zamindars and lower level officials who had participated in the cow-protection movement of 1893 imbibed other ideas of nationalism and socialism in school and college. Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience created a body of Congress workers and Congress sympathisers among the upper strata of rural society but did not give rise to any movement of the really depressed strata of insecure tenants, sub-tenants and labourers. The elections of 1936 and the period of the Congress Ministry brought home to the dominant landed communities a reality which had been crystallising over the years, that dominance would have to be sustained within the cultural framework and politics of national identity as well. This realisation did not come about as the consequence of a crude identification of economic interest with a new power equation. For the small struggling proprietor the promise of greater prosperity under a national government would have as great an appeal as the hope that Swaraj

would bring greater tenurial security or rent reduction would have for the low caste tenant. The Quit India call gave the students, and the dominant landed communities an occasion for the expression of their identification with the idea of nationalism. It did so in a highly surcharged and symbolic fashion. As will be elaborated, the fascination with the symbols of dramatic seizure was portended earlier in the popularity of terrorist idiom with the youth of these districts. The high caste tenant or small zamindar could mill in the mob with the lowly labourer without the fear that such an upheaval would in any way challenge the world of agrarian power relations.

Chapter 3

THE LEADERSHIP AND THE CONTEXT

The Leadership

In its social origins the leadership of the 1942 movement was drawn from the same strata that had provided the nucleus of the Congress organisation set up in the course of the Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience movements - graduates, undergraduates, small zamindars, vakils, mukhtars, all drawn mostly from the Brahmin, Bhumihar, Rajput, Bania and Kayastha castes.¹ However, in the event of 1942 this high caste small proprietor element also threw up individuals who had not previously come to notice on any political platform.² These new men were in a sense drawn from the peasant mobs which they addressed but with an outlook shaped and widened by the events and images of the national movement.

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1. File No. 5/1922, A.T.C.C. Papers, N.M.M.L. In terms of the spread of the Congress organisation, during Non-cooperation the districts of Gorakhpur and Ballia seem to have been better organised than other districts in eastern U.P. See list of Congress Committees, File No. 3/1922, A.T.C.C. Papers, N.M.M.L.
 2. For instance Tarkeshwar Pandey a prominent Congress leader of Ballia (in jail during the 1942 movement) said he had not heard of Bhup Narayan Singh and Sudarshan Singh who led the attack on Bairia thana before. He described them as kashtkars, cultivators. Interview, 7 June 1984, Benares. Bahura village is largely one of Chhatris and according to Paras Nath Mishra, a student activist in 1942, it was a C.S.P. strong hold and Bhup Narayan a C.S.P. worker. D.G. Ballia 1907, p. 90; Paras Nath Mishra, Interview, Lucknow, 13 April 1982.

However, this movement did not, as pointed out earlier, throw up any charismatic peasant leader creating the kind of millenarian images inspired by Madari Pasi or Baha Ramchandra.³ One does come across certain instances where leadership emerges from a different social layer - in Azamgarh at Tarwa thana according to a nationalist account, one Jaddu Bhar was set up as judge at a public court to try the thanedar and constable. He described as very old and illiterate and was reported to have assured them of their safety and sent them out of that area.⁴ In Ghazipur, D.I.G. Waddell mentions the arrest of a prostitute who hoisted the flag on Saidpur Thana and also a sadhu who was at the head of the crowd that he fired on at Chit Baragaon.⁵ At Sadat in Ghazipur one Sevanand sadhu led the mob which had looted the seed store and then set the police station on fire throwing the Sub Inspector and constable into the flames. "Sivanand Sadhu cried out that no one of the thana should be allowed to escape... Sivanand was saying that a Brahmin was dying as a result of the

3. See Kapil Kumar, op.cit.

4. Sriram, 1942 ki Kranti, Hindi, Gwalior, 1946, p.58.

5. G. Waddell, D.I.G. Eastern Range, Congress Rebellion Range E, 13 August-6 September 1942, op.cit.,

firing."⁶ Of course there would be a tendency for official records of freedom fighters to give details of the leadership associated with the Congress and to miss out on illiterate peasants whose names would find mention only if present in records of prison sentences or deaths in police firing.⁷

In terms of the political affinities of the leadership the context of 1942 was such that it was drawn from all shades of opinion within the Congress. It is sometimes argued that it was the revolutionary-terrorists and the socialists who ^{led} the revolt.⁸ They did have considerable influence with students and might have persisted with the underground organisation longer than Congressmen with Gandhian loyalties or with less inclination for sabotage and underground activity. However, the pronouncements of Gandhi on the proposed nature of ^{the} movement⁹ as well as by Sardar Patel and

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6. Evidence of Izzat Hussain, constable, Criminal Sessions Trial No.33(G) of 1943, Basta Ordinance Case, 1944, Ghazipur; see also R.S.Vidyarthi, British Savagery in India, Agra, 1946, p.220.
 7. See Fighters for Freedom, Who's Who Vol.2, Varanasi division, Allahabad, 1964, and the Swatantrata Sangram ke Sainik, series (Hindi), Lucknow, n.d., Uttar Pradesh Information Department.
 8. J.C.Chatterji Indian Revolutionaries in Conference, New Delhi, n.d..
 9. "Leave India to God, if that is too much, then leave her to anarchy" and "that anarchy may lead to internecine warfare for a time or to unrestrained dacoities."
 ✓ Harijan 24 May 1942, loc.cit., A.M.Zaidi, The Way Out to Freedom, New Delhi, 1973, p.211.

Rajendra Prasad¹⁰ had given a general sanction to the idea that this was to be an all out bid for freedom by the Congress not to be deflected by any stray incidents of violence or by the prospect of chaos. In 1942 there was a general acceptance of the idea that since Gandhi had said "karenge ya marenge" everything short of the taking of life was permissible.¹¹ This time there was going to be no passive registration of protest by filling up the jails.¹² Therefore, a sample of the leaders

10. Mammathnath Gupta points out that among Gandhi's disciples a debate was going on just before the movement about whether sabotage of communications was permissible under non-violence. Mammathnath Gupta, Bharatiya Krantikari Andolan ka Itihas, Hindi, Delhi, 1966, pp.353-59. See also Sardar Patel's speech in Bombay, 7 August 1942, The Hindustan Times, 8 August 1942. In a meeting of the Bihar P.C.C. in early August Rajendra Prasad was reported to have admitted the permissibility of non-violent obstruction of military vehicles and said that Gandhi had entered his last fight. Governor of Bihar to Linlithgow, Secret No.540 - G.B. 11 August 1942, The Transfer of Power, Vol. II, London, p.659.
11. "There is also conclusive evidence that even in the most enlightened Congress circles it is believed that the Mahatma draws the line only at murder". FRUP II, August 1942.
12. In instructions issued to the U.P. Congress on 24 July by Jawaharlal Nehru the intensity of the proposed movement was emphasised and it was declared that Gandhi's intention was not to fill the jails. D.N.Panigrahi, Quit India and the Struggle for Freedom, New Delhi, 1984, p.19. According to one story circulating, when Shibban Lal (ex-M.L.A. Gorakhpur) had at Bombay talked to Sardar Patel about the prospect of his arrest by the District Magistrate, the Sardar had asked why he should not arrest the D.M. instead. Extract from statement of Jai Chand Vidyalankar, active in the movement in Benares. In P.N.Chopra (ed.), Quit India Movement, New Delhi, 1976, p.271. See also Sardar Patel's speech, Bombay, 7 August 1942, The Hindustan Times, August 1942.

active in the movement in Eastern U.P. includes from Gorakhpur both Baba Raghav Das, a Gandhian Congressman also affiliated to the circle around Madan Mohan Malaviya in U.P.¹³ and Shibbanlal Saxena, also a professed follower of Gandhi, but one who had been very active both in organising the peasants of the tarai region as well as the sugar mill workers, in the period of the Congress ministry and thereafter.¹⁴ In Benares and Azamgarh, Algu Rai Shastri a member of the C.S.P. and the Kisan Sabha on his return from Bombay outlined a programme of sabotage and parallel government as given out, he said, by Sardar Patel to a Gujarati worker.¹⁵ However, wherever there was an indication that the established Congress leaders were uncertain about the movement¹⁶ a younger element often associated with the terrorist group or the Socialist group (overlapping categories occasionally in eastern U.P.) stepped in to take over. Thus of the situation in Ubhaon on the western edge of Ballia Jagganath Pande,

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13. Baba Raghav Das was especially active in distributing copies of "Shankhad", an underground bulletin brought out from Benares, Baba Raghav Das Smriti Granth, Hindi, Benares, 1963, pp.240-41. See also P.N.Chopra (ed.), op.cit., p.140, p.383.
14. For Shibbanlal's role in August 1942 see Telegram No.7929, 28 August 1942, U.P.Government, Confidential Dept. to Home Dept. File XV-50, COB. Also ^{The Hindustan Times} 13 January 1945, p.3.
15. P.N.Chopra (ed.), op.cit., p.270. SSS, Vol.27 Azamgarh, Hindi,
16. In Azamgarh town it would seem that for some days the local Congressmen did keep things damped down. See Niblett, op.cit., pp.2, 22.

a leading Congress worker made a statement on arrest which described the situation after the Bombay arrests as follows:

there was a great commotion and stir in his locality. In the initial stage he took over the command of the swelling crowd being a previous convicted leader but subsequently his courage failed on observing the public lust for bloodshed, loot and arson. The lead was taken by a desperate B.H.U. youth Parasnath, Braimin, village Misrauli, Ubhaon, Ballia, who took a vow to keep train services dislocated between Turtipar (Railway station) and Benares. In this he was assisted by Deonath Tiwari of Belthara Road, Bbhaon. The deponent, fearing Parasnath's unruly gang on one side and officials on the other, found his leadership between two fires. Having no other alternative he had to run away for safety as the mob had started looting (the) goods train at the Railway station and committing other acts of sabotage.¹⁷

Of the events in Ballia town where crowds had demanded the release of Congress leaders from the district jail, and further crowds were rumoured to be gathering in the countryside, one version is that Chittu Pande, the President of the D.C.C., had been reluctant to come out of jail but Mahanand Mishr, associated with the underground H.S.R.A. organisation in eastern U.P., and Vishwanath Chaubey, the Secretary of the D.C.C. had forced the issue declaring that they would come out.¹⁸

17. To S.P., I.B., from Inspector Harnam Singh, 9 March 1943, C.I.D., R.R. No.37, Benares Sabotage Cases, p.353, U.P.S.A.

18. Interview, Paras Nath Misra, 13 April 1942, Lucknow. This account is one which Parasnath had heard in those days. For the political affiliations of Mahanand Mishr see Jharkhande Rai, Krantikariyon ke Sansmaron, Hindi, Delhi, 1970, p.28 and Fighters for Freedom, Who's Who. Vol. II, Varanasi division, p.

The important point to be noted is that a leadership could always be found even if it was a student just returned from college, or a gang of schoolboys, and that it was enough for a speech, a pamphlet read out, a message passed by word of mouth to produce large mobs milling round in excitement, converging with mobs from other directions onto a target again decided on by word of mouth. The older leadership was still given its due at the moment of confrontation with official authority - the issue was whether that official authority would be submitted to Congress or not. In some cases the Station House Officer had already come to an accommodation with the local Congress leaders and the police station was left alone or the hoisting of the national flag accomplished without a "storming". In other words those who were recognised as old Congressmen were given their due by the crowd, even when events were not entirely under their control. One account of the attempt to take over Thana Bairia in the Doaba region of Ballia reflects both the ease with which programmes put forward were accepted, the readiness to accept a new leadership and yet the fact that it was the Congressman who was sent forward to negotiate. On the 13th of August a meeting was held in Dokatti Bazaar and it was given out that everyone was to collect the next day to attack the thana at Bairia. A boy showed a pamphlet he had brought from Chhapra

across the river in which a 16 point programme issued in the name of Rajendra Prasad was outlined.¹⁹ Two Congress leaders who came up and wanted to know who had issued the plan to take the thana were reproached by the villagers for claiming to be netas (leaders) and not being around at a crucial time. The next day as the crowd gathered, three Congress leaders of the mandal (Congress circle) Bhudev Baba, Jagdish Tiwari, and Dr. Ayodhya Singh came and began to ponder over whether the plan was the right course to follow. Then one Ramjanam Pandey spoke up and said that he for one was going to go ahead anyway. In this he represented prevailing opinion in the crowd and the other leaders had to follow suit. Even so it was one of the doubting netas who went over to negotiate with the thanedar at Bairia. In another march which had to be arranged on Bairia when the thanedar proved stubborn one Thakur Bhup Narayan Singh previously not in prominence emerged now as the organiser.²⁰

In describing the leadership of the movement one marked feature is the leading role played by students

19. This account is from Dinanath Vyas Kavyalankar, August san 1942 ka Mahan Viplav, Hindi, Agra, Samvat 2003, pp. 158-61. In Bihar almost immediately after the movement started there circulated a 16 point programme known as Rajendra Prasad's, probably issued by the Bihar Congress. Point 15 directed that national flags should be hoisted on Government buildings, arms of policemen seized and government offices closed. P.N. Chopra (ed.), op.cit., Wickenden's Report, pp. 83-84.

20. D. Vyas, op.cit.; In S.S.S. Azamgarh, no previous convictions in a national movement before his sentence for participation in 1942 is listed.

both in spreading news of events and in leading and organising activity. These were not only the "big city" college boys of Kashi Vidyapith and Benares Hindu University but also the village school boys in their early teens. The district Congress leaders often inaugurated activity in August 1942 by holding a meeting in the local school and then dispersing with gangs of students over the countryside.²¹ The village schoolboy and the village school teacher had always been an important connection between village society and the national movement. During the Non-Cooperation Movement, recalls one Congressman, bands of students from Kashi Vidyapith used to tour the villages. When a meeting was to be held a handbill was handed over to a schoolboy from that village to be read out by him.²² The student had always been the most important target of the debate on the question of violence-non-violence, a debate particularly sharp in the Civil Disobedience Movement with the saga of the Kakori dacoity

21. In Azamgarh Algu Rai Shastri returning from Bombay on the 11th, contacted students at Katipai and told them of the programme. On the 12th Chandra Shekhar Asthana of Kashi Vidyapith arrived with pamphlets giving instructions for sabotage and a meeting was held at Shri Krishna Pathshala after which Congressmen dispersed over the countryside with groups of students intent of taking control of thanas and disrupting communications. S.S.S., Vol.27, Azamgarh Hindi, pp. pa-pha. In Ballia too the boys from the local schools were responsible for rousing the crowds to action. File XV-150, Serial No.39, Commissioner's Office, Benares, henceforth C.O.B.

22. T.N.Singh, in 1921 Movement, Reminiscences, Delhi, 1971, pp.185-86. We have already noted the schoolboy who publicised the 16 point programme in Dokatti Bazaar.

and subsequently Bhagat Singh's exploits to contend with. In the thirties the small town student also came into contact with socialist thought at whatever primitive a level. Of all these influences what may be termed the terrorist idiom or the terrorist saga of the national movement did come to hold a fascination for the young men of these districts both through the Youth Leagues set up in the thirties and through the Congress volunteer organisation in which some terrorists interested themselves. In this chapter, therefore, the ideology of the terrorists and the influence they exercised has been expanded upon at some length. Again, however, it is necessary to repeat that it was not only the terrorists who led the movement. In the context of the 1942 movement the idea of non-violent satyagraha versus the idea of armed uprising did not clash because the movement was interpreted by all Congressmen as an invitation to an uprising, arms came into the picture only later when the mass movement declined. Therefore, the rallying cry was "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai" and the flag which was hoisted was the tricolour. In Benares city some 10 years earlier during the Civil Disobedience movement the clash of symbols had been sharp with one procession carrying red flags and shouting "Long Live Revolution", "Bhagat Singh, Jatin Das Zindabad" and another carrying the tricolour

shouting "Mahatama Gandhi ki jai".²³ Pamphlets propa-
gandising for the "violence party" were usually printed
in red ink to distinguish their inclination. One fact
which draws attention is that the student population
of this region was in no way less in numbers than that
of less "rural regions in the province. In
terms of provincial figures for literacy the region does
not made an bad showing. (Table VII).

The districtwise break up for male literacy in the
Indo-Gangetic Plain East for 1931 is: Benares 164;
Jaunpur 96; Ghazipur 109; Ballia 106; Azamgarh 81. Even
if one excludes Benares, Ballia and Ghazipur do quite
well.

Of this literate population those who could afford
it tended to go on for higher education to Benares, the
intellectual hub of east U.P. and west Bihar. Educated
unemployment, a pervasive phenomenon, was also felt
sharply in this region.²⁴ In the Mining and Metallurgy
Department opened in the Hindu University in 1923, of the
75 students in 1931, nearly half were South Indians -
evidently prospects for technical education were not
rated very high here.²⁵

23. Ganga Shanker Dikshit, "Abhimanyu pustakalya tatha
Abhimanyu dal ki awashyakta kyon?" in Hindi Prabha,
1 Golden Jubilee Souvenir, Hindi, 15 November 1981,
No. 14, p. 17, A.P.

24. Govind Sahai, 142 Movement, Delhi, 1947, p. 214.

25. D.G. Benares, Vol. XXVI, Supplementary Notes and
Statistics up to 1931-32, p. 12.

Table VII
Progress of Literacy 1881-1931
 (All ages)

	Number						literate per mille					
	Males						Females					
	1931	1921	1911	1901	1891	1881	1931	1921	1911	1901	1891	1881
United Provinces	80	65	61	58	52	45	10	6	5	2	2	1
Himalayan west	147	127	124	105	70	61	13	12	9	5	3	2
Sub-Himalayan West	61	52	47	41	39	37	10	7	5	3	1	1
Indo-Gangetic Plain west	83	65	58	45	49	44	13	8	6	3	2	1
Indo-Gangetic Plain Central	76	64	59	60	55	49	9	6	5	2	2	1
Central Indian Plateau	108	91	74	71	64	53	9	6	4	2	1	0.5
East Satpuras	98	69	60	70	58	54	8	5	3	3	2	2
Sub-Himalayan East	54	44	54	56	44	37	4	2	2	1	1	1
Indo Gangetic Plain East	108	85	69	71	58	47	10	7	5	2	2	1

Source: Subsidiary Table VI, U.P. Census, 1931, Pt. I, Allahabad 1933, p.481.

The student population of Benares came into contact with the terrorist movement through the fact that as a pilgrim town as well as a commercial node between northern and eastern India it had a substantial population drawn from other provinces. Pious widows from Bengal came to Benares to spend their lives by the ghats and a Bengali enclave had grown up in the city. The city also had a Marathi representation. Because of this and because of the advantages of anonymity offered by a pilgrim town, one famous moreover for its winding lanes and steep stairs, Benares drew the attention of terrorist groups who sought to extend their activities into upper India.²⁶ Students renting out rooms without much supervision also provided a recruiting ground.²⁷ One consequence of the activity of the Bengal terrorists in Benares was the founding of a Young Men's Association by Suranath Bhaduri and Sachindranath Sanyal in 1908. The Benares Conspiracy Case of 1915 was a result of their attempt to subvert troops in Benares for²⁸ military uprising

26. J.C.Ker, Political Trouble in India, 1917, reprint Delhi, 1973, p.24. D.G.Benares, Vol.XXVI (D), Supplementary Notes and Statistics up to 1931-32, p.6.

27. Chandra Shekhar Azad for instance stayed in one of the rooms rented out by students in a dharamshala attached to the temple of Baijjanath Mahadeo. "Chandra Shekhar se antim bhent," Hindi Prabha, 15 November 1981, p.91.

28. J.C.Ker, op.cit., p.24, pp.375-77.

In the 1920s the activities of the H.R.A. and the publicity surrounding the Kakori train dacoity also left their mark in this region. In the variety of youth organisations which sprang up in Benares around 1928, the year of the anti-Simon Commission demonstrations, the theme of terrorist action and armed uprising found considerable publicity. Nehru had noted the presence of Youth Leagues which had mushroomed all over North India in 1928 as part of what he felt was a new political impulse and described them as "a very varied lot".²⁹ In Benares alone, Sachindra Nath Bakshi set up the Health Emporium Club, Ramanna, Phanindra Nath Bannerji and Munnoo Lal "Swatantra" a Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Akshayvar Pandey and Satyanand Brahmachari a Youth League, and Banarasi Lal Pandey "Arya" the Vir Abhimanu Dal.³⁰ The choice of this last name is again significant of a particular tendency in Benares which stressed a revived Hinduism as the cultural base of nationalism. Banarasi recalls that the name appealed to him because Mother India needed young men of the nature of Abhimanyu, a hero of the Mahabharata, and also because the name

29. Jawaharlal Nehru, Autobiography, New Delhi, 1962, p.71.

30. Vashisht Muni Ojha, "Abhimanyu Pustakalaya: ek Aitihasik Drishtipat," Hindi Prabha, 15 November 1981, No. 14, p.2. The Assistant Secretary of the Youth League was a suspected terrorist, Kedar Prasad Tewari, U.P. Who's Who, 1936, No.167. Members of the Youth League were not required to take a pledge of non-violence, Interview, Durga Das Bhattacharya, Benares.

conveyed the feelings he had towards Hindi and Hindutva (Hindu-ness) which had drawn their inspiration from Swami Dayanand and Malaviya.³¹ The Dal was founded in 1929 and though it advocated the path of non-violent satyagraha it also set up a library in 1930-31 which made available proscribed literature, often revolutionary-terrorist pamphlets, as well as literature on the French and Russian revolutions.³² Civil Disobedience in general had had its share of bomb throwing incidents in the course of picketing to bring recalcitrant shop keepers into line.³³ The terrorist group associated with the Youth League in Benares also reacted to police interference in their activities by throwing a bomb at the police station in Durgakund on 7 September 1930.³⁴ In Ballia too the fascination which the idea of armed action had for the student was demonstrated by some incidents of mock bombs during the Civil Disobedience movement which led the C.I.D. to observe that here the Congress organisation had tended to produce a revolutionary spirit in the

31. Vashisht Muni Ojha, op.cit., p.3.

32. Ibid., p.5. Ganga Shankar Dixit, op.cit., p.18.

33. See Terrorism in India, Home Department, Government of India, Simla 1937, p.86.

34. See article by one of the H.S.R.A. group in the Youth League, Munnoo Lal Swatantra, "Durgakund Bomb Case," Hindi Prabha, October 1976, pp.118-120.

student community and that an attempt was being made to emulate whatever was read about revolutionary activities in the papers.³⁵ In December 1931 there was an unsuccessful attempt to extort money for the organisation of a terrorist party resulting in the Ballia Political Dacoity case of 1932, from which, however, the Intelligence Bureau concluded that the groups was "a gang of misguided youths", with no organisation or influence.³⁶ However, the people associated with the case, Ram Lakhan Tewari, Baleshwar Singh and Mahanand Mishr were to continue to engage in terrorist propaganda and organisation. The first two were noticed in the company of one Gokul Das Shastri who had come to the attention of the police for trying from 1930 to organise a "violence party" with connections in Bihar, Ballia, Bundelkhand and Benares.

In Ghazipur town too there was a group of students with similar inclinations who stole some chemicals from the science room of the Victoria School, an incident followed by an unexplained explosion there.³⁷ On the

35. C.I.D. Case Diary, R.R., No.47, U.P.S.A.

36. Ibid.

37. This group was influenced by Swami Bhagwan who was later to concentrate on Kisan Sabha work. Swami Bhagwan also induced a student to steal a revolver from his father, a Deputy Collector. In that group Pabbar Ram lists Guru Das, Rash Behari, Vibhash, all Bengalis and Sri Ram Bhatt. Interview, Ghazipur 29 June 1984.

whole, however, Ghazipur, Azamgarh and Ballia were not key areas of activity for the terrorist organisations, Allahabad, Kanpur and Benares being more important at this time. In any case whatever central organisation Bhagat Singh and Chandra Shekhar Azad had been able to give the H.S.R.A. had broken up by 1932.³⁸ Terrorist organisations began to be built up again in the mid-thirties as the ban on the Congress party was lifted and the Youth Leagues began to form again. As before the Youth Leagues formed the forum for all kinds of political ideas absorbing terrorist and revolutionary as well as socialist thought with indiscriminating avidity. This time, however, with the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 and with one section of the terrorist affiliated group having joined the Communist Party (particularly in Kanpur), socialist ideas probably had greater currency than in the period 1928-32.

In Kanpur, A.K.Ghosh, once associated with the H.S.R.A. joined the Communist Party in 1934 and reorganised the Youth League as the Swadhyaya Sangh.³⁹ In Ballia Gokul Das Shastri started bringing out a cyclostyled Hindi leaflet, Jagrit Bharat, in 1934 and organised an Uthan

38. Terrorism in India, op.cit., pp.5-7; Jharkhande Rai Bharatiya Krantikari Andolan: ek Vishleshan, Hindi, New Delhi, 1981, p.4.

39. U.P. Who's Who, 1936, No.114, C.T.D.

Sangh.⁴⁰ According to Jharkhande Rai who was himself then reorganising the H.S.R.A. in Azamgarh and Ghazipur, the Jagrit Bharat was influenced by the Shivaji cult but also had a socialist leaning. This conclusion, however, rests upon^a verse from one of its issues

Sab mil khao makai

ka lava

Yeh bhi na mile to

bol do dhava⁴¹

The Uthan Sangh had branches in some villages and Swami Bhagwan, a kisan leader, was one of its leaders. However a rift developed between him and Gokul Das over the strategy to be adopted and he left the organisation and joined the Kisan Sangh.⁴² In 1935 Gokul Das was sentenced for two years under the Arms Act and not much is heard of the group thereafter but Baleshwar Singh was absorbed on the Central Committee of the H.S.R.A. group which was being put together in the eastern districts. On his release in 1937 Gokul Das organised a Mukti Sadhak Sangh in Ballia. Paras Nath Mishra, who was later to be one of the college activists of 1942, was recruited to this Sangh.

40. U.P. Who's Who 1936, No. 115, C.T.D.; Jharkhande Rai, op.cit., p.48.

41. Let us then all together eat just roasted grains of corn but if even that does not fall to us then let us declare war. Ibid., p.49.

42. Ibid., pp.48-49

by Mahanand Mishr and Tarkeshwar Pandey but says that the Sangh did not engage in any "action".⁴³ This group merged into the Ballia Socialist group. From the records of the Nandganj-Ankushpur Dacoity case of 1941, however, it emerges that a group of about 20 members of the H.S.R.A. did exist in Ballia headed by Kamta Singh who was also President of the Congress Mandal Committee of Chilkishr.⁴⁴

Youth Leagues also sprang up in other districts - in 1936 a Chatra Sangh was set up at Barhaj, Gorakhpur,⁴⁵ a centre of Congress activity; in July 1938 a Bharatiya Nauyuvak Sangh at Deoria,⁴⁶ and in August 1938 a Nauyuvak Dal in villages in the police circles of Mardah and Dildarnagar in Ghazipur.⁴⁷

In Jaunpur the Youth League was dominated by Raj Deo Singh who headed a splinter group of the original H.S.R.A. and came to have an enormous influence on this youth organisation bringing it firmly into the sphere of

43. Interview, 13 April 1982, Lucknow.

44. Evidence of P.W., No.33, Rajpati Singh, C.I.D., R.R.No.5, pp.279-83, U.P.S.A.

45. P.A.I., 24 September 1938.

46. P.A.I., 9 July 1938.

47. P.A.I., 20 August 1938.

influence of the revolutionary-terrorist "party" in the district. In May 1937 Raj Deo Singh was elected General Secretary of the United Provinces Youth League and the League in Jaunpur came to provide a forum for all important ex-terrorists.⁴⁸

In the flurry of political organisation which preceded and followed the ministry period the terrorist party gained an important foothold in Azamgarh, Ballia and Ghazipur through open organisations like the Youth League, the Kisan Sabha and C.S.P. organisations. This was particularly so in Ghazipur where the founder of the C.S.P., Loknath Singh, was a one time member of the armed police who had been extermed from Bengal for his contacts with the Anushilan Samiti there. Those who sympathised with the idea of secret organisation for armed uprising also used the Kisan Sabha in Ghazipur as a front organisation.⁴⁹

48. P.A.J., 5 June 1937; Munnoo Lal Swatantra, op.cit., p.121. The influence of the terrorist party on the Jaunpur League can be gauged from the fact that a Youth League Camp held in the district in 1938 was attended among others by Kunj Behari Singh, Secretary District Youth League, Ram Karan Misra and Audesh Singh, all three later implicated in the Babatpur Train Dacoity Case of 1940, C.I.D., R.R., No.4, U.P.S.A.

49. Jharkhande Rai, Krantikariyon ke Sansmaron, Hindi, Delhi, pp.27-29. In Gonda the terrorist group worked through a Mazdur Sabha which they started in November 1937. Evidence of Radhey Shyam, approver, Criminal Sessions Trial/No.17(b) of 1939, Pipradih Train Dacoity, Ghazipur Sessions Court Record Room.

As pointed out in Chapter I some Kisan Sabha work was inaugurated in these districts in the thirties but the main focus of propaganda was the student community. In Ghazipur the membership of the Socialist Party, the Kisan Sabha and the terrorist group overlapped to a considerable extent.⁵⁰ Weekly classes and discussions on socialism were held in the Kisan Sabha office of Ghazipur and the activities of the Vampanthi group were looked at with suspicion by the more orthodox Congress group. In the meantime the underground organisation was also being constructed. In May 1937, after the annual meeting of the Provincial Yuvak Sangh at Sitapur, a central organisation of the H.S.R.A. was elected with Virupaksh Angde as Chairman, Jagdish Dutt Shukl as Commander-in-Chief and Jharkhande Rai as Prime Minister and Chief organiser.⁵¹ The organisational weakness which had plagued the earlier H.S.R.A. was, however, to continue including the fact that groups tended to cluster around particular personalities. One of the resolutions passed at a key meeting at Allahabad was that no attempt was to be made to start a district branch of the H.S.R.A. at

50. For instance, in the case of Loknath Singh and of Pabbar Ram, the members of the reconstituted H.S.R.A. were told to work in Congress, Kisan Sabha, working class and youth organisations but to owe primary allegiance to the H.S.R.A. Jharkhande Rai, Bharatiya Krantikari Andolan, op.cit., p.52.

51. Jharkhande Rai, Bharatiya Krantikari Andolan, ibid., p.46.

Jaunpur. Instead the incorporation of Raj Deo's group was to be sought.⁵² Raj Deo Singh, it would seem, was reluctant to give up his personal control of the Jaunpur group which continued to stay separate. After Raj Deo's arrest in June 1939 the group split over a conflict in loyalties to two leaders - Kunj Behari Singh and Saheb Lal.⁵³ This group, however, was able to carry on a fairly successful war of attrition against police and patwaris in the months following the decline of the August movement, perhaps an indication of a greater measure of local connections and support.⁵⁴

What was the ideology which inspired these groups were were set up from the mid-thirties? For this purpose it is proposed to examine how far in fact the ideology of the terrorist groups had changed since the days of the H.R.A. in the mid-twenties. It is important to assess which aspects of the ideology appealed at the level of the rank and file and at the level of the student population with whom this raznochintsy element maintained contact.

52. Jharkhande Rai, Bharatiya Krantikari Andolan, ibid., p. 54.

53. Interview, Raj Nath Singh, Ghazipur, 27 June 1984. See C.I.D. R.R. No. 34, p. 826, U.P.S.A. also C.I.D., R.R.No. 4, U.P.S.A. for the rift. Even while in jail in this period proposals for joint action were discussed between Jharkhande Rai and Raj Deo but nothing was decided. Interview, Pabbar Ram, 29 June 1984, Ghazipur.

54. A.P.S. 2 April 1943, A.P.S. 19 February 1943, A.P.S. 3 September 1943, A.P.S. 29 October 1943.

* Intelligentsia drawn from various classes usually of the lower middle classes.

On the whole the revolutionary terrorist stream of politics maintained the same ideological drift in this period as in the 1920s despite a greater familiarity with socialist literature and socialist thought in the thirties. Whatever the kind of future society they envisaged the framework which determined the selection of ideas and images remained the nationalism of armed and immediate confrontation with the state by a vanguard of heroic and dedicated men. Socialist thought led them to hope that this would unleash a mass movement which in some ways would create a state which represented the workers and the peasants rather than one dominated by the capitalists and zamindars. In other words the choice of action in a way limited the widening of their ideological horizons. Even in the early twentieth century this emphasis on a vanguard's attack on the state had marked the difference between terrorist thinking and that of the "extremist" wing in ^{the} Congress. P.B.Sinha has shown how for the period 1905-1917 the "extremists" in Congress, Tilak and B.C.Pal had noted approvingly of the 1905-06 Revolution in Russia the method of large scale strikes, a method not dissimilar to Pal's ideas of passive resistance. Mahatama Gandhi who followed the extremist position in that he looked for ways to draw the masses into movements also praised the "Russian method" of not resuming work in the events of 1905-06. But the Indian

terrorists of that time had interpreted "Russian methods" as terrorist activity.⁵⁵ This interpretation was to persist though it also began to be hoped that by exposing the weakness of the state or destroying its core the masses would be roused to action. The Hindustan Republican Association's constitution of 1925 had proclaimed that it stood for "the abolition of all systems which make exploitation of man by man possible,"⁵⁶ but their pamphlet "The Revolutionary" had also found it necessary to compare their international aims not only with those of Bolshevik Russia but with the rishis of the past.⁵⁷ It also proposed the nationalisation of large enterprises and cooperative unions for private and small scale business enterprises.⁵⁸ While this for the first time lays down some concrete proposal about the outlines of the socialist society it may also reflect one tendency within what was taken for socialist thought at the level of the rank and file, i.e. a certain tendency to find only large capitalist property

55. P.B.Sinha, Indian National Liberation Movement and Russia 1905-17, New Delhi, 1975, pp.197-208, 217.

56. H.R.A. Constitution in Dr. Bhagwan Das Mahore (ed.), Kakori Shaheed Smriti, Hindi, Lucknow 1977, pp.207-9. The constitution also called for the formation of labour and peasant organisations. It was to be instilled into the minds of the labourers "that they are not for the revolution, but the revolution is for them."

57. Ibid., pp.202-4. Also Manmathnath Gupta, Bhagat Singh and His Times, Delhi, 1977, p.60. The pamphlet was circulated in the United Provinces between 28-31 January 1925.

58. Mahore (ed.), op.cit., p.203.

and large zamindari properties as oppressive and to link such forms of property as collaborative with foreign rule rather than to examine the social relations within which property as such existed. They were in a sense against the dominance of feudal property right in the countryside, and suspicious of large capitalists but did not think deeply about society as it existed and how far it carried within it the potentialities for social change. In that sense all these terrorist groups whether it was the H.R.A. or the H.S.R.A. or the groups which were set up in the thirties cannot be compared to the Narodniks in Russia or to the Socialist Revolutionaries who took up the populist tradition in the twentieth century.⁵⁹ For all their idealisation of the peasant commune, the Narodniks did try at least to establish contact with the peasant life in the "going to the people movement" of summer 1874. When the peasants failed to respond it was argued that the revolutionary would have to work for long periods with the peasantry to gain their trust and confidence - it was this which was linked to the other aspect of activity of the members of Zemlia i Volia -

59. Bipan Chandra, "The Ideological Development of the Revolutionary Terrorists in the 1920s," in Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India, New Delhi, 1981, p.225.

the organisation of terror against the Tsarist state. Of course, this second aspect of activity did come to dominate their activities because the response from the countryside remained disappointing, and the numbers of populists willing to go to live in the countryside few. The urban intelligentsia also alleviated their longing to find a tie with the peasant through a study of the countryside, in particular of the peasant commune.⁶⁰ This longing to understand the masses, for whose better life the terrorists wanted nationalism and in a form which would abolish "the oppression of man by man", is something which is less prominent in the history of the terrorist movement in India.⁶¹ However, in an article written from jail, Ram Prasad Bismil did advise a kind of "going to the people" movement. He said he had now come to the conclusion that the situation was not suited for a Kranti Dal, revolutionary party, and students should instead go to the countryside and educate the people and organise labourers and kisans against the oppression of

60. Richard Wortman, The Crisis of Russian Populism, Cambridge, 1967, pp.1-34. Franco Venturi, Roots of Revolution, London, 1960.

61. The terrorists . . . had to believe that it was because the foreign government had been able to terrorise the Indian people that it prevented them "from extending their helping hand to the Revolutionaries". This official terrorism then had to be met by counter-terrorism. H.R.A. pamphlet, January 1925 in Mahore (ed.) op.cit., pp.202-4.

zamindars and raises, the wealthy. This also seems to be one of the few articles written by a terrorist which has something to say about changing the position of women. Youths, he writes, should reform the social status of women so that they began to think of themselves as a part of the human race - they should not be treated like a shoe on the foot or a doll in the house. He advises young men not to look for Government jobs but to take up a craft like shoe-making, ironsmithy, tailoring or laundering. Again this was the kind of life advocated by the Narodniks to bring them closer to the people.⁶² What is more comparable with the Narodniks is the desire to fashion a new kind of youth who would represent in his person the ideal of the liberated nation for swearing all the pulls of middle class existence towards domestic life, government service, and a respect for social hierarchy. In their own lives the Indian terrorists often felt the bite of poverty but did not want it to force them towards any acceptance of the colonial state with all the accommodations that middle class society made with it. In experiencing this deprivation they

62. Ram Prasad Bismil, "Gaon ki Oar", Yuvak (Hindi) March 1929, pp. 180-83, K.N.P.S.

generalised it to a perception of the poverty of the working masses of India⁶³ but it was only at this level that they "went to the people".

Bhagat Singh certainly did grope for an understanding of historical process and class relations and said that the goal of the H.S.R.A. was that of establishing a socialist republic⁶⁴ but ultimately felt that the task of the H.S.R.A. was not that of organising the masses but of releasing their energies by individual acts demonstrating the weakness of the imperialist state. Ajoy Ghosh wrote that though the goal of the party by 1928 had become a socialist revolution the immediate strategy remained the same - armed action. The idea was to strike at selected nerve centres of the government again and again and thereby release the blocked energy of the masses, which when released would sweep away imperialism. At that stage the idea was to join the mass upsurge, work as its armed vanguard and give the torrent of lava a socialist direction.⁶⁵ This

63. This perception of poverty was sometimes expressed in the most moving terms. Ashfaqullah, sentenced to death for the Kakori dacoity, spoke of the sufferings of the worker, on whose labour cities bustled and factories ran and of the farmer who laboured to produce food and said he prayed that after his time would come a day in which "Abdullah mistri and Dhanja chamar and the kisan would be seen seated in Chattar Manzil, Lucknow, along with the likes of Mr. Khaliquzzaman, Jagat Narain and the Nawab of Mahmudabad." Testimony of Ashfaqullah, in Mahore (ed.), op.cit., pp.224-25.

65. Loc.cit. Manmathnath Gupta, Bhagat Singh and his Times, pp.200-201.

64. Bipan Chandra, op.cit., pp.234-37.

was the way in which the rank and file of many terrorist groups viewed the course of the Russian Revolution, as a dramatic seizure of power by a carefully planned and executed coup which then roused the masses to action. This rather than the militant strike action of the workers or the tide of agrarian revolt in spring - summer 1917 is seen as the key to the Bolshevik seizure of power. (The role of the military mutiny in 1917 was, however, given more careful attention). In part, of course, this conception of the Russian Revolution was the result of the way it had been reported by the western press⁶⁶ but this was not the only reason.

The terrorists in India did, however, dislike the connotation which the term "terrorism" put on their intellectual aspirations and their goals. Sukhdev wrote to Gandhi to refute the charge that their goal was only destruction and said it was in fact the establishment of a socialist republic. People associated with this political tendency have in more recent memoirs expressed

66. Of the period 1905-17 P.B. Sinha writes that the English press reported only the terroristic activities of those among the Social Revolutionaries who had been carrying on the traditions of the Pluralists or the Narodniks of the 1890s. "This projected the revolutionary movement in Russia only as a wave of assassinations and terrorism, as if in the struggle of the people of Russia, there was nothing except political murders." P.B. Sinha, op.cit., p.217. However, as this book points out, Tilak and B.C. Pal noted different aspects of "Russian methods".

their hurt over what they felt was Nehru's characterization of them as mindless or fascistic.⁶⁷

In this chapter the word terrorist has been used, not in a way which is meant to deprive them of the highly charged feelings which they had for the cause of nationalism or their urge for social justice or of their intellectual aspirations but because this tendency seems to me to invite comparison with the secret society revolutionaries of 19th century Europe, the Carbonari in Italy and the Burschenschaften of Germany. They can be called revolutionaries not because of their socialist aspirations so much as because of their desire to destroy the state which prevented the realisation of national independence and democratic rights. The main force of their attack against capitalists and zamindars was directed towards the support which these classes were supposed to be giving to the imperialist state.⁶⁸ These classes were in many pamphlets warned to give up their toadying ways, to 'come to their senses' before the poor revolted. Two actions are significant of their militant

67. Kashiram one of the Kakori Train Dacoity group writes that they were not "emotional, goalless terrorists and mindless animals as Nehru would have it". His companions he asserts, were thinkers and in Lucknow Central Jail they had studied books on socialism. Kashiram, Kranti ke ve Din, Hindi, Mirzapur, 1976, p.224. See also, J.C.Chatterji, op.cit., p.217.

68. Though Bhagat Singh was moving towards a more complex understanding, see Bipan Chandra, op.cit.

espousal of democratic rights against the colonial state - Bhagat Singh's throwing a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly to protest against the Trades Disputes Bill which had "deprived the millions of their primary right and the sole means of improving their economic welfare". The bomb, their statement in court said, had been dropped to register their protest "on behalf of those who had no other means of expression and to give expression to their heart rending agony."⁶⁹ The other is the facts which the terrorists undertook for special rights for political prisoners, in which Jatin Das gave up his life.⁷⁰ Despite the contact, therefore, with socialist thought the terrorists were nationalist revolutionaries rather than socialist revolutionaries and this is reflected in their ideas not only in their deeds. They saw themselves as a spur to militant nationalism. It was nationalism and an admiration for the methods of armed confrontation with an oppressive state which determined the principle on which they selected their heroes from history. Thus writing from jail on 6 June 1929 Bhagat Singh asserted that the

69. Statement read out by Asaf Ali on behalf of Bhagat Singh and B.K.Dutt, 6 June 1929, loc.cit., G.S.Deol, Shaheed-e-Azam, Sardar Bhagat Singh, The Man and His Ideology, Patiala, 1978.

70. Jatin Das died in September 1929 after a 64 day hunger strike for improvement in the status of political prisoners.

elimination of force was utopian and that "the new movement which has risen in the country and of which we have given a warning is inspired by the ideals which inspired Guru Gobind Singh, Shivaji, Kamal Pasha, Reza Khan, Washington, Garibaldi, Lafayette and Lenin."⁷¹ In the terrorist history of the national movement the high points are the Vellore Mutiny, 1857, the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre, the exploits of Ram Prasad Bismil and Bhagat Singh, later the 1942 movement which is seen to be long to the revolutionary tradition⁷² and the I.N.A. and the R.I.N. uprisings.

The other point to note is that Bhagat Singh's ideas of socialism and atheism were not accepted by all members of the H.S.R.A. and did not penetrate down to other terrorist sympathisers in North India, Yashpal in his autobiography pointed out that though the word socialist was part of the title of the H.S.R.A. most of the party members knew very little about the principles of socialism, that their notions of building a socialist state were vague and not a motivating factor.⁷³

71. loc.cit., Manmathnath Gupta, Bhagat Singh and His Times, op.cit., p. 163.

72. Manmathnath Gupta, Bharatiya Krantikari Andolan ka itihās (Hindi), Delhi, 1966, p. 366. See also J.C. Chatterji, Indian Revolutionaries in Conference, Delhi (n.d.).

73. Corinne Friend (ed.), Yashpal Looks Back, New Delhi, p. 179.

For the political influences which Bhagat Singh and Chandra Shekhar Azad brought to bear on the youth of Benares city in the Civil Disobedience movement some cyclostyled newsletters give an indication. Of these the most regular was Ranbheri issued by a group which did not endorse the path of terrorist action⁷⁴ but nevertheless gave the heroism of the terrorists due homage, and on the other hand sundry leaflets termed Toofan, Ranchandi, Chandika which give some indication of the terrorist stream. There is absolutely no mention of socialism with reference to Bhagat Singh - he is identified as the symbol of the path of violent resistance in the cause of nationalism,⁷⁵ a cause which in Chandika is advocated through violent religious imagery, in one issue calling upon Ma Chand to take on her fearsome form and wash away national humiliation and cowardice with human blood,⁷⁶ in a Dewali issue calling for the destruction of foreigners and their toadies just as Ram had destroyed the rakshasas.⁷⁷ Violence is justified

74. Ranbheri was a cyclostyled newsletter brought out in Benares during Civil Disobedience by Vishnu Rao Paradker, Damodar Das Sah, Sant Saran Malhotra, Bishwanath Sharma and Durga Prasad Chatri. Copies of it are available at the Abhimanyu Pustakalaya, Varanasi, A.P.

75. Chandika, 19 October 1930, "Gandhi ya Bhagat Singh", A.P.

76. Chandika, 23 September 1930, "Aao Ma Chandika," A.P.

77. "Dewali" Chandika, 25 October 1930, A.P.

as a religious duty and terrorism as an act of destroying evil.⁷⁸ A passage from Chandika typical of the diffused feeling towards the wealthy runs as follows:

Sampathishalliyon ke prati: "To the Wealthy"
 In the fight between the people and the Government it is clear that the wealthy, in particular the landed wealthy, are on the whole supporting the sarkar, because in this fight a hungry India fights for bread. So it is the middle class and the poor who have taken up the battle. The others are dependent on the sarkar. They also fear that their wealth might be snatched away and given away to the poor. We warn the rich not to support the government otherwise the poor will get even more hostile and what happened in France and Russia will happen here. Be warned. If you cannot support the people openly do so secretly so that they may stay in sympathy with you, If you cannot, at least do not support the sarkar or the worst will befall you.⁷⁹

The fascination was with Bhagat Singh as the heroic individual, the symbol of national pride and the model for youth. When Bhagat Singh was hung the stories of atrocities the police were supposed to have committed with his corpse,⁸⁰ the picture of Bhagat Singh that became so popular - the European hat, the confident stare,

78. "Mahashakti ki puja", this calls for the worship of Maha Kali through sacrifice, Chandika, 30 October 1930. Toofan of 5 May 1932 argues that the lesson of the Gita is that to give the wicked their just punishment is not violence but pure non-violence.

79. Chandika, 30 October, 1930, A.P.

80. Bhagat Singh figured prominently in the iconography of the Youth Leagues of the late thirties in U.P. At a Youth League meeting Raj Deo Singh described how Bhagat Singh's corpse had been cut into pieces, P.A.I. 27 May 1939; at a Y.L. conference in Unnao, 13-15 May 1939 a life size portrait of Bhagat Singh was displayed, P.A.I., 20 May 1939.

all these reflected the level of identification with the symbol.⁸¹

It is because of the emphasis on the role of the self sacrificing youth who represent the force of a confident nationalism that a nationalist magazine like Yuvak published from Patna and carrying articles representing all streams of thought within the nationalist platform could also carry in 1929 a laudatory article on Mussolini and his Black shirts, extolling both the discipline and the dedication of its youth movement, with admiration for the "heroic" way in which the fascist youths took on the communists in street fights, as well as for the March on Rome. To be fair to the article it does concede that the fascist movement did not put forward a programme for social change and that "therefore, Mussolini was not to be compared with Lenin or Mahatama Gandhi but more so with Kamal Pasha, Amanullah, etc." The article also contains as a box item Sarojini Naidu's comment that India needed a Mussolini who could crush prevailing anti-national forces, that Italy provided an instance of how a strong personality could hammer a scattered peoples into a new unity.⁸²

81. At a meeting of the Provincial Youth League in June 1939 in Lucknow it was proposed that an Inquila^{bi} Sena be formed with the Bhagat Singh hat as its head-gear, P. A. I 24 June 1939.

82. Gyanchandra Sondhi, "Mussolini aur uski "kali kameez" Yuvak, Year 1, Issue No. 9, 1929, K.N.P.S. The Benares Youth League subscribed to this magazine as clear from a stamp on this issue.

That this admiration for the nationalist element in fascism which seemed to operate with discipline and monolithic power, was not just an aberration is demonstrated again in the attitude towards Axis victories displayed by youths in the period of the Congress Ministry and after. It was Hitler as the victorious leader of a resurgent German nationalism who invited a certain admiration, despite the attention which top ranking Congress leaders, Nehru in particular, drew to the theories of race superiority and the anti-democratic nature of fascism. Japanese militarism was also to carry the same fascination. This is not to argue that the aspiration towards armed uprising for nationalism was fascist in content, only that the nationalistic fervour of fascism attracted many a youth. This, as will be dealt with later, formed part of the context of the 1942 movement.

The other aspect of terrorism, which was to display a continuity into the late thirties and to influence the politics of the Youth Leagues and later the volunteer movement, was the emphasis on militant confrontation with the state. In practise this often meant that the terrorists participated in and accepted Congress activities at the high points of the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience because the volunteer movement in both these

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phases gave opportunity to the youth to challenge the state and those who seemed to be supporting it. Bipan Chandra points out that nearly all the important members of the revolutionary group had taken part in the Non-Cooperation movement.⁸³ Ashfaqullah of the H.R.A. sentenced to death in the Kakori case, gave in his testimony a call to revive the spirit of 1920-21, to revive again the atmosphere of the Ahmedabad Congress.⁸⁴ Bhagat Singh had arranged meetings and agitation against the Simon Commission in 1928.⁸⁵ In small town Ballia three of those accused in an attempt to extort money for the organisation of a terrorist group - Ram Lachan, Baleshwar Singh and Mahanand Mishr - had been among the chief organisers and picketeers of the Civil Disobedience movement.⁸⁶ It was when civil resistance seemed to be leading to negotiation with the colonial state whether through talks, or constitutional concessions as in the idea of trying out provincial autonomy as outlined in the 1935 Act, that this terrorist

83. Bipan Chandra, op.cit., p.224.

84. Dr. Bhagwan Das Mahore (ed.), op.cit., p.224. The Ahmedabad Congress of December 1921, held after the boycott of the Prince of Wales' visit, had passed a resolution calling upon Congressmen to court arrest by joining volunteer organisations which had been banned. Ram Prasad Bismil in his testimony also called upon all groups to rally around Congress.

85. K.K. Khullar, Shaheed Bhagat Singh, New Delhi, 1981, p. 39.

86. Ballia Political Dacoity Case, C.J.D. case Diary, C.J.D., R.R. No.47, U.P.S.A.

idiom was sharpest in its criticisms of Congress.

From the point of view of the terrorists what was hateful about the policy of negotiation, whatever the terms on which it was carried out, was the recognition of the strength of the colonial state, an entity which they wanted to see as based only on terror and whose weakness they wanted to expose so as to encourage the masses against it. Their pamphlets consistently reflect the humiliation of being ruled by a "handful of foreigners".⁸⁷ Since the state was seen to exist only because of "official terror"⁸⁸ it was the official machinery, in particular the police, which was seen as the barrier to a national uprising. A pamphlet circulated in Benares city probably around 1932 uses as its persuasion for a policy of attack on the officials and their supporters the logic of the small numbers who would have to be killed in the process. The sacrifice of 2000 or so, it argues, is not too much for three crore people; even if the police were killed the number would not amount to more than 12,000 in all. The Army it was argued would join the movement.⁸⁹ The persuasion against the

87. Chandika of 23 September 1930 said it did not behove those who were 33 crore and allowed a handful of foreigners to grind them down to talk of ahimsa, A.P.

88. Which is why Jallianwallah Bagh forms an important incident in terrorist historiography of the national movement.

89. Andolan Asafal Huwa t.o? pamphlet, Hindi, n.d., A.P.

strength of the British Raj always lacked conviction on the issue of the army. The other side of the argument that the masses were terrorised into inactivity was the fear also that they might continue to remain inert. This fear expressed itself in the idea of subverting the Indian Army (a hope which, however, lost confidence after the failure of attempts in World War I) and the idea of utilising situations in which the aid of enemies of Britain could be enlisted together with the hope that in the volunteer movement could be developed the framework for a national militia.⁹⁰

When the Congress Ministry came into power these strategic possibilities had to engage with an entirely different strategy of acquiring power. The Congress Ministry evidently presented the terrorist stream of thought with a dilemma. What was to be the attitude taken towards the state in such a situation when the bureaucracy was supposed to be taking its orders from a popularly elected Ministry. Some terrorists had by now joined the Communist Party.⁹¹ It was the Ministry which

90. "Terrorism has an international bearing also because the attention of the enemies of England are at once drawn to India through the acts of terrorism and revolutionary demonstrations and revolutionaries are hereby able to form an alliance with them..."
The Revolutionary, January 1925, op.cit.

91. Terrorism in India, 1937, op.cit.

secured the release of the political prisoners including those imprisoned for the Kakori hold up. The ex-Kakori prisoners had agreed to work on the Congress platform and to give up all secret and revolutionary activities⁹² but there was evidently a sense of disorientation. "The political scene had changed from seven years ago," recalls Kashiram, a Kakori prisoner, "The leadership had passed from our hands to the Gandhians."⁹³ He is evidently referring to the situation in Civil Disobedience days when Bhagat Singh had even posed a challenge to Gandhi's popularity for the youth. Mammathnath Gupta also describes the feeling of dislocation

The 1935 reforms resulting in the formation of Congress Ministries in the provinces led to a situation very unfavourable for revolutionary activities. When the masses saw the tri-colour flying and fluttering over all important buildings, and they saw leaders donned in Gandhi caps being saluted by red-turbanned policemen, it became very difficult to speak of revolution.⁹⁴

92. Speech of Sachindar Nath Sanyal at a reception given to ex-Kakori prisoners in Benares, P.A.I. 4 September 1937. Kashiram recalls that he had suggested they work as an independent group and not depend upon the promises of Pant but that Ram Krishna Khatri and Jogesh Chandra Chatterji had not agreed. Kashiram, op.cit., p.238.

93. Ibid., p.240.

94. Mammathnath Gupta, Bhagat Singh and His Times, op.cit., p.217. This fear was expressed as a hope by the Director of the Intelligence Bureau at that time who remarked that the assumption of government by Congress had caused a reorientation of political agitation and "gave grounds to hope that political progress would be directed and controlled by

In the Ministry period the element of confrontation with the state ^{was} in fact conducted now in the form of violent anti-police speeches, this being the distinguishing feature both in the speeches of ex-terrorists as well as in Youth League meetings in general. The Lal-pugri wallah had always been the most visible barrier between servitude and azadi and for those who feared that the Ministry might represent a permanent halting point on the road to complete independence the effort to divest the official machinery of "authority" reflected the continued urge towards a more militant strategy for power. The language used to defy the police was a language which expressed the continued need to pose a challenge. For instance one speaker at a Youth League meeting in Surajpur, Azamgarh, urged his audience to shout 'ulloo' if the police or patwari sent for them.⁹⁵ At political meetings it was said that the police should not be helped in the investigation of cases.⁹⁶ This attitude rapidly created a situation of

94. (contd...)
 popularly elected governments under which the incentive to opposition by means of the revolver and the bomb would be largely if not entirely eliminated.
 "Preface," Terrorism in India, 1937, op.cit., p.ii.

95. P.A.I., 18 March 1939.

96. For instance in a student meeting in Benares, P.A.I. 28 January 1939. C.I.D. officers were attacked in a revolutionary leaflet of September 1938 in connection with the Pipradih train dacoity case, P.A.I. 17 September 1938. See also P.A.I. 10 October 1938.

strain for the Congress ministry. On the one hand it wanted to maintain a good record for civil liberties and to secure the release of all political prisoners. This had been one of the important planks of the national movement. On the other hand it wanted to avoid a decline in service morale which could destabilise the administrative situation and cut short their tenure in office before they could complete their reform programme.⁹⁷ The attempt to control violent anti-police speeches as well as speeches which seemed to be a direct invocation to violent uprising against the state led to conflict between the ex-terrorists and the Ministry⁹⁸ and to accusations about the hypocrisy

97. R.S.Vasudevan, "Strategies in the Congress: 1934-39," Chapter III, M.Phil dissertation, 1982, JNU.

98. There was at the very start a bitterness about what was seen as the Ministry's attempt to damp down the receptions organised for the released prisoners by the District and Town Congress Committees. In a tour of the eastern districts made by Sachin Bakshi, Jogesh Chatterji and Ram Krishna Khatri after their release it was reported that they had eulogised revolution, threatened the government and British imperialism and advocated disaffection in the army. Perhaps the Ministry wanted to discourage such talk at a time when other prisoners had yet to be released. For resentment against "instructions from Allahabad" about the receptions see Jogesh Chandra Chatterji, In Search of Freedom, p.495. Kashiram, op.cit., pp.237-39 and for their speeches, extract from report on political situation in U.P. for the week ending 23 October 1937, Haig Mss., Eur. F115/12. Raj Deo's Youth League was very enthusiastic about arranging a reception for the released Kakori prisoners, Interview, Raj Nath Singh, Ghazipur, 27 June 1984.

of the Congress Ministers from the forums of Youth League meetings.⁹⁹

Meanwhile underground groups were being organised again, particularly in the eastern districts of Jaunpur Ghazipur and Azamgarh. The student community in the period of the ministry was bombarded with a variety of ideas and a variety of pamphlets from the Socialists, Communists, terrorists and later from the Forward Bloc. In the Tripura Congress ^{March 1939} the terrorist groups generally sympathised with Bose¹⁰⁰ for what they felt was a more

99. In a meeting in Sultanpur Mammathnath Gupta said he did not agree with Jawaharlal's suggestion that Congress Ministries should not be criticised. The revolutionaries had joined the Congress to convert it into an organisation of the masses and to radicalise it, P.A.I., 30 October 1937. In July 1938 red leaflets entitled Ranbheri were put up in Allahabad, Basti, Benares, Jaunpur and Fyzabad in which Mahatma Gandhi was held responsible for the death of Bhagat Singh, the hypocrisy of Jawaharlal, Mahatma Gandhi and Congress leaders was castigated and armed revolution advocated. In August a leaflet Kranti ki Gunj was reported from Jannpur and Benares urging youths not to place any faith in the Congress ministries and to take up armed revolt, P.A.I. 30 July 1938, P.A.I. 20 August 1938. See also P.A.I. 22 October 1938, P.A.I. 5 November 1938, P.A.I. 12 November 1938. A Government report of February 1939 on the volunteer movement described the Jaunpur Youth League as revolutionary and anti-Congress, File No.4/2/1939, Home Poll., N.A.I.

100. Both Jogesh Chandra Chatterji and Damodar Swaroop Seth (who at one time had had connections with terrorism) resigned from the C.S.P. over its failure to vote against the Pant resolution at the Tripuri Congress. Later they withdrew their resignation. J.C.Chatterji, op.cit.p. ; Paras Nath recalls that many of the terrorist group became anti-C.S.P. after Tripuri, Interview, 13 April 1982, Lucknow. At the Benares Division Youth Conference held in Jaunpur, 6-7 May 1939 a resolution was passed protesting

uncompromising position about the necessity of resuming a posture of conflict with the British Government and also because they shared his views about taking advantage of Germany's hostility to Britain.¹⁰¹ "We had the same psychology as Bose towards Axis victories," recalls Jharkhande Rai.¹⁰² With the resignation of the Congress Ministry the idea that the war situation could be used to organise for a final confrontation with the British was one which was expressed by many congressmen even in the course of the Individual Satyagraha movement which was not meant in fact to express this idea or to hamper the war effort. These ideas influenced the kind of propoganda carried out against the Raj as way clouds gathered over Europe. The equation which Gandhi and Nehru drew between Fascism and Imperialism while yet supporting the democratic aims professed by the Allies against the Axis powers¹⁰³ was not universally accepted.

100. (contd...)

against the unconstitutional election of a new Congress President, P.A.I., 6 May 1939.

101. At Ghazipur, at a Youth League meeting in October 1938, Raj Deo Singh recalled that Germany had participated in a conspiracy to overthrow British rule in the First World War and said that in the coming war Germany would offer arms and India would be free. P.A.I. 22 October 1938. See also S.C. Bose, Indian Struggle, 1935-1942, p.28.

102. Interview. See also J.C. Chatterji, In Search of Freedom, op.cit., p.527.

103. Gowher Rizvi, however, argues that Gandhi began to equate the British with the Japanese most strongly only after the failure of the Cripps mission. Gowher Rizvi, Linlithgow and India: A Study of British Policy and the Political Impasse in India, London, 1978, p.209.

Among schoolboys, among the terrorist groups, among a certain section of the Congress the war situation brought a vicarious satisfaction in Axis victories, drawing into prominence an Asiatic power and also affording the spectacle of the Empire under threat.¹⁰⁴ These groups had the same attitude towards the Axis powers as Bose, that advantage should be taken of the situation without taking into account the fascist or militarist ideology of the Axis powers. The political psychology created by this feeling was noted by Congress

104. The diversity of sources from which such an attitude is reported is remarkable. In August 1940 at Jaunpur one Sureshanand said his audience should bless Hitler whose teachings were responsible for advances made by India evoking a response of "Hitler Sahib ki jai" from his listeners. Shibbanlal Saxena, ex-M.L.A., Gorakhpur was reported to have praised the Germans as a brave nation, P.A.I. 10 August 1940, 24 August 1940. In November Baba Raghav Das, a Gandhian, said that the Germans were supplied bread by Hitler but Britain let India starve, A.P.S. 22 November 1940. At the Saryupari Brahman Maha Sabha of 25-27 December 1940 one Bhagwati Pande gave the names of Karl Marx, Gandhi and Hitler as the three great personalities whom the audience ought to follow, A.P.S. 27 December 1940. Among the items recovered at a terrorist hide-out in Lucknow was a Hindi poem, "Salaam O King of Germany," C.I.D., R.R. No. 5 U.P.S.A. The title of a proscribed book of 1940 was "Krantikari Hitler," File No. 2, Box No. 5, Bundle No. 30, Police Department, U.P.S.A.

leaders like Gandhi and Nehru with dismay¹⁰⁵ and seems to have also been felt by certain foreign observers for instance Chiang Kai Shek in his February 1942 visit to India.¹⁰⁶ This then brings us to the unique context in which the movement took place and which is crucial to any explanation of the form which it took.

The Context

The Crimean War fought far away from India had nevertheless coloured the events of 1857 in India. Sita Ram Sepoy said it was thought during the Revolt that the Russians had killed all the Sarkar's soldiers and that only boys could be recruited in Britain.¹⁰⁷ Something less than a century later the perception of another set

105. In a speech at Allahabad, 17 December 1941, Nehru stressed that the policy of helping the enemy's enemy was the coward's way and that the Germans placed themselves on the highest rung of the international order while placing the Indians on the lowest. S.W.J.N., Vol.12, p.21. Gowher Rizvi points out that after the failure of the Cripps Mission Gandhi had to endeavour to prevent Bose from turning the frustration of Indian nationalists into support for Japan, op.cit., p.209.

106. On his return from India Chiang Kai Shek had cabled instructions to his ambassadors in London and Washington on 24 February 1942 telling them to impress upon Churchill and Roosevelt the urgency of solving the Indian political problem. "If the Japanese should know of the real situation and attack India they would be virtually unopposed." Tara Chand, History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol.4, New Delhi, 1972, p.337.

107. James Lunt (ed.), From Sepoy to Subedar, Delhi, 1970, p.26.

of enemies at war with the suzerain power was to absorb the interest of every section of the population in India, an interest heightened by more far reaching agencies of information this time, most important of which was the radio. This interest was not, however, always expressed in the way thought desirable for the "war effort"; and the exercise of utilising the resources of a colony and then of defending it in a situation in which the most powerful representative party was out of power and not associated with this effort was to pose many a paradox for the Government. Radios typified one such paradox. Radios were used to disseminate the right attitudes to the war- but at the same time wireless transmitters were confiscated from Universities.¹⁰⁸ As the war situation took a turn for the worse on the eastern front from December 1941 the Government found that increasing credence was being given to Axis broadcasts.¹⁰⁹ Subhas Bose had begun broadcasting from Germany in January 1942 and by August 1942 there were four stations in Germany churning out propaganda into India. In many cases the rumours that floated around at that time could be directly traced to Axis broadcasts.¹¹⁰

108. In 1940 radios were distributed to tahsil head-quarters as part of the Rural Development programme. On the other hand wireless transmitters were removed from universities and the students of Allahabad, Benares and Lucknow went on strike. U.P.A.R., 1940, p.31.

109. FRUP II, January 1942, Home Poll., N.A.I.

110. FRUP I, January 1942. In May 1942 the U.P. Governor, Hallett was reporting that enemy broadcasts were becoming increasingly popular. Hallett to Linlithgow, Secret U.P. - 136, Enclosure No.16 from U.P.C.I.D., The Transfer of Power, Vol. II, p.25.

The dangers of mass communication media in a situation in which the populace was not in fact identifying itself with the fortunes of the state were given their sharpest expression in the way in which Amery's broadcast of 10 August, intended to justify the action taken against Congress, was interpreted to mean that the Congress had in fact outlined exactly such a programme of sabotage, and in many places where local activists were unsure about their course of action the broadcast gave the green light for an insurrectionary programme.¹¹¹

Ever since it became clear that Britain would be engulfed in the European war all kinds of rumours had been reported - an index of the fact that the population was informing itself that the sarkar was having problems.¹¹² Till about December 1941, however, the war did not bring a sense that government was going to collapse in India though there was a realisation that the resources of administration were stretched out tight. With the

111. The Secretary of State, L.S. Amery had made a series of statements in Parliament and to the American public in which official repression was justified by outlining the Congress programme in extreme terms, F.G. Hutchins, Spontaneous Revolution: The Quit India Movement, Delhi, 1971, p. 272. Of course the broadcast merely confirmed what people had attuned themselves to expect. See Sriram, op.cit., pp. 53, 67, 80 for the impact of the broadcast in Azamgarh, Ballia and Janunpur respectively.

112. In Azamgarh a speaker was reported to have said that if London fell Churchill would come to India. P.A.I. 21 September 1940.

sequence, however, which began with the bombing of Pearl Harbour, 7 December 1941, the sinking of the two British battleships, the Prince of Wales and the Repulse on 10 December, the surrender of Singapore on 15 February 1942, the occupation of Rangoon on 7 March 1942 and in early April the bombing of Colombo, Vizagapatnam and Cocinada, the rumours became steadily more ominous, relating to predictions about the downfall of the Raj,¹¹³ the harsh measures it might resort to under duress,¹¹⁴ and the possibilities of currency collapse, shortages and outbreaks of crime and looting.¹¹⁵

113. "Revolutionary changes between the 13th and 23rd of August were prophesied... according to some of the astrologers in no case could Britain rule the waves, and a mighty nation of the East was expected to appear on the horizon as the world's greatest power. An ethnic description of the nation was given, and the events, and facts also convinced the people that Japan was to come out as the greatest world power. These things were freely discussed by people at every meeting place and on the high roads." Govind Sahai, '42 Movement, op.cit., p.11. Here it is clear that there are three sources of perception about the future, the proposed Congress movement which was in the air, prophesy, and facts and events.
114. In February 1942 it was reported that Kanpur labour was upset by the rumour that they would be chained to their machines if the town was bombed so that they would not run away, FRUP I. February 1942. In the same month it was reported that the police were upset by the proposal to send police forces to Rangoon. Ibid.
115. U.P.A.R., 1942 and Fortnightly reports for U.P., 1942, passim.

Report

sequence, however, which began with the bombing of Pearl Harbour, 7 December 1941, the sinking of the two British battleships, the Prince of Wales and the Repulse on 10 December, the surrender of Singapore on 15 February 1942, the occupation of Rangoon on 7 March 1942 and in early April the bombing of Colombo, Vizagapatnam and Cocinada, the rumours became steadily more ominous, relating to predictions about the downfall of the Raj,¹¹³ the harsh measures it might resort to under duress,¹¹⁴ and the possibilities of currency collapse, shortages and outbreaks of crime and looting.¹¹⁵

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115. U.P.A.R., 1942 and Fortnightly reports for U.P., 1942, passim.

The most significant feature then of the context of 1942 is that a sense that government was collapsing in fact preceded the movement.

Till the situation on the eastern front took a turn for the worse the Government had not really made a determined effort to associate the Congress with the war effort in a way which would satisfy its insistence on an actual transfer of power. "The Congress claimed that only a popular government could arouse enthusiasm for the war among the masses. This would have been a weighty consideration if India, like France, had been the centre of the war. But in 1940 India was still far away from the scene of battles... Linlithgow's task was to supply the sinews of war, and this he was accomplishing satisfactorily."¹¹⁶ What seems to have changed the situation was the possibility of an actual invasion and the possibility, with the example of Burma in the fore, that the population might offer no resistance, perhaps even collaborate. In some of the propoganda against any help to Britain in the war, whether in the Youth Leagues or in volunteer meetings or other Congress gatherings an element of unfavourable comparison between Britain and Germany was sometimes used as a tool of

116. Gowher Rizvi, op.cit., p.152. See also p.160, ibid.

rhetoric.¹¹⁷ In some of the common talk about the treatment to be expected from the Japanese the path of non-resistance was held to be the safest and one likely to bring good treatment.¹¹⁸

Congress and pro-Congress newspapers warned the Government of such a possibility if popular opinion was ignored in the running of the war effort. "When we hear that the Burmese are co-operating with the Japanese we fear that the same thing might happen in India" wrote the Sandesh of Agra on 8 April 1942.¹¹⁹ "The Japs will have to face as 'stiff' a resistance in this country as they had to face in Singapore and Rangoon..." wrote the The Ujala, Agra, in its issue of 3 March 1942 and The Sainik of 10th April put forward the following question, "What is going to happen in provinces where there is

117. Youth Leagues were very active in anti-war propoganda, interview, Jharkhande Rai, 5 March 1983, Delhi; Baba Raghav Das for instance made the following speech in October 1940 which earned him two years R.T. "Hitler has taken responsibility to feed his population. Nobody is hungry there. In Russia nobody is hungry. It is not so in the administration of the British and all are dying of hunger... At present excepting America the whole world is against the British..." File No.3/17/40, 1940, Home Poll., N.A.I.

118. Rumours reported from Benares in February 1942 after the fall of Singapore by Thakur Harnam Singh, Inspector, Intelligence Bureau, 24 February 1942, Nandganj Train Dacoity Case, C.I.D., R.R.No.5, U.P.S.A.

119. File No.189/42, 1942, Home Poll. (I), N.A.I.

'Advisor Rule' when people in Burma turned 'traitors' despite there having been a ministry in charge."¹²⁰

The failure of the Cripps mission brought Congress policy to the decision that only a resurgence of nationalist feeling brought about through the issuing of an ultimatum^{to} the British could^{the will} be developed for any kind of levy en masse to organise civilian life and resistance in the face of invasion. In this gamble the prospect of immediate chaos and the possibility of an outbreak of lawlessness was something which Gandhi faced and accepted.¹²¹ It was the realisation that the Congress might in fact be forced willy-nilly to deal with an invasion that influenced the decision to pass the August resolution rather than any short-sighted strategy of taking advantage of Britain's difficulties. The desire, however, to "take advantage"^{also} was one of the components of the situation which precipitated the response to 1942. It was an element of that nationalist feeling, of which the terrorist groups represented the most militant fringe, that the mechanism of the state was to be attacked relentlessly and without considerations of ideology. In that sense the terrorist

120. File No. 189/42, 1942, Home Poll (I), N.A.I.

121. A.M.Zaidi, op.cit., p.211.

groups had more in common with Bose from 1938¹²² than with the Socialist wing of Congress. The tactics employed by the terrorist groups in eastern U.P. on the war question were those of propoganda about hampering the war effort, propoganda about the vulnerability of the state and the possibility, therefore, of overthrowing it by means of an attack on its communications, on its police and bureaucracy, an idea which, as always, revolved around the formation of an armed underground core.

The popularity of the terrorist idiom in these districts had created a certain propensity among school-boys and young men for a movement of the 1942 type which seemed to realise their dream of insurrectionary action. The actual preparation for insurrection took the form of propoganda in the Youth Leagues and in the Congress volunteer movement. Within the core terrorist groups this took the form of train dacoities which threw a challenge to the ability of government to protect its own property, gave money for arms and propoganda and also caused a stir among the young students who were their main constituents and for whom the drama of "action" had to be

122. After the Sudeten crisis and the Munich agreement in 1938, Bose, then President of the Congress, proposed to exploit the next international crisis by confronting Britain with an ultimatum to part with power or to face direct action and disorder. Johannes Voight, "Co-operation or Confrontation? War and Congress Politics 1939-42," in D.A. Low (ed.), Congress and the Raj, New Delhi 1977, p. 351.

performed.¹²³

The first terrorist organised train dacoity in this context took place in fact in the period of the Congress ministry at Pipradih in Gorakhpur on 9 April 1938 and was organised by the groups in Ghazipur, Azamgarh and Gorakhpur.¹²⁴ Jharkhande Rai^{has} written that the Pipradih dacoity was organised because the terrorists knew that a World War would break out and they needed money to organise an armed rebellion.¹²⁵

The Pipradih dacoity case was tried in Ghazipur and had a sensational impact on the youth there who crowded the court. This included, writes Jharkhande Rai, the youth associated with the C.S.P.¹²⁶

Raj Deo's group in Jaunpur was also exploring the idea of train dacoity and sabotage of communications to dramatise the possibility of striking the Government at this point. Raj Deo who had been arrested in a section

123. Such enterprises were called "actions" probably due to a desire to emphasise the dynamism of the act in its confrontation with the state.

124. Jharkhande Rai, Interview, 5 March 1983, Delhi.

125. Jharkhande Rai, Krantikariyon ke Sansmaron, op.cit. p.19.

126. Ibid., p.28.

396 I.P.C. case in June 1939 was said to have talked of train wrecking for political proposes.¹²⁷ The Benares Anushilan group was also reported to be thinking along the same lines.¹²⁸ On 6 November 1939 printed leaflets signed by the H.S.R.A. were put up in Allahabad urging the public to occupy Government buildings, treasuries and armouries. Young men were urged to harass government by wire-cutting, derailing of trains and propoganda in the army.¹²⁹ On the night of 6-7 April 1940 fourteen railway telegraph wires connecting Jaunpur with Benares, Allahabad, Lucknow, Sultanpur and Ghazipur were cut, seriously dislocating railway traffic.¹³⁰ A few months later on the 9th of July the Jaunpur terrorist group led by Kunj Behari Singh organised a train dacoity between the Khalispur and Babbatpur Railway Stations on the Fyzabad Benares line.¹³¹

127. An enquiry into cases of railway sabotage on the East India Railway in Bihar had drawn the attention of the C.I.D. in U.P. to one Brijnandan who was reported to be a member of Raj Deo's H.S.R.A. group. Enquiry into cases of Railway Sabotage, 1940, Home Dept., Police, S.No.10, File No.280, Bundle No.133, Box No.85, U.P.S.A.

128. Ibid.

129. P.A.I., 11 November 1939.

130. The police remarked that this appeared to be part of the celebration of national week. FR II 18/4/1940, Home Poll. N.A.I.

131. See C.I.D., R.R.No.4, U.P.S.A.

In March 1941 the Central Committee of the H.S.R.A. in the eastern districts organised another train hold up at Nandganj, in Ghazipur,¹³² and in March 1941 the terrorist group in Gorakhpur and Azangarh as well as Raj Nath Singh and Balrup Singh of the group in Ghazipur held up another train at Sahjanwa in Gorakhpur.¹³³

Organisationally these "actions" were a disaster for the H.S.R.A. groups in eastern U.P. for the searches and arrests which followed broke up the groups. Of the Khalispur-Babatpur dacoity the D.I.G. of the C.I.D. commented: "We were fortunate in being able to break up the organisation before the outbreak of rebellion in 1942."¹³⁴ However, the dacoities did keep up an interest in the idea of a confrontation with the state particularly at a time when Congress politics were in the doldrums and the individual satyagraha movement started in October 1940 was not arousing much enthusiasm from the student population, or in the rural areas.¹³⁵ The process of collecting evidence against those suspected in the cases itself

132. Interview, Jharkhande Rai; also C.I.D., R.R. No.5, U.P.S.A.

133. Interview, Raj Nath Singh, Ghazipur, 27 June 1984; also C.I.D., R.R.No.34, U.P.S.A.

134. C.I.D., R.R. No.4, U.P.S.A.

135. A.P.S., 29 November 1940, U.P.S.A.

involved the politically minded public with local Congressmen and student sympathisers pitting themselves against the police in trying to prevent people from giving evidence or in trying to influence the jury.¹³⁶

The Congress volunteer organisation was the other sphere in which the terrorist groups in eastern U.P. exercised an influence and volunteer camps were used to disseminate the revolutionary saga and to develop the idea of the volunteer groups as the nucleus of a national militia. In the period after resignation the Congress had revived its interest in the volunteer movement in order to build up an organisation for a civil disobedience campaign. This seems to have shifted the interest of students from the Youth Leagues to the Congress volunteer organisation.¹³⁷ In August 1940 the

136. On 3 March 1941 a Youth League meeting was held in Jaunpur to win over prosecution witnesses in the Babatpur - Khalispur train dacoity case, C.I.D., R.R. No. 4, U.P.S.A. See also Nandganj, train dacoity case, C.I.D., R.R.No. 5, U.P.S.A.

137. This is suggested by the following figures for recruitment of volunteers:

Increase in volunteers

	Monthly average Jan.-Oct. '39	Nov. '39	Dec. '39	Jan. '40	Feb. '40	Monthly average Nov. '39- Feb. '40
Congress volunteers	+762	+711	+2579	+1935	+1200	+1606
Youth Leagues	+237	+104	+2	+26	-701	-142

Note by Chief Secretary, U.P. on the volunteer movement in U.P., 26 April 1940, Hallet to Linlithgow, 29 April 1940, No. 4, p. 17, Mss. Eur. F. 125/103, Linlithgow Mss. microfilm N.M.M.L.

Government banned all militant volunteer organisations but Congress volunteers in U.P. continued their activities.¹³⁸ It was reported that Nehru and Narendra Deo were inclined to start a movement on the issue of defying this ¹³⁹ ban and decided to carry on with volunteer activity till the A.I.C.C., which was to meet at Bombay on 15 September 1940, came to a decision on the issue.¹⁴⁰

The A.I.C.C. when it met watered down all proposals for a militant campaign against the government and directed that all volunteer activity be suspended in preparation for the Individual Satyagraha movement.¹⁴¹ The intention obviously was to suspend the activities of an organisation which might give a more confrontationalist edge to the proposed movement/^{which} was meant to be purely symbolic in its opposition to India's participation in the war without her consent. In its effect it was meant to register a protest against the rigidity of the government rather than to disrupt the war effort.

138. P.A.I., 7 September 1940.

139. File No.4/13/40, Home Poll (I), N.A.I.

140. The Congress Working Committee it was reported were opposed to the crisis being precipitated by the U.P. Congress on the volunteer issue and Jawaharlal was requested not to pass any militant resolution on this issue at the U.P.C.C. meeting to be held at Allahabad on 9 September but to await the A.I.C.C. decision. File No.4/13/40, Home Poll (I), N.A.I.

141. P.A.I., 21 September 1940. Individual Satyagraha started on 17 October 1940.

By December 1941 the Individual Satyagraha movement was effectively at an end and attention turned again to the organisation of volunteer bands to maintain internal order and to organise for self sufficiency in case of a breakdown of Government, dislocation of communications and disruption of food supply.¹⁴² With the withdrawal of the British from Burma and the Japanese occupation of Rangoon in March 1942 such an eventuality seemed very real.

However, both in the Individual Satyagraha movement as well as in the volunteer organisation the ideas expressed often went beyond the protest against the suspension of the right of free speech in the case of the former and the programme of self defence and self sufficiency in the case of the latter.

Both by terrorist groups in Eastern U.P. and by other Congressmen the volunteer organisation was used to suggest the idea of a parallel Congress militia which might be put to good use if the situation allowed. In

142. Resolutions of the U.P.P.C.C. Council, Allahabad, 9 January 1942, 5 February 1942, p.19, Pt.III/1942, U.P.P.C.C. papers, N.M.M.L. Though in the early months of 1942 the recruitment of volunteers for internal security and self-sufficiency was projected as a non-party affair, in June a resolution passed by the U.P.P.C.C. Council called for the revival of the Congress volunteer organisation, the Kaumi Seva Dal. Rallies of this Dal were organised in the last week of June, U.P.P.C. circular No.23, 6 June 1942, No.24, 8 June 1942, U.P.P.C.C., Ibid.

the course of the Individual Satyagraha movement the speakers who courted arrest were to recite the formula: "It is wrong to help the British war effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance." In fact some speakers drew upon images of the defeat of Britain and called for preparation to overthrow the government.¹⁴³ At this stage their propoganda did not have much of an impact but predictions of the downfall of the Raj seemed to be coming true from the turn of the year 1941 as the British began to evacuate south-east Asia. In the words of an official assessment of the Individual Satyagraha movement, "Although its direct effect on the war effort... may have been negligible, it increased political feeling and opposition to Government at a critical period and thus prepared the way for the flood of 'political defeatism' which overran the country when Japanese successes brought the war closer to India in the early months of 1942."¹⁴⁴

Of the Kaumi Seva Dal in eastern U.P. what invites attention is the active role played in it by

143. File No.3/7/40 Home Poll (I), N.A.I.

144. File No.3/6/1942. History of the Civil Disobedience movement, 1940-41, Home Poll. N.A.I.

many who were associated with the terrorist groups or with the Youth Leagues and with the Congress Socialist Party. In Jaunpur the terrorist group took an active part in the holding of a volunteer training camp at Shahganj between 16 February-6 March 1940. Kunj Behari Singh, an associate of Raj Deo and one of the prominent figures in the Jannpur Youth League, was the organiser of the camp and among the volunteers who attended were many who sympathised with the idea of underground revolutionary organisation for an attack on the state.¹⁴⁵ Notes of lectures delivered by Kunj Behari Singh on the history of the Congress prompted the C.I.D. to comment that they were more about the revolutionaries and terrorists of India than about the Congress.¹⁴⁶ A song taken down in the course of the camp is worth reproducing for its vision of coordinated destruction of foreign rule in one massive sweep. It also gives an idea of the kind of enthusiasm among the youth which 1942 tapped. Translation of song from copy-book of Ram Lakhan Singh:¹⁴⁷

145. Evidence of prosecution witness, No. 148, Bahadur Singh, 10 April 1942. Khalispur train Dacoity, 1940, C.I.D., R.R. No. 6, U.P.S.A. In July of that year Kunj Behari Singh and his group carried out the train hold up at Khalispur.

146. C.I.D., R.R.No. 6, U.P.S.A.

147. This copybook was produced in the trial of the Khalispur Train Dacoity Case, 1940, C.I.D., R.R., No. 4, U.P.S.A. The song is reproduced as it was in translation, with a few grammatical corrections.

In Azangarh, Arjun Singh, a sympathiser of the terrorist group, was also active in the Kaumi Seva Dal as was the case with Mahanand Mishra in Ballia. The captain of the Dal in Ghazipur, Beni Madho Rai, was also a member of the terrorist group.¹⁴⁸ In the Shahganj camp of the Kaumi Seva Dal, as pointed out earlier revolutionary propoganda had been the distinguishing mark. Paras Nath Mishra recalls that he took part in a Kaumi Seva Dal Camp in 1940 in village Gopalpur, Ballia in which classes were taken by Vishwanath Mardanna, an ex-revolutionary who had joined the C.P.I. after the death of Bhagat Singh.¹⁴⁹ The Kaumi Seva Dal seems to have become the focus of propoganda amongst the youth, for a police report on volunteer organisations in mid-1941 noted that Youth Leagues had gradually decayed and even when membership had remained static the organisation in most cases was virtually defunct.¹⁵⁰

148. Jharkhande Rai, Interview, op.cit.

149. Interview, op.cit. According to Paras Nath, Mardanna brought with him copies of the 'Comintern' and gave a lecture from Bukharin's ABC of Communism on the classification of society which was his first introduction to Marxist thought.

150. In Basti formerly one of the most active centres the Youth League had broken up. File No. 1240/1941, Police Dept., Box No. 82, U.P.S.A. This was probably due to the flow of members into the Kaumi Seva Dal and due to the arrests made in the course of the satyagraha. It may also in eastern U.P., where it was strongest, have been due to the disruption caused by arrests made in connection with train dacoities.

In the 1942 movement the organisation and leadership of the Kaumi Seva Dal does seem to have played a role in the districts under survey. In Benares district the mob that attacked Danapur railway station was led by the Congressman Kanta Prasad and also by Gobind Singh of village Bathi, who was the captain of the local Kaumi Seva Dal.¹⁵¹ In Ballia the Kaumi Seva Dal seems to have provided a nucleus of local activists and young men as is clear from the way in which the village of Bahuara in the Doaba organised for the takeover of the thana at Bairia.¹⁵² The idea of using the volunteer organisation for this kind of activity had in fact been in the air much before the movement. Around May 1942 Congressman, Thakur Jagganath Singh, had come on a tour of the Doaba area in Ballia to explain the Congress self-defence and volunteer programme. At a meeting in Ballia he said that this programme was intended to provide protection against the possibility of air raids, but whether air raids took place or not the organisation would be of use in the fight for swaraj.¹⁵³ According to this account,

151. Kanta Prasad Vidyarthi Papers, Regional State Archives, Varanasi.

152. Dinanath Vyas, op.cit., pp. 158-59.

153. Ibid., p. 155. Bairia in Bahuara Congress mandal seems to have been a strongly Congress village. In the Individual Satyagraha movement, not particularly noted for the enthusiasm it aroused, a crowd of 3000 had attended the meeting at Bairia in December 1940 at which Thakur Radha Mohan Singh had courted arrest, A.P.S., 13 December 1940.

the village of Bahuara had in 1941 set up a sort of volunteer village self defence force with about 75 members who had made the Bajrang Ashram their headquarters as well as a Gram Sahayak Committee to organise flood relief and a panchayat which had done away with the necessity of taking cases to court.¹⁵⁴

The way in which the Congress tried to organise self defence and self sufficiency activity to deal with the worsening war situation was also double edged in its impact. On the one hand the Congress argued that this activity was not a purely party affair¹⁵⁵ and that no obstruction should be offered to the official A.R.P. programme.¹⁵⁶ However, the kind of eventualities that the Congress was trying to prepare people for contributed to the impression that the

154. Dinanath Vyas, op.cit., p.155. Govind Sahai also writes that in Ballia people had begun to depend upon the Kaumi Seva Dal and the Gram Rakshak Dal for their defence, Govind Sahai, op.cit., p.219.

155. "Problem of Food Supplies," Jawaharlal Nehru, speech, Allahabad, 15 March 1942, Hindustan Times, 16 March 1942, p.9. See also Hawai Hamle se Bachhat ke Upai, 1942, n.d., U.P.P.C.C. pamphlet, p.19, Pt.III/1942, U.P.P.C.C. Papers, N.M.M.L., henceforth U.P.P.C.L. and Sawaal aur Jawaab, 1942 Ibid.

156. Resolution passed by the U.P.P.C.C. Council, Allahabad, 9 January 1942, U.P.P.C.C. Papers, p.19, Part III/1942, N.M.M.L. also Sawaal aur Jawaab, op.cit.

Government was in a state of collapse and that Congress was the only organisation which could take its place. The government, therefore, could only look on such activity as encouraging defeatism. In its self-sufficiency and self defence programme the Congress emphasised two basic themes. One related to the fear of a breakdown of supply through a disruption of communications and through hoarding, and the other to a fear of the breakdown of law and order, raising the spectre of dacoities and goonda raj. It was feared that the goonda or muscle man for hire could also be predatory on his own account. This insecurity was being felt by all the possessing classes, the zamindars in some districts were organising their retainers against dacoits,¹⁵⁷ and the merchants were reported to be uneasy about the security of their grain stocks.¹⁵⁸ The administration was led to complain that the civilian population seemed to be more apprehensive about goondas and dacoits than about the possibility of Japanese invasion.¹⁵⁹

157. FR II February 1942, N.A.I. Also Hallet to Linlithgow, No.U.P.-131, 12 April 1942, Mss Eur F 125/105 Linlithgow Mss.

158. See the Grain Enquiry Committee Report of the Bihar P.C.C. which had been set up on 16 April 1942, File No.P-22, Pt.II, A.I.C.C. Papers, N.M.M.L.

159. FR I February 1942, N.A.I. The number of dacoities in U.P. had increased from 872 in 1940 to 964 in 1941 leading Hallet to remark that the increase might be due to the war situation which had produced, "in particular among the lawless classes, a general feeling of excitement, possibly coupled with the

The Congress "constructive policy" of the period from January 1942 began from this sense of insecurity and aimed at establishing contact with the "respectable" classes in society and in reassuring them that Congress could, with their help, provide them with that security which they were beginning to feel that the state might not be able to.¹⁶⁰ The less well-to-do would feel equally insecure, if not more so, being without the means to protect themselves or to ensure against economic disruption. In the towns Congressmen were advised to keep in touch with the rais, the educated, vakils, barristers, editors, residents of the Civil Lines and students and to take their help in solving problems of day to day existence created by the war situation.¹⁶¹ To prevent social upheaval the level of tension was to be kept low

159. (contd...) feeling that Government can now do little to suppress crime." Hallet to Linlithgow, No.U.P.-119, 19 January 1942, Mss Eur F 125/105 Linlithgow Mss. Government reported that zamindars and banias had welcomed the Ordinances providing for special courts and enhanced penalties for certain offences, FRUP II, January 1942.
160. "The Congress constructive policy today may be summed up in a few words: the organisation and maintenance of self-sufficiency and self-protection." Jawaharlal Nehru, Allahabad, 15 March 1942, Hindustan Times, 16 March 1942, p.9.
161. Sawal aur Jawaab, booklet, Hindi, p-19, Part III/1942, U.P.P.C.C., papers, N.M.M.L., henceforth U.P.P.C.C. for the same collection of pamphlets.

whether this arose from economic distress or from communal relations. Congressmen were told to "invite the co-operation of all sections notably the propertied classes in the organisation of relief..."¹⁶² Zamindars and kisans were urged to close ranks so that they gave no opportunity to goondas and badmashes to operate.¹⁶³ Zamindars ^{were} advised to allow the cultivator to keep as much grain as he required for his family and for seed grain and not to screw up rents in times such as these.¹⁶⁴ Volunteers were told to rove the bazaars to keep an eye on prices, and traders were told not to hoard grain as this would lead to rioting.¹⁶⁵ Congressmen in villages were asked to win over goondas and badmashes and keep them in check and not to allow goondas from outside to enter the village.¹⁶⁶ The Congress also advised

162. Instructions to Congress Committees issued by the U.P.P.C.C. Council, Allahabad, 5 February 1942, U.P.P.C.C. "Have you met Hindus and Muslims of your locality and made arrangements for the safety of your locality?" Hawai Hamle se Bacchat ke Upai, Hindi, circular, 1942, undated, U.P.P.C.C.

163. Fasal Kaatne ka Samai Aa Gaya, Kisanon ko nek Salah, Ramu aur Adhir ki Baatchet, Hindi, 1942. U.P.P.C.C.

164. Ibid., also Instructions, U.P.P.C.C. circular, 21 February 1942, U.P.P.C.C.

165. Sawaal aur Jawaab, op.cit.; also Anaaj ke Vyapariyon ko Mahatama Gandhi ki Chetavani, Hindi, U.P.P.C.C.

166. Sawaal aur Jawaab, op.cit.

patrolling activity by volunteers and when enthusiasm for this seemed to be dying down the training of volunteers in akharas, wrestling pits to organise self defence and to instill fearlessness.¹⁶⁷

On the issue of food and commodity supply Congress warned the villagers that transport might increasingly be diverted to war supply and even be totally dislocated. To meet this ^{danger} local self sufficiency was encouraged - the farmer was told to shift to food crops and after harvest to keep aside as much grain as would suffice for seed and to meet the needs of his family for a couple of months should the transport system at any time break down.¹⁶⁸ Charkhas were distributed to encourage local craft production, a move which was reported to have met with an encouraging response.¹⁶⁹

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167. Aatm Raksha aur Aatma Paryapta ke Programme ke Silsile mein, Hindi, circular, 8 June 1942, and U.P.P.C.C. circular, 3 June 1942, U.P.P.C.C.
168. Fasal Kaatne ka Samaj Aa Gaya, op.cit.; Sawaal aur Jawaab, op.cit., this circular suggested caravans of bullock carts should transport break down. See also resolutions of the U.P.P.C.C. Council, Allahabad, 9 January 1942, U.P.P.C.C.
169. Ibid. The Secretary of the U.P.P.C.C. reported on 11 March 1942 that there was a great demand for cotton and charkhas in rural areas which they were not able to meet for want of funds and technical knowledge. P-22 (Part I), A.I.C.C. Papers, N.M.M.L.

The irony of the situation, however, was that when one of the largest representative parties was not supporting the war effort but preparing the people for the worst consequences of it, its actions could not but be viewed by the Government as encouraging the belief firstly that defeat was inevitable and secondly that Congress was the only organisation which could step into the breach when government collapsed. In fact the Congress "constructive programme" did have this effect, an effect strengthened by the manner in which the British had evacuated Burma and the discriminatory treatment which had been experienced by Indian evacuees. ✓ Government complained that Congress was posing in towns as the saviour against panic and disorder,¹⁷⁰ it was working up an agitation in the villages against the breakdown in law and order which it was representing as inevitable; it was "taking full advantage" of the fear of dacoits prevalent among larger zamindars and of the curtailment of transport,¹⁷¹ - in short, the administration

170. FRUP II, January 1942.

171. FRUP I, February 1942. In April 1942 R.A. Kidwai was prosecuted for a speech he made in Gorakhpur on 6 April 1942 in which he had said that there was little hope that Britain could save India. If the British were driven out Indians had to prepare to save themselves from falling victims to others. Villages should be self-supporting because a time was coming in which trains would be stopped and communications cut off, Hallet to Linlithgow, No. U.P.-133, 16 April 1942, Mss. Eur. F. 125/105, Linlithgow Mss.

suspected that the "ultimate object of the Congress would appear to be to set up a parallel administration to take over from or supplant the present Government."¹⁷²

The Government also feared that the preaching of self sufficiency was encouraging villagers to hoard their grain instead of bringing it to the market, and might even have an adverse reaction on the payment of rent.¹⁷³ A general loss of confidence in the government was also reflected in the fact that traders were converting paper currency into bullion and cultivators hoarding coin in preference to notes.¹⁷⁴ This fear about the stability of the currency was encouraged by the anti-war propoganda of many local activists though it was not a part of the Congress programme.

The situation was such that even the administration registered a sense of doom though in fact it actually withstood the 1942 movement quite firmly. But this feeling did exist and could even affect the lofty I.C.S., R.N. Bannerjee of the I.C.S. serving in the Central Provinces and Berar records. the following impression:

172. FRUP II, February 1942, see also Hallet to Linlithgow, 17 February 1942, The Transfer of Power, Vol. I, p. 199.

173. Ibid. See also Hallet to Linlithgow, Secret No. U.P.-140, 31 May 1942 and Secret No. U.P.-142, 16 June 1942, The Transfer of Power, Vol. II, p. 156, p. 222.

174. FRUP II, February 1940.

The sinking of the Repulse and the Prince of Wales off the Coast of Malaya followed by the fall of Singapore created almost consternation in the ranks of the officials, British and Indian, more or less similar to the after effects of Dunkirk and the summer of 1940. Japanese bombings came up to Vizagapatnam... these visitations created the definite impression that Japanese landings in India were imminent... 175

The progressive demoralisation of an Inspector of Police posted in Ghazipur and investigating the Nandganj train dacoity is an interesting illustration of the loss of confidence of the police in eastern U.P. On 19 November 1941 Thakur Harnam Singh, Inspector, reported to the Superintendent of Police, I.B., that "Ballia badmashes" were "spreading disquieting news from Subas Babu and others regarding present situation." On the 16th of February 1942 he observed that the fall of Singapore had created a panic in Benares, and by the 26th of the month he seems to have begun to panic himself as he recounted the stories with which jurors in the Nandgang case were being regaled to influence them in favour of those accused - the Japanese would march in from the east, the Germans from the west, the Americans would not come to

175. R.N. Bannerjee in K.L. Panjabi (ed.), The Civil Servant in India, Bombay, 1965, pp.319-20. See Rajendra Prasad, Autobiography, Bombay, 1957, p.531 for the impact of troop movements and of the panic movement of people inward from the coast.

the rescue of the British, therefore, those who believed they would be rewarded for their actions against patriots were entertaining foolish hopes. This lengthy exposition invited the unsympathetic comment from his superior that "all this" was out of place, but by the 22 August Harnam Singh was living in a state of siege in Ghazipur city which had been isolated since the 14th, in daily fear that he would be the target of the H.S.R.A. and with disturbing news coming in from the rural police stations.¹⁷⁶ Most vulnerable to rumours was the policeman in remote rural outposts. Murtaza Husain, one such sub-inspector when he was hauled up for neglect of duty described the situation in those days as one in which "every soul of that locality was moving in an air which contained scent of rebellion and antagonistic emotions."¹⁷⁷

176. C.I.D., R.R. No.5, U.P.S.A.

177. Statement of S.I.Murtaza Husain, S.O., P.S.Ubhaon in the prosecution case against him. A typed copy of this was given to me by Shri Paras Nath Mishra.

Chapter 4

THE CROWD AND PARALLEL GOVERNMENT

In this chapter it is proposed to examine the nature of the response to "Quit India" in this region through an examination of the social base of the movement, the form of activity undertaken by the "crowd" and the degree of commitment the leadership and the following had to the development of alternate nuclei of authority once the existing forms of administrative power had been destroyed.

It has been argued that the strength of the initial response lay in the unique conjuncture of the war and the difficulties of the Government in dealing with it. The pattern of agrarian relations here was such that while no strong peasant movement developed or a really strong Kisan Sabha organisation was set up, almost every section of agrarian society could cherish their expectations that Congress Raj would do something about their impoverishment. In a backward region, affected by a constriction of employment across the social spectrum this expectation was widely diffused. This created a social base for the movement of 1942 which was drawn from every strata of agrarian society, except the very big zamindars, but the lack of definite expectations also meant a lack of definite goals around which institutions to replace those of the Raj could be built up. The leadership of the movement had been

enthused by what seemed the possibilities of a situation in which the British administration was weak and especially vulnerable due to the war crisis. Once it was made clear that the administration was in fact capable of re-establishing itself - and that through the use of the army and the Special Armed Constabulary and through methods which deliberately did not take into account even the sensibilities of the "respectable" classes in the countryside, the shopkeepers, merchants, more prosperous zamindars and tenants - the idea of taking over the institutions of state by force rapidly lost both possibility and conviction even for the leadership.¹

Those who were prepared to stay underground found themselves isolated from the masses,² unable to rouse them to further action, even unable to organise them to resist the repression which was unleashed. Of course it was difficult to organise civil resistance in a situation in which any gathering invited random firing³ but the result

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1. In September 1942 the government reported that the leadership was losing faith in the movement along the current lines. Two of the principal leaders Mohanlal Saxena and Balkrishna Sharma (trade union activist, Kanpur) had given themselves up. Shibban Lal Saxena had been arrested by villagers in Gorakhpur but said he had in any case planned to give himself up the next day. FRUP I September 1942.
 2. Achyut Patwardhan, a Socialist from Maharashtra, defending the necessity of an underground movement, nevertheless agreed that the technique of underground movement would have to be changed so that it did not isolate the leadership from the masses, Hindustan Times, 16 April 1948, p.4.
 3. Sriram, op.cit., p.63, Niblett, op.cit., p.45.

of this was that villagers began giving information about Congress leaders or at least discouraging any propoganda or sabotage activity in their vicinity which would leave them wide open to collective fines and indiscriminate reprisals.⁴

One section of the leadership who persisted in underground activity engaged in terrorist counter-reprisal against officials. In Jaunpur the terrorist group seems to have carried on with this for a fairly long time⁵ but the drying up of support from the public also forced such groups to take to extortion or dacoities to supplement funds.⁶

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4. In September it was reported that in several cases information leading to arrests was given by villagers where a collective fine had been imposed or who feared that it would be imposed. FRUP I, September 1942. See also File No.3/30/42, Home Poll-I, N.A.I. and FR Bihar II September 1942. Shibbanlal Saxena was apprehended by a village headman, Hindustan Times, 13 January 1945, p.3. See Niblett, op.cit., pp.47-50 for an account of the methods of reprisal used. He called it "official arson" and "official dacoity".
 5. FRUP II, September 1942; A.P.S. 19 February 1943, A.P.S. 2 April 1943, A.P.S. 3 September 1943, A.P.S. 29 October 1943.
 6. FRUP I, Novemebt 1943, A.P.S. 12 February 1943. Of such activities in Bihar the Government wrote: "There were in fact many uneasy alliances between political and professional criminals and only a small proportion of the loot found its way into the party coffers." File No.3/19/44 Home Poll (1), N.A.I. This tendency for the underground terrorist groups to get mixed up with existing dacoit gangs was particularly marked in Bihar.

Nor had the previous social history of the region developed among the peasant crowd of 1942 a tradition of organisation either for agrarian demands or for social change. The contrast one had in mind is the situation in southern Maharashtra as outlined by Omvedt where the cultural tradition of the non-Brahman movement and the past history of struggle against Brahman landlords created a base for the persistence of parallel government - the prati sarkar.⁷ From U.P. itself we have an example of the peasants' capacity to organise purposefully for determined ends as is evident from the organisation of Kisan Sabhas "from below" in Oudh during 1920-21.⁸ Of Pratapgarh in 1920-21 the following process of organisation was reported: "When a Kisan Sabha was started in a village, a village panchayat was appointed and all members of the sabha, many of whom were intimidated into joining, had to take an oath that they would carry out the panchayat's orders. The panchayat was also empowered to try cases and inflict fines and other punishment."⁹ The panchayats were the means by which internal solidarity was enforced through boycott of waverers and

7. See Gail Omvedt's perceptive article, "Quit India in Satara," unpublished, April 1983, Workshop on India in 1942, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, 1983.

8. M.H.Siddiqi, op.cit., pp.118, 122, 217; Kapil Kumar, op.cit., pp.192-193.

9. U.P.A.R. 1921-22, p.xvii, para 22.

detractors.¹⁰ In the districts under examination the example we have of the peasants displaying organisational initiative for a goal is in the case of the gau-rakshini movement of the 1890s - here in the organisation of the fund raising, propoganda and boycott of detractors considerable initiative is displayed.¹¹ In the movement of August 1942 where the target was the colonial government the response was eruptive but the panchayats set up ephemeral - their social composition is not discernable, nor where the initiative came for setting them up. In one or two cases it is obviously the local Congress leaders who make up the panchayat.¹² The panchayats do not seem to have survived the collapse of the movement, i.e. there was no continued impetus to turn away from police and courts to them. Of course the whole attempt to study the nature of parallel government in 1942 in this region is frustrated at every turn by the paucity of material, stemming ultimately from the fleeting duration of the movement. Very often the nature

10. M.H.Siddiqi, op.cit., p.215; Kapil Kumar, op.cit., p. 193.

11. See Note on the agitation against cow killing, File No. 304-414, January, 1894, Home Public, Part B, N.A.I.

12. As for instance at Reoti, in Ballia, where the President of the Congress Mandal Committee presided. In another instance it was an old man chosen from the crowd at Tarwa, Azamgarh, see below.

of the movement has to be deduced from the few, sometimes rather apocryphal, incidents that come down to us from certain nationalist accounts.¹³

Before doing so, however, it is proposed to examine the social composition of the crowd of 1942 because this is one of the features which has been used to draw conclusions about the kind of insurgency which developed.

The Composition of the Crowd

Max Harcourt describes the crowd of 1942 as young, rural and of predominantly middle and high caste status.¹⁴ This is related to his analysis of the movement as deriving its main thrust from the kisan, the autonomous small holder peasant, whose grievances derived both from the greater pressure exerted on him by zamindars from the late nineteenth century and from the support which the Raj gave to the zamindars in the enforcement of their demands as well as from the adverse affects of being drawn into a world market economy and experiencing adversely both the effects of scarcity as well as a

13. Govind Sahai, 1947, op.cit., R.S.Vidyarthi, British Savagery in India, Agra, 1946, Sriram, 1946, op.cit., D.Vyas, 1946, op.cit., B.Mitra and P.Chakraborty (ed.), Rebel India, Calcutta, 1946.

14. Max Harcourt, "Kisan Populism and Revolution in Rural India: The 1942 Disturbances in Bihar and East United Provinces," in D.A. Low (ed.), op.cit., pp. 322-23.

price depression crisis. In August 1942 it was the onset of a scarcity crisis which disturbed the small holder peasantry and brought them into the movement.¹⁵ In the tables he has drawn up of caste composition¹⁶ the high percentage of Brahmans, Bhumihars, Rajputs followed by Ahirs supports his contention but this has to be balanced against the fact that they did in any case represent a substantial proportion of the rural population.

Artisanal and professional castes such as the barber, potter, Lohar etc., make up a smaller number in any settlement. However, the more substantial labouring castes such as the Chamar, the Dom, the Dusadh and the Bhar do seem to have a smaller representation in his tables than the upper castes. However, this section would be even more affected by the scarcity crisis than the small holder peasant. Such limited analysis as I have attempted for a few incidents seems to suggest that the participants in the crowd were drawn from a wide spectrum of rural society though in some incidents there is a bias towards the representation of "Singhs" who could be Rajputs or Bhumihars.¹⁷ In any case an accurate

15. Ibid., pp. 326-43.

16. Ibid., p. 346.

17. Of 57 convicted in the case relating to the attack on Police Station Danapur, Benares district, 53 have caste affixes in the following proportion:
16 Singhs (Rajput/Bhumihar), 5 - Brahman, 1-Das, alias Misr, 3-Rastogi (Banias), 4-Ahir, 3-Koeri,

picture can be built up only if balanced against the prevailing caste composition in the locality of a particular incident.

Evidence of enthusiastic participation in certain localities tends occasionally to confirm this slant towards communities of upper caste peasants. Bahuara village in Ballia which was responsible for the massive turnout to take over thana Bairia was composed mainly of Chhatris.¹⁸ On 18 August a huge mob had raided the Police Station of Gahmar, in Tahsil Zamania, in Ghasipur. Of Gahmar, one of the Defence Witnesses in an Ordinance Case remarked: "The whole village Gahmar so far as the Kshatriyas are concerned is one Biradari. All the Kshatriyas of

17. (contd...)
 2-Sonar, 1-Kalwar, 2-Lohar, 1-Mallah, 1-Teli, 1-Bhar, 1-Chamar, 3-Gond, 1-Thatara, 7-Bind. Here one notices not only the number of "Singhs" but also the seven Binds, one of the most socially and economically deprived castes of rural society. Kamta Prasad Vidyarthi papers, Regional State Archives, Varanasi. In the names of those killed in the attempt to storm Madhuban thana, Azamgarh, almost every section of village society is represented: Ramnakshatr Pandey and Rampati Tiwari (Brahmins), Munni Kunwar and Bhagwat Singh (Chattris or Bhumihars), Banwari Yadav, (Ahir), Lachanpati Koeri, Kumar Majhi, Raghunath Bhar, Shivdhan Harijan, Sambhar Gader (a shepherd caste) and Hanif Darzi. S.S.S., Vol.27, Zila Azamgarh, op.cit.

18. Dinanath Vyas, "Kavyalankar", op.cit., p.156.

village Gahmar belong to one family."¹⁹ Clan mobilisation seems to have played its role in this mahal (estate) in 1942 as it had done in mid-1858 when Meghar Singh, a Rajput of Gahmar, had risen up in revolt drawing the lineage into the fight with him.²⁰ The vast mahal of Sherpur in Ghazipur where the overwhelming number of proprietors and tenants were drawn from a Bhunihar lineage was held responsible for the attack on Muhammadabad tehsil and was punished accordingly.²¹ Two villages which Paras Nath Mishra, a student activist chose for spreading news of the movement were Taribada and Charaunwan, both of which he describes as Thakur villages and Congress strongholds.²² In the enumeration of those hamlets which were

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19. Criminal Sessions Trial No.63(G) of 1944, 22 December 1944, Basta Ordinance Case 1944, Ghazipur Sessions Court Record Room.
20. Ranajit Guha, Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India, Delhi, 1983, pp.322-29. Chit Baragaon is another Rajput dominated estate which comes to notice both in 1857 and in 1942. In May 1858 the village of Chit Baragaon was destroyed under orders from Government because of "its persistence in open rebellion and its long notorious characters that had rendered its impunity dangerous for the peace of the country. Narrative of events for the week ending 23 May 1858, Progs. No.139-40, 25 June 1858, Foreign Dept., N.A.I.
21. Waddell, op.cit., D.G.Ghazipur, 1909, p.256.
22. Interview, op.cit.

the targets of reprisals this impression of the participation of the high caste landholding communities is reinforced. Such targets were for instance the large village Sherpur already mentioned, Chit Baragaon in Ghazipur,²³ village Suhawal in Ghazipur inhabited by "rich farmers"²⁴ Palli village in Gorakhpur district where there were several well-to-do zamindars.²⁵ Tiled roofs, a sign of relative prosperity, are described as being destroyed, and in some cases the itemisation of goods or price of goods looted or destroyed by the police suggest the same thing.²⁶ In one nationalist account of molestation of the women of village Parsa in Gorakhpur it is found necessary to stress that "needless to say all these women were of well-known families."²⁷

23. Chit Baragaon was the chief of a block of seven villages in which Bais Rajputs owned 51 per cent of the total area in 1909, D.G.Ghazipur, p.179.

24. A.Moin Zaidi, op.cit.

25. Ibid. In an incident at Raje Sultanpur, Fyzabad where an S.I. was bayoneted to death by an ex-soldier, Jamna Ahir, the government indicted the persons responsible as "all local inhabitants of some substance". FRUP I, September 1942.

26. A.Moin Zaidi, op.cit., R.S.Vidyarthi, op.cit., passim, G.Sahai, op.cit., p.224.

27. Shriram, op.cit., p.9.

But the lowest castes and the agricultural labourers did also participate in the movement even though their proportional representation has not been worked out. The Government when it wanted to emphasise the lawlessness unleashed by the movement tended to highlight the participation of particular castes whom they identified as always a law and order problem and ^{who were} now allowed their head.²⁸

Stephen Henningham concludes that the movement drew a response from all sections but in the form of "two interacting insurgencies", the elite nationalist uprising of the high caste rich peasants and small landlords and the subaltern rebellion of the poor and low caste. The elite uprising stimulated the poor to join in attacks on government buildings and property, and they joined partly in the hope of acquiring provisions.²⁹ Of the two instances, however, which he cites to illustrate this, the report of the incident in Begusarai, Monghyr clearly says: "Of the villagers the Bhumihars and the poor labourers took prominent part in the loot."³⁰ The Bhumihars in Bihar as in East U.P. are one of the

28. Of Ghazipur, it was reported that "much of the trouble is due to local Ahirs who have distinct criminal tendencies." Govt. of U.P., Confidential Dept. to Home Department, Telegram, 20 August 1942, File XV-50, C.O.B.

29. Stephen Henningham, "Quit India in Bihar and the East United Provinces: The Dual Revolt," in R. Guha, (ed.), Subaltern Studies, II, Delhi, 1983, p. 137.

30. Ibid., pp. 151-152.

high caste landholding communities. Were there in fact two insurgencies with two different perceptions - the one of "nationalist protest" and the other a "rebellion of desperation".³¹ Firstly, in the crowd attacks on thanas and stations one cannot distinguish the two motivations.³² Can one, therefore, deprive some participants of a nationalist feeling? Secondly, if looting is what distinguishes the two rebellions then the looting of Government property was not something which in eastern U.P. was engaged in only by the poorest and the lowest. In some cases, as is usual to many incidents the poor came to scavenge after the bulk had been looted by a more socially diverse mob. In one of the cases associated with the looting of the seed godown at Mohammadabad, Ghazipur, of the 9 sentenced, 4 were Pandeys (Brahmans)

31. Stephen Henningham, Peasant Movements in Colonial India: North Bihar 1917-1942, Canberra 1982, p.181.

32. There are enough instances which demonstrate the participation of those of the lowest castes, for instance two Binds, in the cutting of roads and culverts which could bring no hope of loot. See Ordinance Case Rule 35, D.I.R., 30-9-42, Basta 1942-43, Nandganj, Ghazipur Collectorate Criminal Record Room; also Case u/35(1)b read with rule 121. D.I.R. of 13-10-1942 in which Aklu Kallu, Chingi, Jeodhan, Naresh, Lotan, all names without caste suffixes, which suggests low status, came to dig up a culvert shouting Mahatama Gandhi ki jai Basta 1942-43, Nandganj, Ghazipur, Ibid. The Gazetteer describes the Binds as an aboriginal tribe who depended on agricultural and general labour for a livelihood, D.G.Ghazipur, 1909, p.88.

one an Ahir, one Mali, one Mallah, one Muslim and one Chamar.³³ In the same crowd one Nathu Pande characterised as a "respectable Brahman" was accused of carrying away 30-40 bags of grain.³⁴ One participant recalls how in the looting of sugar from a goods wagon at Belthara some zamindars had brought along boats to carry it away over flooded tract.³⁵ Moreover the very fact that looting did not carry over to the grain stores of the zamindars and the traders shows that the "rebellion of desperation," if it was only this, did not operate with a high degree of autonomy. The act of plunder kept within the outer limits of a "legitimacy" defined by the anti-imperialist impetus of the movement.^{35a} However,

33. Criminal Sessions Trial No. 85 (G) of 1943, Ghazipur Sessions Court Record Room.

34. Ordinance Case of 1942, Basta Ordinance Session Trial 1942, Ghazipur Sessions Court Record Room. A zamindar's karinda was found in possession of two muskets and a bayonet looted from the police station at Qasimabad, Ghazipur, FRUP II, September 1942, N.A.I. At Nandganj in the home of Bhola Singh, an absconding Congress man and his brother (who was a member of the District War Committee, a gun licensee and held ^{what} sanads from D.M.s!) D.I.G. Waddell recovered ^{some of a} sub-Inspector's private property, a looted railway lamp, a crowbar and a picture of Bhagat Singh. Waddell, op.cit.

35. Interview, Paras Nath Mishra.

35a. See pages 233-237 of this chapter.

in certain incidents of dacoity which took place when the movement was over (but policing still inoperative) a certain degree of independent free-booting now directed against private property seems to have begun. In this the poor were probably more prominent.^{35b}

The other section of village and small town society which participated in the movement were the traders, the shopkeepers and the merchants. The Intelligence Bureau noted that a very large number of petty tradesmen, merchants and moneylenders had provided the bulk of the funds used by the Congress in the early stages of the movement. This willingness to subscribe was put down to their sympathy with the Congress Party's nationalist aspirations but also to their desire to stay on the right side of the party which they thought was about to seize political power.³⁶ Another reason which prompted the trading classes to demonstrate support for the movement was the fact that the Congress was the authority which they looked to for the protection of their property once the existing structure of law and order had been attacked.³⁷ In Ballia town the Congress

35b. See pages 239-242 in this chapter.

36. Note by Intelligence Bureau, Home Deptt., 28 February 1944, Document No.404, The Transfer of Power, Vol. IV, London, 1974, 765-767.

37. S. Henningham in R. Guha (ed.), op. cit., p. 152; Govind Sahai, op. cit., p. 223. In Bihia, near Arrah in Bihar a students meeting was held in which merchants and traders were also present. The godown which was now under the people's authority also held their stocks. Goondas it was reported wanted to loot the godown

leaders who were released from jail were given generous subscriptions of money with which to begin their "government."³⁸ According to one story current then, Chittu Pandey had asked the shopkeepers of Ballia to feed the crowds in town freely that day to prevent looting.³⁹ The traders and shopkeepers do seem to have demonstrated their support for the movement by chipping into feed the mob which collected on particular missions of "takeover".⁴⁰ In some cases the merchants themselves were Congress leaders and acted accordingly. In Azamgarh B. Radha Raman a merchant, and in fact a member of the Notified Area Committee, had taken part in the attack on the Notified Area and his house was set on fire in the subsequent reprisals.⁴¹ In the repression of the movement the merchant and trading community of this area were punished

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37. (contd...)
but on the appeal of Ramadhar Mishr of the D.C.C. students chased away the goondas and gave the merchants their goods. D.Vyas, op.cit., p.137.
38. B.Mitra and P.Chakarborty (eds.), Rebel India, Calcutta, 1946, p.80.
39. Interview, Tarkeshwar Pandey, 7 June 1984, Varanasi.
40. Ganga Sahu, a merchant of Macchhlisahar, Jaunpur gave water to those who had hoisted the flag on the thana. Sriram, op.cit., p.82.
41. R.H.Niblett, op.cit., p.41.

by the levying of collective fines⁴² and a blind eye was turned to indiscriminate looting by the police and troops who found in shopkeepers a lucrative target.⁴³

The other feature which has to be examined is the question of whether the Muslims stayed aloof from the movement. The Home Member claimed in the Legislative Assembly that the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes had stayed aloof from the movement but in this he was referring to them as special interest 'blocks'.⁴⁴ The so-called scheduled castes, as is clear from the caste composition of the crowd, certainly participated. As for the Muslims, one reason why the Congress leadership had been hesistant about launching a movement was the

42. In Ballia town heavy fines were imposed on businessmen which it was noted were paid up promptly. A. Moin Zaidi, op.cit., pp. 111-13; Lane in Hunt and Harrison, op.cit., p. 202. Apparently Chittu Pande had advised the mahajans to pay up fines promptly to prevent looting by the troops, Interview, Tarkeshwar Pandey, 7 June 1984, Varanasi.

43. Lachhmi Ram and Shamuram, businessman of village Balopore in Ghazipur complained that on the 15 of September 1943 (probably 1942) they had been looted by a posse of soldiers, constables and chaukidars "under the belief that the higher authorities will take no notice... under the disturbed conditions prevailing". File No. 3/51/42, Home Poll., N.A.I. R.S. Vidyarthi, op.cit., p. 263; G. Sahai, op.cit., p. 226.

44. Reginald Maxwell, Home Member, Legislative Assembly Debates, 1942, Vol. III, p. 148.

fear of a communal conflagration. The Government had also feared that a movement might accentuate communal tension.⁴⁵ Muslim names do figure in the names of those sentenced for activity in 1942 both in the attacks on thanas and in the names of looters.⁴⁶ Nationalist reports of the movement insist they participated.⁴⁷ However, in the sensibilities of the leadership as well as of the officials there was a certain demarcation. There seems to have been a special need felt to make sure that Muslim were not coerced into joining the movement. Niblett, the collector of Azamgarh, said that in a set of instructions found people were advised not to interfere with the Muslim population.⁴⁸

45. Hallet to Linlithgow, 2 July 1942, The Transfer of Power, Vol. II, London, 1971, No.216, p.304.

46. For instance Husain Khan and Dilawar Jolaha were convicted for taking part in the attack on thana Mohammedabad, Ghazipur and of looting. Sessions Trial No. 82 (G) of 1943, Basta Ordinance Case 1944, Ghazipur Sessions Court Record Room. One Abdul Sattar was among those convicted for looting the seed store at the same place. Criminal Sessions Trial No. 85(G) of 1943, Ibid. Hanif Darzi died of bullet wounds in the attack on Madhuban thana, S.S.S. Many other examples can be cited from the lists in the S.S.S. series and in the Who's Who of Freedom Fighters, Varanasi Division.

47. Govind Sahai, said the Muslim masses participated in east U.P., Purnea especially and Bihar in general, Chittagong and Sachar, op.cit., p.24. A.M.Zaidi, op.cit., p.38.

48. The other injunction was that rents were to be paid to the zamindars provided they did not actively oppose the movement, Loc.cit., S.Henningham, in R.Guha (ed.), op.cit., p.161.

The Government was so amazed at the absence of communal tension in the year 1942 that the Intelligence Bureau found it necessary to prepare a special note on the subject. The note reported the widespread belief that Gandhi and other Congress leaders had issued special instructions that no attempt be made to coerce Muslims into participating but that no proof of such instructions had been found.⁴⁹ The note concluded that "Hindu restraint" had been largely responsible for the absence of communal strife.⁵⁰

One of the main organisers in Ghazipur, Baldau Pandey, recalls that having established their sway over Saidpur, they had told the Deputy Collector to send four policemen to Anrihar Railway station where some Muslims were staying to make sure that looting did not start there. Later Baldau Pandey escorted these Muslims back to Jaunpur using the train which was standing there and which used to run at the command of the Congress.⁵¹

The incident reflects a certain worry about the safety of these Muslims and concern that any attack on them might lead to communal violence. In one instance the

49. File No. 5/3/43, 1943, Home Poll. (I), N.A.I. See also FRUP II, August 1942.

50. Ibid.

51. Interview, Baldau Pandey, Ghazipur, 26 June 1984.

Muslim SHO. of Ubhaon, Ballia was accused of having chosen to skulk in Muslim villages around his thana instead of checking out reports of trouble elsewhere.⁵² D.I.G. of police, Waddell, after an incident of firing told some Muslims to look for the wounded and requisitioned some dal and wheat from a Muslim mahajan.⁵³ This evidence could suggest a certain distance from the events of 1942, even so the number of Muslim names in the list of participants cannot be overlooked. This, however, the Government eventually chose to ignore because in its determination to assert that the Muslim community had stood aloof⁵⁴ it later exempted all Muslims from collective fines.⁵⁵

One notable absence from the list of participants which in a way reflects the nature of the movement is that of women. The milling around of mobs, the attack on thanas, post offices etc. were probably not activities considered suitable for women. In the initial stages of the movement in the larger towns girl students had taken part in processions, but bar the incident of the prostitute who

52. Prosecution case against Sub-Inspector Murtaza Husain S.O., P.S. Ubhaon, op.cit.

53. Waddell, Congress Rebellion Range E., op.cit.

54. FRUP II, August 1942.

55. U.P.A.R. 1942. Baldu Pandey also asserted that the Muslims had participated in the movement but that they were let off more lightly "because the British favoured them more." Interview, op.cit.

had put the flag on thana Saidpur⁵⁶ one has not come across other incidents in these districts.

In the cow-protection movement of 1893 which had involved the rural population of this region in a large way peasant women were probably won over to the movement through the collection of chutki (a handful of grain) as a contribution from them every day.⁵⁷ The necessity of involving women and the lower castes in the development of a more "purist" Hindu consciousness has yet to be evaluated for they were always susceptible to the charm of the more eclectic cults of the pirs.⁵⁸

In the national movement it was made acceptable for women to involve themselves in public activity by raising this participation to the level of religious piety and social reform. Hence the prabhat pheris which combined devotional with nationalist songs, the devotional acclaiming of nationalist leaders by women

56. Waddell, Congress Rebellion Range E. Obviously she operated outside the sphere of conduct held appropriate for other women.
57. See Dupernex's report on the Gaurakshini Sabha in Azamgarh, 7 July 1893, File No.461 B, Serial No.44, Home Public, November 1893, N.A.I.
58. See W.Crooke, The Popular Religion and Folk Lore of Northern India, 1893, reprint, Delhi, 1968, Vol.I, pp.201-8, for the participation of Hindus and Muslims in ceremonies venerating the pirs, in particular, the cult of the panj pir so popular at one time in Gorakhpur and Benares divisions; also M.Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims, London, 1967, p.13. This idea was suggested by an admonitory reference to the practise of worshipping graves (of holy men) in a caste journal Halwai-Vaishya Sanrakshak, November 1917, p.104, K.N.P.S.

with tilak and aarti, and the use of women picketeers in liquor and ganja shops. They were also used to build up pressure on men to participate in the movement or to bridge the distance between Indian officials and the movement.⁵⁹ In other words it was seemly for women to participate in certain activities but not perhaps in the kind of melees which characterised this movement.

Of course in the aftermath of the movement it was very often the women who were left behind to protect property while the men fled for fear of harsher retribution at the hands of the troops. "The males deserted the villages," writes one historian, describing reprisals around an aerodrome in Ghazipur, "leaving a few females behind".⁶⁰ And these females were sometimes beaten up and molested.⁶¹

59. "It is a fact that many loyal officials - including police officers-have in consequence suffered more from taunts and abuses from their female relatives than from any other source", wrote one Inspector General of Police after a tour of U.P. in July-August 1930 during the Civil Disobedience movement. File No.249/1930 and k.w. Home Poll., N.A.I. Many of Premchand's stores have this theme as their subject.

60. A. Moin Zaidi, op.cit., p.113.

61. R.S.Vidyarthi, op.cit., p.264 for molestation of women in Gorakhpur district, p.238 for an incident in Sherpur Kalan, Ghazipur. Sriram, op.cit., p.61.

Nature of Crowd Activity

Turning now to the nature of crowd activity it is proposed to examine this in terms of the target of attack and the way in which it was attacked. It is argued that the target was clear but the nature of the alternative was not. Therefore, the method of capture of power took the form of the replacement of the symbols of the Raj with the symbols of nationalism - the tricolour, the Gandhi cap and the name of Gandhi - but there was a fundamental ambivalence about the form in which alternative institutions of power were to be built up and to what ends they were to be directed. Symbolic gestures were made expressing the superior moral authority of a nationalist government based on popular support. This is what is stressed in nationalist accounts of "Swaraj government". But since this remained at the symbolic level and could not direct popular support into the organisation of alternative institutions of power, parallel government in eastern U.P. was ephemeral and rapidly lost substance.⁶² Once this government could not really guarantee some protection to life and property whether from the extortion of officials, or from the poor

62. Jayaprakash Narayan in his pamphlet, ABC of Dislocation pointed out that the people had accomplished the destruction of the civil authority of the "usurper power" but they did not know how to create their own power and resist the conquest of the liberated areas. File No. 3/6/43, Home Poll. (I), N.A.I.

and desperate, or from the professional dacoit, ^{then} this gesture of power probably lost its conviction for the upper strata of rural society and for the commercial classes. Then the "normalcy" of the law and order structure of Advisor Government might even have been preferred without in any way abandoning an attachment to Congress which, it was perceived, was bound in any future settlement with the Raj to play again a dominating role.

The target of crowd action in 1942 was every vestige of the administration of the Raj - the Post Offices, Railway Stations and thanas.

The administration was to be incapacitated by the destruction of communications and then itself demolished. The question then is this - what element of the old administrative structure whether in the form of buildings or organisation was to be preserved for the use of Congress Raj? Or was the intention to destroy the old structure entirely and substitute not only the guiding force but an entirely new system? There were cases in which the idea expressed was only that of forcing the police or the patwari to accept the authority of the Congress over their functioning. For instance one account of the activities of Baldau Pandey, in Saidpur, suggests that government officials including the railway men had started taking their orders from

Congress and the trains began to be used for the purposes of the movement.⁶³ On the other hand the drive to completely destroy all the signposts of government and to actually dismiss officials seems to be a somewhat stronger impulse. Thus when police stations were attacked they were often burnt and in one case the papers of the station were specially searched out for burning.⁶⁴ Village records were snatched from patwaris and burnt.⁶⁵ In some cases the officials were dismissed and a panchayat set up in ^{their} place.⁶⁶ In Bansdih tahsil, Ballia, the crowd after taking possession of the tahsil appointed their own tahsildar.⁶⁷ In Ghosi-Basantpur in Gorakhpur where the

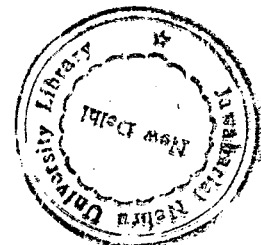
63. Brahmendra Sharma, "Commissioner ko Angootha Dikhaya," Hindi Prabha, October 1976, p.110. According to Baldau Pandey their sway lasted for about eight days. Interview, op.cit.

64. The Station Officer of Garwar, Ballia, had removed the police records from the thana in apprehension of an attack and kept them at the house of one Girja Singh. The mob burnt the thana and then made a point of burning the records as well. Precis of the case against Bans Gopal Singh, S.O., Garwar, Ballia. A typed copy of this was given to me by Shri Patas Nath Mishra.

65. S.S.S., Vol.35, Gorakhpur, p.25.

66. Ibid.

67. According to A.M.Zaidi this was a local Congressman, op.cit., p.201. *Gajadhar Sharma*



agitation suddenly escalated on 22 August Ayodhya Prasad and Ram Vriksh Kunwar led a band of workers who began to snatch away chaukidars uniforms and to arrest patwaris. Patwaris and chaukidars were hedged around by a circle of crossed lathis and made to accompany the procession. When the procession reached a village they were welcomed by the inhabitants and a new panchayat was set up.⁶⁸

Small branch post offices were also destroyed even though, as the government pointed out, this did not seriously inconvenience the administration.⁶⁹ In village Bahuara in the Doaba area of Ballia it was decided to lay ambush to the steamer which ran from Patna to Buxar and of which one station lay nearby. A passenger on the steamer, who suggested that the steamer should not be broken up but merely prevented from going ahead, was not heeded and those who had volunteered for this enterprise insisted on breaking it up.⁷⁰

The History of Parallel Government in the National Movement and Its Character in 1942

The concept of parallel authority had been expressed in various ways and to various ends in the

68. S.S.S. Vol.35, Gorakhpur, p.25.

69. Some Facts About the Disturbances in India, 1942-43, Government of India, 1943, pp.8-9.

70. D.Vyas, op.cit., p.160.

national movement. It had on occasion taken the form of a boycott of existing administration, a rejection of its legitimacy, and even on occasion expressed the idea of a substitution of its authority.

Panchayat power as it had been used in agrarian movements and when these movements had flowed towards the nationalist programme, had developed from the traditional powers of the caste councils and employed these powers to different ends. The traditional panchayats had always been more influential among the lower castes. But in the national movement the idea of the panchayat was meant to express the common purpose of peasants of all castes. In the Kisan Sabha movement in Oudh, 1920-21, the panchayats had included representatives sent by various castes for the purposes of coming to decisions about the peasant movement.⁷¹

The Congress also extended the idea of the panchayat to suggest that under Swaraj panchayats would control the functioning of chāukidar, patwari and thanedar in a decentralised kind of way and with real authority. In the sphere of the dispensing of justice there was often a tendency to suggest that panchayats might or ought to replace the courts. Traditionally panchayats particularly

71. Peasants were organised in castes and then converged through panchayats at rallies. M.H.S. Siddiqi, op. cit., pp. 214-15.

among the lower castes had arbitrated on questions of caste norms and "morality". These panchayats depended on a process of achieving consensus within the caste rather than on an impersonal code which was to be enforced. Nationalism extolled this aspect of functioning as giving a justice which was speedier and cheaper, and most important a justice which brought a greater harmony in contrast to the destructive feuding which the courts were supposed to be encouraging.⁷² The panchayats set up in the course of the various national movements, like the traditional panchayats, did not always distinguish between the civil and the criminal sphere or the sphere of what was considered morality. They could organise the social boycott of a zamindar, or an official, or deal with theft, adultery, drunkenness etc. The way in which these panchayats dispensed

72. The Kisan Sabha which a group of nationalists in Allahabad were trying to build up from 1917 formulated a petition to the Secretary of State in 1918 that panchayats be immediately established in villages to decide civil suits up to Rs.500/- and all non-cognizable criminal cases. In a circular published in August 1919 one of the objects of the association was put as the establishment of panchayats to decide all quarrels among agriculturists. In the activities of the agents of the Sabha in Rasra, Ballia, in October 1919 they were said to have told cultivators to settle all law disputes by panchayats and that the association could undo the proceedings of the court of law. (This of course could not be conducive to social harmony as it was probably oriented to the issue of ejectments by legal process). File No.49/January 1920, Home Poll. NAI. In February 1921 when Gandhi issued instructions to the peasants of U.P. one of these was 'we should not resort to law courts but should have all disputes settled by private arbitration,' Collected Works of Mahatana Gandhi, Vol.XIX Ahmedabad, 1966, pp.419-20.

justice was not only through the levying of fines but also through commonly recognised forms of social boycott or social humiliation - for instance by blackening a culprit's face or making him ride a donkey backwards. In these panchayats Congressmen were sometimes, though not always, recognised as an arbitrating authority. The recognition of this right to arbitrate was to be of immense importance in establishing a legitimacy for Congress in the mediation of relations between peasants, zamindars and the Government.⁷³

In the flux of expectations aroused by the election campaign of 1936 the idea of an authority parallel to that of government and substitutive of it was revived again. On the one hand it was thought that now Congress "courts" could substitute for police and courts, on the other (which was a somewhat different proposition), that officials must now respond to pressure and direction from local Congressmen representing the masses. Elections had aroused the hopes of the tenantry and this conception of dual authority in both its manifestations was operating in the context of zamindar-tenant tension. "Congress Raj" was generally taken ^{by} tenants to mean that eviction should now be resisted on any ground, that whatever land

73. See Chapter I.

was now occupied was theirs⁷⁴ and that only that much rent need be paid as could be "spared" or none at all.⁷⁵ When the Ministry assumed power this kind of phenomenon constituted a serious embarrassment to it. The two ideas which could flow together when the Congress had not accepted office now had to be distinguished, and it had to be made clear that the function of the party organisation was not to substitute for the official machinery but to channel upwards for the consideration of the Ministry popular opinion and local grievance. The policies then formulated by the Ministry would be put into execution by the official machinery. Furthermore, it was also evident that this machine could not operate with any degree of efficiency if local Congressmen put pressure on the local administration in response to local issues and local tensions without reference to the policy framework within which the Ministry was working.

(Though of course such pressures did in fact influence the making of policy). The problem was complicated because this phenomenon of "parallelism" was taking place in the context of hopes generated on the matter of agrarian reform. It was, therefore, not simply a question of

74. See Chapter I.

75. FRUP I, June 1936; P.A.I. 20 March 1937; FRUP I, March 1937; Haig to Linlithgow, 23 August 1937, Haig Mss. Eur. F 115/179.

impairing official efficiency and bureaucratic morale. "Parallel government" was also arousing anxiety of the small zamindar whom the Congress was anxious to further incorporate into its camp. Many small zamindars who had not voted for the Congress were after the elections coming over to the Congress and the Congress did not want to alienate them.⁷⁶

The phenomenon of "parallel government" therefore, had to be checked and steps were taken to do this starting with the circulars of late 1937 from the Chief Secretary and from the Secretary of the U.P.P.C.C. advocating better relations between Congress and the administration⁷⁷ and then by tighter administration culminating, in mid-1939, with the more active attempts of the Congress organisation under Nehru's presidency

76. U.P.Zamindars Conference, Pioneer, 30 October 1937 File No.C-6/1938, A.I.C.C. Papers, N.M.M.L.

77. On 10 November Chief Secretary Gwynne issued a circular, prepared under the instructions of the Ministry, asking District Magistrates to strive to establish relations of mutual confidence with district leaders of the Congress in the interests of a more efficient administration. Subsequently Seth Damodar Swarup, Secretary U.P.P.C.C., issued a circular to D.C.C.s directing that so long as representatives of Congress formed the government the Congress organisation and the administration had to work as allies. Grievances should be handled by the appropriate authorities and in case of dissatisfaction reference could be made to these authorities,

and failing that, to the P.C.C. Haig Mss. Eur. F.115/12. I owe the ideas developed in pp226-227. to R.S.Vasudevan "Strategies in the Congress", op.cit.

to curb such activity.⁷⁸ In U.P. the effort to curb such activity through the enforcement of party discipline did not entirely succeed⁷⁹ which in fact was part of the reason for the party's continued popularity with the peasantry.

An attempt "from above" to institutionalise some degree of devolution of power to supplant the administration in village affairs came to very little. The Rural Development Board which the Governor suspected was being employed as a breeding ground for political propoganda was controlled by instructions issued by the Ministry that the staff must conform to the conduct rules laid down for government servants and must not participate in politics.⁸⁰ The Governor it is true had had some difficulty in getting the Ministry to issue these instructions and for this compromise the Ministry was severely criticised in the U.P.P.C.C.⁸¹ A similar process is noticeable on

78. This can be observed in the pulling up of local agitators by the party and in the public support given to the administrators by ministers on issues of agrarian and labour unrest. R.S.Vasudevan, Chapter 2, op.cit.

79. See Radhika Singha, "Office Acceptance and Parallel Government - Two Styles of Political Mobilisation: Gorakhpur 1937-39" M.Phil Seminar, unpublished, for the case of Shibbanlal Saxena's activities in Gorakhpur.

80. Haig to Linlithgow, 9 February 1938; Haig Mss. Eur. F.115/176.

81. Haig to Linlithgow, 9 March 1938, ibid.

the issue of powers to be given to panchayats. The original conception was that these would control chaukidars, enlist civic guards, and that there would also be judicial panchayats.⁸² But in their final form the proposals reduced the powers given to a minimum.⁸³

On the whole the Congress Ministry crystallised a certain strategy of winning power which was oriented to the winning of effective legislative authority over the administration rather than creating new institutions for the exercise of executive and judicial powers. This did not mean that this process of winning power was merely a constitutional exercise. It was a question also of demonstrating a willingness to undertake a certain measure of agrarian reform and the U.P. Ministry did so. In this period the administration was impressed with a new reality - that of Congress as the successor power. This was reflected in the ease with which sometimes the Congress was able to "take-over" in 1942. In some cases the local officials had come to arrangements with the local Congress leaders beforehand or policemen had shown hesitancy in taking strong action against Congressmen.⁸⁴

82. Pioneer, 17 October 1938, pp. 1, 15.

83. Haig's "Appreciation of the Existing Situation," 19 December 1938, Linlithgow Mss. Eur. F. 125/101.

84. At Garwar, Ballia, the S.O. had avoided taking any action himself against Congressmen, Precise of case against S.O. Bans Gopal Singh, op. cit.

In the period after resignation the unrepresentative character of the Advisory regime was criticised as encouraging bureaucratic unresponsiveness. To highlight this Nehru in some of his speeches seems to have taken up again the promise of greater powers for the panchayats in the sphere of control of the administration:

Who is the panch these days? You cannot do anything against them. Leave them alone. You cannot even remove your petty officials like tehsildars and thanedar... But if the officers are elected by you they will not do anything wrong for fear of being removed from office. ⁸⁵

In the movement of 1942 the destruction of government agencies and the sabotage of communications set up ideal conditions for the development of decentralised executive and judicial authority but in the short time that they functioned the panchayats were used to express symbolically the moment of Congress victory but did not go on to develop as organs which could govern.

The dispossession of the Raj in August 1942 and the process of its re-establishment was very prominently a matter of symbols enhanced by the atmosphere of "spectacle" - tamasha. The crowd of 1942 was composed not only of participants but also of spectators - what one Station House Officer admitted were only tamashayees

85. S.W.J.N., Vol. 11, p. 151. See also speech at Bharwari, Gorakhpur, 3 October 1940, ibid., p. 148.

who were not concerned with the actual looting and burning.⁸⁶ This was the audience on whom the transfer of power had to be impressed. Accounts of the movement sometimes give the impression of a kind of carnival atmosphere in which the solidarity of the crowd in this nationalist enterprise is marked by rounds of refreshments, sometimes the prodigious splurging of booty, sometimes provided for by local mahajans. The crowd which had looted sugar from a goods train at Belthara Railway Station met up at Basti village with the crowd which had just burnt the police outpost and post office at Rampur, Azamgarh. With the local potters donating 36 pots to make sherbet and the local villagers distributing chana the crowd refreshed itself and then made off for Madhuban thana.⁸⁷ Railway track was uprooted openly and ^{by} large gangs shouting "Gandhiji ki jai". News of the hoisting of the tricolour on thanas and tahsil buildings had a marked effect on surrounding areas.⁸⁸ The fluttering of the national flag on ekkas

86. Criminal Sessions Trial No.63 (G) of 1944, Basta Ordinance Case 1944, Ghazipur Sessions Court Record Room.

87. Shriram, op.cit., p.54. At Danapur, Benares, prior arrangements were made for feeding the crowd. Kamta Prasad Papers, op.cit.

88. News of the national flag flying on Bairia thana had stirred the whole Doaba. D. Vyas, p.161.

and tongas had always been one indication of the extent to which the poor of a particular town sympathised with the Congress, as one I.G. of police had remarked in Kanpur on a tour during the Civil Disobedience movement.⁸⁹ On the 17th of August 1942 at Rajwari, Benares D.I.G. Waddell observed boats carrying Congress flags on the Ganges.⁹⁰

The chaukidars surrounded by mobs were made to take off their belts, which were the signs of their official power;⁹¹ the patwaris were divested of their papers and the police were made to take off their red turbans, wear Gandhi caps, shout Gandhiji ki jai,⁹² and carry Congress flags at the head of the crowd.

If the police surrendered to Swaraj authority, they were publicly assured of their safety in one case,⁹³ in another case they were dismissed but with three

89. He noted that in Kanpur in mid-1930 nearly all ekkas and tongas carried national flags. File No.2, 49/1930 and k.w., Home Poll., N.A.I.

90. Waddell, op.cit.

91. S.S.S., Vol.35, Zila Gorakhpur, p.24.

92. Some facts about the Disturbances in India, 1942-43 op.cit., pp.2-3. When the people surrounded Bairia thana the S.O. to signify capitulation wore a Gandhi cap and shouted slogans with the public. B.Mitra and P.Chakraborty, op.cit., p.78. He also hoisted the national flag over the thana. D.Vyas, op.cit., p.159.

93. Tarwa thana, Azamgarh, Sriram, op.cit., p.58.

months salary.⁹⁴ In all cases where policemen were lynched it was because they had fired on the crowd at some point⁹⁵ - in one case in Fyzabad, however, it was simply because the constable had dared to put a speaker under arrest.⁹⁶ The bodies then were usually thrown onto the police station and burnt.

Shifting now from the symbolic gesture to the actual exercise of authority what was the perception within which the crowd and the leadership operated? The first point is that it was generally accepted that Gandhi's injunction of non-violence meant that loss of life was to be avoided.⁹⁷ As pointed out this held so long as the police did not demonstrate serious resistance. The second point is that the target of attack was to be limited to the government - zamindars were to be paid their rent⁹⁸ and private property was to be protected.

94. Bansdih tahsil and thana, Ballia, ibid., p.70.
Also D.Vyas, op.cit., p.146.

95. For instance at thanas Saadat and Danapur.

96. FRUP I, Appendix I-A, August 1942.

97. FRUP II, August 1942.

98. Niblett, loc.cit., Hemmingham in R.Guha (ed.), op.cit., p.161.

There were some instances of the looting of private property.⁹⁹ In Ballia the house of an Honorary Magistrate and a pharmaceutical dispensary, both suspected of "loyalist" sympathies were looted as also the houses of some officials.¹⁰⁰ At the time when this happened Chittu Pande, the D.C.C. President, had been released from jail to take charge of the town and did not seem to have been able to stop this from happening.¹⁰¹ According to Govind Sahai this was done by a section which was dissatisfied with what they felt was a "timid policy".¹⁰² The only instance of an attack on^a zamindari estate is the loot of the estate at Kajha, Azamgarh, which belonged to two English women, the Sturmer sisters, resident in England. One nationalist account justifies the incident on the grounds that the management's oppression against the tenants broke the endurance of the crowd.¹⁰³ The estate owed its origin to sale for

99. FRUP II, October 1942.

100. FRUP II, October 1942. Also Memorial of Mirza Rahmat Ali to Governor, U.P., 7 November 1942, File No. 153, Serial No. 7, C.O.B.

101. "A party who could not be contacted by the Congress leaders, in the meantime raided the houses of some of the magistrates and the police outposts" and "ruined the..." B. Mitra and P. Chakraborty (ed.), op.cit., p. 80.

102. G. Sahai, op.cit., p. 223.

103. Shriram, op.cit., p. 68.

for default of revenue in the early nineteenth century and the former zamindars, Singhel Rajputs, had continued in possession as a turbulent body of tenants always resenting their dispossession.¹⁰⁴

In some cases liquor and ganja shops were also attacked, either because they were a source of excise revenue for the government, or because they had been picketed in earlier nationalist movements. The crowd which advanced on Madhuban thana in Azamgarh, destroyed a liquor and tari shop on the way and also released the cattle from a cattle pound. A tari shop was also destroyed near Amila and another near Sagri in the same district.¹⁰⁵

In one sense these targets could be reconciled with their having some sort of association with the Government whose property the leadership had to allow as a permissible target of plunder.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless in many cases a distinction was made between official

104. S.R. Azamgarh, 1881, pp.62-63, para 193.

105. S.S.S. Azamgarh, y, va, gya.

106. Henningham quotes a report of a sub-divisional office of Begusarai, Bihar, who said that to keep a hold on the movement the younger section of the Congress began to support the action of the looters and even to join. Henningham, op.cit., p.182.

property and the private possessions of the officials. A revolver taken away in the raid on Tirwa thana, Azamgarh was returned when it was found that it was the personal property of the Sub-Inspector.¹⁰⁷ In some cases the leaders made a deliberate attempt to disassociate their actions from the idea of loot. At Suremanpur Railway station, Thakur Bhup Narayan Singh threw the cash found there down a well so that no one could misinterpret their actions.¹⁰⁸ In Rampur chauki the crowds burnt all the records of the post office but the 25 money orders which had arrived that day were with the money given to the post master who was told to deliver them.¹⁰⁹

107. FRUP I, September 1942, Appendix I-A. At thana Garwar, Ballia, which was burnt on 21 August, the belongings of the staff were neither looted nor damaged. Case against S.O. Bans Gopal Singh, op.cit.

108. D.Vyas, op.cit., p.160. It was also reported that when the Congress took charge in Ballia it investigated the looting of the seed go-down, the railway goods shed and the steamer. Everyone who had shared the loot, came forward voluntarily (emphasis mine) and accepted his guilt and handed over the loot. B.Mitra and P.Chakraborty (eds.), op.cit., p.81. Also D.Vyas, p.147, G.Sahai, op.cit., p.224.

109. Shriram, op.cit., p.54.; S.S.S.Azamgarh, In Azamgarh Niblett noted that the mail in the interior kept running despite the disturbances, op.cit., p.37. It would seem that the vital importance of the money order in many a peasant household meant that the post man was one functionary who could not be dismissed.

The moral aura then which it was sought to radiate was this - that Congress Raj would deal fairly with those officials who submitted to their authority,¹¹⁰ that violence to person and plunder^{of} individual property was to be guarded against, and that under this new government there would be even greater security because of its greater popular support. This popular support would exert a moral influence and authority.

Events at Ballia offer some illustration of these hopes. With the destruction of communications the administration in Ballia was isolated. On the 15th of August the D.C.C. office was taken back from the police and a Congress Committee reconstituted. One of the first acts of this committee was to call for the opening of the bazaar which had been on hartal from the 10th. The bazaar opened - an index of the merchants' support. The District Magistrate began to negotiate now with the Congress leaders in jail but Radha Mohan Singh an influential Congressman refused to help unless powers were handed over unconditionally to the Congress. This

110. At Saidpur Bhitri, tehsil Ghazipur where the police had allowed the crowd to take over the thana and handed over their muskets the crowd restored the muskets later to them at their request. M.H.B. Nethersole, op.cit. At Tarwa thana, Azamgarh where the crowds had seized the guns of the constables, they were reassured of their safety and seen safely out of that locality. Sriram, op.cit., p.58. See also S.S.S.Azamgarh.

the D.M. faced with the prospect of threatening crowds pouring in from the countryside agreed to do on the 19th. One of the first acts of the Congress leaders was to proclaim that the public could feel assured about their safety.¹¹¹ The looting of the houses of an Honorary Magistrate and of the Munsiffs, Treasury Officers and the Magistrates in charge of recruiting on the same day, brought the "bazaar people and the citizens" to appeal to Congress on the 20th to exercise their influence and get the markets opened and protect the citizens from the hooligans.¹¹² The next day when information was received that about two or three hundred people were marching towards the city from the countryside the leaders went to persuade them to retire, which they did.¹¹³

Another incident in the district, which almost all nationalist accounts mention, is the case of a widow who came before the President of the Congress Mandal Committee at Reoti, which had taken over power, and complained that she had been robbed of certain ornaments. The police had failed to solve this crime but in

111. B.Mitra and P.Chakraborty (ed.), op.cit., p.80.
Sriram, op.cit., p.71.

112. Govind Sahai, op.cit., p.223.

113. Ibid., p.223.

"independent" Ballia, it is recounted, the culprits were traced and the ornaments recovered and the offenders vowed not to commit such crimes in the future.¹¹⁴

In fact, however, the parallel government was not able to ensure this security for the possessing classes in a sustained way. Perhaps it would be fairer to say that at the peak point of the movement the mixed composition of the crowd and the influence of the idea which had called it into existence was such that private property was not endangered. But as the reality of a situation in which the police had been immobilised without alternative institutions of sufficient strength began to sink in, incidents in which smaller gangs of people began to make private possessions the object of raids began to come to light. The reestablishment of government did not really check this because the police were now engaged in crushing out the movement and in carrying out reprisals. So in the months August, September and November 1942 dacoity figures for the province register an increase.¹¹⁵

114. B.Mitra and P.Chakraborty (eds.), op.cit., p.8. Sriram, op.cit., p.74.

115. In August and September 1942, when, according to government, the dacoity figure usually fell, the number now was double the average of the last ten years, U.P.A.R. 1942, Lucknow, 1943, p.43. Niblett reported that there was a crop of dacoities in Madhuban circle after September 1942 which he attributed to "the lawlessness of the times," op.cit., p.54.

Sessions Court records at Ghazipur detail a few such dacoities. An accounts officer reported that on the 19th of August on his way back to Benares from Ghazipur aerodrome his boat was looted twice near Zamania.¹¹⁶ Idris Kunjra, grain dealer, bringing grain from Buxar to Dharammapur by boat reported that he was looted by about 25 men shouting "Gandhiji ke jai".¹¹⁷ Significantly the people accused in this case are all Ahirs.¹¹⁸ A gang of about 50 raided the house of sonar in village Bhuarpur, Saidpur, armed with spears, gandasas and torches shouting "Mahatama Gandhiji ki jai" and took away cloth and ornaments. The Sonar found that the Saidpur thana had been shifted to the tahsil and when he went there the police refused to register a report because they were "literally overwhelmed by disturbances all over the area."¹¹⁹ In the night of 21-22 August 1942 a mob of 50-60 looted clothes, grain, ornaments and cash from the house of Ganesh Ram Bania in village Bhitri. The bania went to Saidpur thana but

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116. Criminal Sessions Trial No. 88, Basta Ordinance Case 1939-40/1943-45, Ghazipur Sessions Court Record Room.
117. The looting was begun by the Ahirs and then numbers swelled. Criminal Appeal No. 208 (G) of 1943, Basta 1942-43, Nandganj, Division III, Ghazipur Collectrate Criminal Record Room.
118. Ibid.
119. Case No. 25 u/395 I.P.C., Basta 1942-43, Saidpur, Ghazipur, Ghazipur Collectorate Criminal Record Room.

the police were busy suppressing the disturbances.¹²⁰ What is to be noted in these instances is that the targets of attack were now the commercial men and that there seemed to be an effort to legitimise the shifting of target by shouting "Gandhiji ki jai". In two cases the looters were Ahirs, usually tenant cultivators, not of the privileged high caste category, and do seem to have drawn to themselves the special attention of the government in the movement.¹²¹

In such a situation the merchants, who in any case were nervous about their safety even before the movement, probably felt even more threatened as ^{the} "moral" authority of the Congress began to wane. They were not in a position to organise retainers for self-defence as the zamindars were. On 22nd August on his way back to Ghazipur from "pacificatory" operations around Ghauspur aerodrome, Nethersole came across a long line of bullock carts laden with bags of grain - the bania who owned them was bringing them to Ghazipur for fear of looting. From what he had seen of road-side traffic, the disorders, he wrote, had the effect of bringing large quantities of hoarded grain from the rural areas into

120. Case No. 97 under 395 I.P.C. Basta 1942-43, Saidpur and Ghazipur, Ibid.

121. See Chapter I

the cities and "an unexpected solution of 'price control' might be in the offing."¹²² Murtaza Husain, the Station Officer of Ubhaon Ballia claimed that he had helped to disperse 'local miscreants' who had collected on 15th August, 1942/loot the Siar bazaar as well as the Post Office and seed store.¹²³

As the movement displayed itself as a losing cause, funds donated to Congressmen by the trading classes began to dry up.¹²⁴ Insecurity about their property must also have influenced this withdrawal.

Gail Omvedt makes the important observation that it was through successfully countering the dacoits who preyed on rich and poor alike that the Pratiya Sarkar of 1942 in Satara built up the confidence of the people in them as a centre of power

122. Nethersole, op.cit.

123. There is a suggestion here that it was the cowardice of the S.O. in doing anything about the attack and loot of the Belthava Road Railway Station which encouraged 'local miscreants' to think of looting the bazaar. Prosecution case against Murtaza Husain, op.cit., para 3. In the report of the situation in Begusarai, Bihar, in Henningham's article, there is a similar incident of a party of 300 who came to loot shops in the town. R. Guha (ed.) op.cit., p. 167.

124. Intelligence Bureau, 28 February, 1944, The Transfer of Power, Vol. IV, pp. 767-770. This does not mean however that their sympathy for the congress evaporated as well. Shopkeepers and merchant in Benares responded with emotional hartals and havans when Gandhi went on fast in February, 1943. A.P.S. 26th February, 1943, 5th March, 1943.

both against the police and the dacoits.¹²⁵ Here in eastern U.P. the parallel government was able to impose its conception of right action on the crowd during the moment of eruption, but failed to institutionalise this thereafter, which led to the swiftness of its collapse.

That August 1942 was ultimately a matter of symbols not institutions was also recognised by the government who made an attack on these symbols a crucial aspect of their "pacification". Police authority was re-established in dramatic ways. At Bairia four congressmen were flogged facing the Thana which they had wrecked. Here and at Sahatwar the police were established in the best house available in town.¹²⁶ "To wear a Gandhi cap was a crime in Ballia", says a nationalist account;¹²⁷ and this was not an exaggeration. Niblett, the D.M. of Azamgarh, found that his Superintendent of Police had issued an order that no one should wear a Gandhi cap and that the police and the civic guards in the city had been snatching these caps off the heads of many respectable people. On the 17th of August troops who saw a Congress flag flying over the Khaddar Bhandar at

125. Gail Omvedt, op.cit.

126. Nethersole, op.cit.

127. R.S. Vidyarthi, op.cit., p.262; Sriram, op.cit., p.80.

Sarai Rani took it down and set fire to the building. Earlier they had fired on a gathering which had shouted "Mahatama Gandhi ki jai".¹²⁸

If the movement had humiliated the lower officials the process of re-establishment humiliated the "respectable classes." One form of reprisal used was to round up goondas, or Dom gangs and use them to accompany police parties on raids and take part in the loot. The private property of Congressmen was not now given government protection, ^{just as} the loot of government property had been held permissible during the movement.¹²⁹ In Mau, Doms employed by the notified area office were brought to loot the house of Radha Raman Aggarwal, a merchant who had taken part in the movement.¹³⁰ In part this was due to the fact that at this time a good

128. Niblett, op.cit., pp. 39, 48 & 49. In Gorakhpur one Ramnarayan Rai was beaten for refusing to shout "Sarkar ki jai" instead of "Gandhiji ki jai" At Barhaj, Captain Moor with Pathan troops smashed a picture of Gandhi in a shop, went to the local Khadi Ashram, took down the tri-colour and tore it. D. Vyas, op.cit., pp. 128-134.

129. It was Police Raj now instead of Congress Raj. According to R.S. Vidyarthi, police and mukhia now used their opportunity to avenge enmity with Congressmen and to extort money. R.S. Vidyarthi, op.cit., pp. 247-248,

130. Niblett, op.cit., p. 41, para 18.

number of Pasis, another caste considered low, were enlisted in the Special Armed Constabulary and the "Criminal Tribes" panchayats were used for patrolling the railway lines.¹³¹ The outrage at being subjected to humiliation at such hands is reflected in nationalist accounts of the movement which tend to concentrate more on the saga of atrocities than on the movement itself.

It was not only through the aspect of repression that the Government sought to restore its authority but also through the restoration of its normal functions. "The sooner public services are restored, the sooner public confidence will be restored," wrote Nethersole; "I have just heard that the mail I brought from Benares to Ghazipur has had a very good effect."¹³² August 1942 was indeed a "war of nerves."¹³³

131. U.P.A.R. 1942, Lucknow, 1943, p.27, Zaidi says that the Special Constabulary were recruited "from criminals serving jail terms, or the undesirable elements in the population or the undesperately poor", op.cit., pp.31-33.

132. Nethersole, op.cit.

133. Ibid.

CONCLUSION

It now remains to assess the 1942 movement within the long term strategy of the Congress for the transfer of power. One important dimension to the development of this strategy was the relation between the nationalist leadership and peasant movements.

To my mind there has been some constriction in the way this relation has been examined, both for the purposes of determining the "popular" consciousness of the peasantry as well as for the long term strategy of the leadership, or if one prefers, "elite consciousness".

The first springs from the fact that popular consciousness is usually examined from data relating to a moment of crisis, a moment when the existing power structure is challenged. Breakdown is of course revealing, but without an understanding of the "normal", an understanding of the extraordinary cannot be satisfying. Most important, without a view of the long term one cannot assess the direction of change.¹ Power reversal does not

1. Without this long term perspective (which this effort also lacks) the application of the idea of "just price" to study crowd behaviour also fails to illuminate peasant ideology unless one knows what the prevailing norms about price fixation were. When peasant mobs looted hats demanding cheaper grain or cloth were they harking back to traditional expectations or responding to millenarian expectations generated by a sense of unique and total change? See Kapil Kumar, *op.cit.*, p.175, for an insufficiently worked on application of a "moral economy" in the context of peasant riots in 1921.

necessarily imply a drive towards ideological transformation. The slave revolts of the Roman Republic did not envisage an end to slavery but a reversal of roles.² In other words the process of ideological reformulation is sometimes missed out.³

Distinct typologies in terms of class relations and goals can emerge only from the long term. The "every-day" offers insight into the extent of solidarity or the extent of internal contradiction and thereby better explanations about the duration of movements, their ability to develop institutions of power and about the direction of change. Problems of power and of hegemony make it difficult to accept as a general rule the "primacy of the subaltern as the subject of historical and sociological enquiry" or an acknowledgement of the subaltern "as the maker of his own history and the architect of his own destiny."⁴

2. M.I. Finley, Ancient Sicily, London, 1979, p.141. Of course the act of reversal does itself challenge and change the nature of that power.

3. One example of this problem from R.Guha's most stimulating book on peasant insurgency can be seen in the discussion on the Santal insurgency of 1855. One finds that when the Santals look back to a golden age they see it as a time when they did not suffer from the "saheb's justice" but also as an age in which there had been no disputes about the land. Could one not infer then that there was not only a perception of "us", the tribals, against "them", (dikus and colonial state) but also of what was perceived as a deplorable change in the "us" category? Moreover, along with the anti-diku thrust has also to be assessed the irreversible impact of a "sanskritising" influence on tribal religion. R.Guha, Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India, Bombay, 1983, pp.291-98.

4. Ranajit Guha, "Preface" in Ranajit Guha (ed.) Subaltern Studies II, Delhi, 1983.

This sometimes begs the question of the actual "viability" of certain peasant movements, of their ability both ideologically and in terms of power to withstand the onslaught of state power.⁵ This of course should not direct attention away from the ways in which such pressure could modify the forms in which state power expressed itself.⁶

The usual consequence, however, of not giving sufficient weight to the power relations within a particular context is that the failure of a particular

5. In this context there is a rather puzzling indictment of a historian as having an elitist viewpoint for having argued that a peasant leader of the Aika movement of 1921-22 did not find it possible to organise in the face of repression. What Siddiqi had remarked on was that the level of organisation in this movement was lower than that of the Kisan Sabhas and this was responsible for its short life span. In support of his counter argument, Gyan Pandey has seen as significant that political resolutions began to be passed and that Madari Pasi tried to extend the movement to the petty zamindars. What this seems to suggest is that Madari Pasi, who had been making "liberal grants of land at 4 annas a head", (loc.cit., Kapil Kumar) was now being confronted with a certain reality at the level of local power relations as well as with the dangers of political isolation. This power reality he was unable to confront and the movement was crushed. If Congress had conciliated the petty zamindar "from above", Madari Pasi had been faced with the same inescapable power reality "from below". See M.H.S. Siddiqi, op.cit., p.207; Gyan Pandey, op.cit., pp.184-90; Kapil Kumar, op.cit., p.199.
6. See R.Guha for an interesting exposition of the way in which the colonial state evolved... to greater sophistication as a result of seismic peasant insurgency, op.cit., p.2.

movement is ascribed to the compromising nature of the leadership. The relationship between the leadership and the peasants tends to be examined around the themes of the betrayal of the peasant aspirations, or the "use" of the peasant movement in the interests not of their aspirations for social transformation but to the ends of "constitutional negotiations". Constitutionalism and association with the peasant movement are seen as the two poles of nationalist activity. That the Congress leadership had a conception of strategy which is not only related to constitutional goals is not examined. If the tempo of popular activity is seen as being broken by the limits set by the nationalist leadership the determinants of policy and strategy at the level of the leadership seems to revolve around the issue of using but checking popular participation. Popular upsurge encourages the leadership to begin a movement, fear of social upheaval leads to a decision to call it off.⁷ The point of dissatisfaction with this approach is not that the leadership did not desire to impose certain constraints or make certain compromises or call off movements. The

7. Of 1942 in eastern U.P. Chandan Mitra writes, "Years of virulent anti-British mobilisation had created the necessary environment for mass action. When the time for action arrived the people were prepared to act under any leadership that could be provided. The limitations clearly lay with the leadership." Can this, however, explain the rapid withdrawal of the masses from the movement. Attempts to organise them again around a no-rent movement did not succeed. C.Mitra, "The Lion in Retreat", See K.Kumar, op.cit., p.216.

point of dissatisfaction is that if subaltern consciousness is to be allowed a logic and rationale which is not simply a series of responsive reflexes to the leadership; then the leadership too should be allowed a long term logic. This long term strategy is one of winning power on certain terms and not in legislatures alone.

To examine this position it is useful to take up the Gandhi-Irwin pact of 5 March 1931 because this is usually understood as the point at which the Congress parted company with the mass movement. "Constitutional considerations at national and provincial levels prevented the adoption of a militant stand point at this crucial stage when important sections of the peasantry most needed, and most desired it."⁸ What will be argued here is this that during the eight month truce inaugurated by the pact in Uttar Pradesh the Congress maintained an insistence on two issues which reveal a rationality which signifies more than mere "constitutionalism" or fear of upheaval. (Firstly, the Congress leadership insisted on its right to continue to organise tenants on the "economic" issue of securing adequate remission of rents and secondly on the right of Congress to represent their case for such remissions to the government. This meant

8. Gyan Pandey, "A Rural Base for Congress: The United Provinces 1920-40," in D.A.Low (ed.), op.cit., p.213.

that even before any constitutional formulas had been worked out Congress was demanding that a representative function be recognised which challenged the administration of the Raj as an adequate structure for dealing with the needs of the peasantry.

"The whole scope of the movement has changed" wrote Gandhi to the Home Secretary in May 1931. "It is no longer one for the non-payment of rent. It is a movement purely for seeking economic relief."⁹ In his interview with the Governor of U.P. on 20 May 1931, all of Gandhi's suggestions on giving relief to the tenants in one way or the other asked the Government to concede to Congress a recognition of the right to organise the tenants on the issue of securing remissions and the right to represent their case to the Government.¹⁰ Hailey rejected the suggestions on the ground that a delay in the collections would be dangerous - but the crux of the matter lay in the unwillingness to acknowledge the

9. Mahatma Gandhi to Emerson, 23 March 1931, enclosing note prepared by Jawaharlal Nehru, 33/11/1931 and k.w. Home Poll. N.A.I.

10. Gandhi had said that the relief announced by the Government was not adequate and suggested the adoption of one of the following measures (1) that Government accept Congress figures (2) that Government hold an enquiry with selected Congressmen to get the figures (3) that Government hold a public enquiry at which Congress men could give evidence as to the capacity of tenants to pay. FRUP II, May 1931, N.A.I.

X" Congress as the intermediary between Government and the tenant. The parallel with the Champaran situation was not to be encouraged.¹¹

Of the manifesto on remissions issued by Gandhi to the kisans on 23 May 1931 the Government noted that its "chief mischief lay in the assumption that the Congress was an authority competent to decide what rents should or should not be paid, to adjudicate disputes between landlords and tenants and to receive complaints against the former lodged by the latter."¹² Congress appointed committees of enquiry and Congress organisations acted as agents for the receipt of petitions and in some cases attempted to act as agencies for the collection of rent.¹³

While Pandey acknowledges that the truce gave Congress an opportunity to extend its rural organisation, he says that the Congress lost influence in Agra villages partly because of remissions, partly because of punitive

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11. Ibid. "What was really weighing with them", recalled Sampurnanand, "was the principle involved, it would be a dangerous precedent to accept a demand sponsored by Congress". Sampurnanand, Memories and Reflections, Bombay, 1962, p.62.
 12. J.M.Clay, "Statement of Case Regarding No-rent Campaign," 15 December 1931, U.P.Gazette, July-December 1931, Extraordinary, p.6.
 13. "Statement of case regarding no-rent campaign," op.cit., p.63. It was felt that the manifesto practically supported the demands put forward by the local leaders and caused serious difficulties in rent and revenues collection, U.P.A.R. 1930-31, Lucknow, 1932, p. IV. From Lucknow district it was reported that tenants were putting in written applications before the Congress for redress of grievances in much the same style as that of regular petitions in court. FRUP I, August 1931.


action but also because the Congress had worked up the peasants and then called off the campaign.¹⁴ In Rae Bareilly the official Congress leadership did much, he says, to reduce militancy. That militant propaganda continued even after the truce, is attributed quite rightly to local militants.¹⁵ (What he emphasises is that in the period of the truce the Congress was trying to prevent clashes between tenants and the zamindars and to bring about compromises between them)¹⁶ - and such compromises he implies were at the expense of the tenant. But even though the tenant did not get as much remission as he hoped for, the very fact that tenants, and even zamindars, were looking to the Congress for a way to come to some working arrangement represents a shift in power relations.¹⁷

14. Gyan Pandey, The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh 1926-34, pp. 176-77.

15. Ibid., p. 181.

16. In Agra after the Pact the Congress themselves appealed to the Government for substantial remissions, enquired into any reports of the continued non-payment of taxes and helped the zamindar realise 'reasonable' and 'proper' rents. Gyan Pandey, ibid., p. 175. See also pp. 182-83.

17. It was reported that in some cases landlords, finding it impossible to collect rents had attempted to arrive at some compromise with local Congress representatives. FRUP II April 1942. The same report also says that Congressmen were finding it difficult to get tenants to pay the agreed rate, i.e. the tenant was not always ready to accept Congress as arbitrator either! Ibid.

In this shift lay also a move to a demand that the relation between the tenant and the landlord be regulated by legal form rather than by customary authority. Congress activity in the truce period by an insistence on the implementation of remissions, and on the cessation of illegal cesses created a situation in which both Government and landlords were challenged by the presence of a new force. That tenants were taking recourse to the letter of tenancy law under Congress direction constituted a threat to landlord income and landlord status and to the prestige of the administration.¹⁸ This shift in situation was not of course one undertaken in a blend legalistic way - it resulted in considerable tension. Hence the complaints of the administration that the Congress was ignoring the  of the truce, that the no-rent campaign was being continued in another guise. In fact official sources do not indicate a decline in agrarian tension after the truce.¹⁹

18. In many instances rent over and above the legally recorded rent or nazarana, was an important part of rental income. Payment of nazarana was also a sign of submissiveness. Taking recourse to the law, asking for a receipt, paying rent by money order (so as to have a record of payment) all these were dangerous signs of fractiousness and a challenge to landlord authority. See FRUP II, November 1931, Home Poll. N.A.I. See Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces, U.P.P.C.C. 1931, for incidents of ikhfa, concealed rent.

19. See U.P.A.R. 1930-31; FRUP II, March 1931; File No. 33/24/1931, Home Poll, N.A.I., File No. 33/XI and k.w. 1931, Home Poll, N.A.I.

The other point is that when the Congress turned to the policy of negotiation with Government this had a definite duration in strategy - it could be sustained only so long as rental collections were stalled. Once rent collection was started in mid-November 1931 without any satisfactory compromise there was no option but to advocate non-payment of rent again.²⁰

The official view of this period at the end of the year when the truce had broken down was that the Congress had carried on the no-rent campaign in another form, that Congress was intervening between Government and landowner and between tenant and landlord and that it was establishing institutions parallel to Government.²¹ The role of arbiter cast before it the shadow of a successor authority functioning in a transitional phase.

20. On 14 October, Jawaharlal Nehru expressing dissatisfaction at rent-remissions said "defensive action" would be necessary. In November U.P.P.C.C. discussions with Government came to nothing and on 18 November 1931 Allahabad D.C.C. decided to advise agriculturalists to withhold payment of rent and revenue. U.P.A.R. 1930-31. The sanction for this came from the A.I.C.C. President Sardar Patel. Pandey ascribes this to the leadership being forced to reconsider their attitude "of blind neutrality" under the pressure of the actions of the masses. Which then does not explain why they did not respond enthusiastically to the re-opening of the campaign.

21. "Statement of Case," op.cit., p.3.

The influence of the zamindars was seriously impaired²² and the U.P. Government sought to restore it by throwing its weight behind the formation of a stable "agriculturist" party - the N.A.P. formed in 1934.²³ But the position which the Congress had established for itself in the course of the civil disobedience movement was such that the peasantry of districts which had not been so deeply affected by the no-rent campaign were also eager to vote for Congress. In Gorakhpur for instance Congress victories caused some surprise to the Government for the zamindars "were supposed to have a good hold over the tenants here".²⁴

In these districts too, in the course of the elections of 1936-37 and in the months which followed, signs of what the Government called parallel activity were noticed. Fundamentally this represented on the one hand the expectations aroused in the peasantry by the Congress election campaign and their own expectations of the changes which would follow its installation in power.

22. Expressing anxiety about what would transpire after the ordinances were lifted the Nawab of Chhatari pointed out that grant of occupancy right would not necessarily mean that the tenant would turn away from Congress. Printed note for W.E. Hailey, 24 June 1932, Nawab Chhatari, Mss. N.M.M.L.

23. See Venkatachar, in Hunt and Harrison, *op.cit.*, for an account of how the administrative and rural development machinery was used to promote the N.A.P., pp. 192-93. "The officials in many places have practically become agents of the N.A.P.", fumed Nehru, Statement to the press, 5 February 1937, S.W.J.N., Vol. 8, p. 19.

24. Haig to Linlithgow, 13 February 1937, Mss. Eur. F. 115/16.

From the view point of the local activist it also represented the desire to impress upon the zamindars and the local administration that a popular government would mean a curtailment of their prestige and authority. As pointed out earlier the ministry had to combine a policy of clamping down upon such manifestations of parallel authority while at the same time demonstrating its determination to undertake agrarian reform.

The claim which the Congressmen had made in the course of the Civil Disobedience movement, i. e., that they could better represent the popular voice than the administration and the administration must allow them to do so, had now taken institutional expression. The Gwynne circular represented the recognition of a new reality in which the District Magistrate had to give up the I.C.S. "tradition" founded upon the authority of the Raj and establish "good relations" with the men who had been hitherto the "local agitators". The method of wielding power expressed in the course of the Ministry had a strong impact on the shaping of future Congress strategy which oriented itself to demanding a widening of the powers given under the 1935 Act - powers which it would exercise through the existing administration. As pointed out the idea of popular participation in administration was not developed significantly in the ministry period. The idea, therefore, that this

administration be destroyed and Congress actually form the executive represents a distinct moment in the national movement. To a large extent it was an un-characteristic development, ^{Why} it took place at all, why in these districts, and why it was only a moment is now summarised.

In the districts of Azamgarh, Ballia and Ghazipur, which had not participated in the no-rent campaign of 1930-31, it was not peasant militancy which had established a "hold" for the Congress in the countryside but the expectations of all strata in the village of a better deal. (On the one hand the attitude of the ministry and the 1939 Act had reassured the small zamindars. / It posed no threat at all for the zamindar ⁿowing fifty acres of sir and paying Rs.250 or less in land revenue.) For the fixed-rate tenants and occupancy tenant it further confirmed the security of their tenancies - though as pointed out the fixed rate tenants here were virtually in the position of sub-proprietors in any case. (On the fifty acres of sir allowed to zamindars the sub-tenants were not given any occupancy ^xrights. Sub-tenants ^{of} tenants were not given any occupancy rights. However, sub-tenants on sir land above the fifty acre ceiling could qualify for occupancy rights if they could prove occupation of the land. In general, therefore, the sub-tenants could also hope that

the implementation of the 1939 Act could secure them possession of land even if all sub-tenants did not qualify for this opportunity. However, for reasons which have been traced out in chapters one and two the status divide between the high caste tenantry and the low caste tenants—a divide strengthened by better conditions of tenure for the high caste - meant that the really wretched section of agrarian society could not develop any independent movement in this period because the power structure of village society here was too overwhelming.

In these districts, therefore, during the ministry it is the Youth League and the volunteer organisation which draws to itself attention rather than the Kisan Sabha operating in the sphere of agrarian agitation.

Hence the pattern of response of the peasantry of U.P. to 1942 was not coincidental with districts where the link between the Congress and the peasant had a past in the shape of a tradition of agrarian militancy. The location of these districts, therefore, is very crucial in explaining their response to 1942. (The agro-commercial links between these districts and eastern India and the fact that they were not self sufficient in food grain created a sense of insecurity about food supply. The dependency on emigré.

remittances from the east also created uneasiness about the future. Because of the war East U.P. had been declared a Warned Area.²⁵ In addition the movement of labourers back and forth from this region to places bordering the eastern front strengthened the perception of an imminent collapse of government.

That if one structure was collapsing, it was Congress which was to take its place was an indication of the impact which the Ministry had made, the expectations which it had aroused from every section of village society. That this was a cross class movement is related both to the pattern of agrarian relations as well as to the nature of the movement. In the course of the movement no internal contradiction was expressed between the participants. In its collapse, however, there is some indication, which more detailed studies might elaborate upon, (that the absence of administration began to encourage poor peasants to take to the looting of private property. Looting, however, cannot by itself constitute a strong challenge to the structures of domination.)

The fact that the 1942 movement drew a response from all sections explains the strength of the initial

25. File No. 51/3/43-Police, 1943, N.A.I. When Japan entered the war Civil Defence activity began in the east of the province, U.P.A.R. 1941.

upheaval. (But this unanimity was also based on a mobilisation around symbols rather^{than} around an actual strategy for holding power and it lacked a sustaining dynamism.) The dynamism and innovativeness of the peasant masses in the Non-cooperation and the Civil Disobedience movements sprang in fact from the element of class contradiction which is missing in this movement.

This also explains the tenuous nature of the tie between the leadership and the following in this movement. (In 1942 almost anyone who claimed to be giving out the Congress programme in a way which confirmed the general perception of a doomed and collapsing Raj was followed. This leadership could consist of the student from the mofussil town or from Benares, i.e., not necessarily of one who had any association with the peasant population before. (Their call to destroy the Government was accepted as the Congress message and carried out in a certain context.) But when the Government demonstrated that it was not in fact collapsing the masses withdrew. The idea that Congress might actually take over the administration had not been worked out tactically. It remained a symbol of militant nationalism. The readiness on the part of some activists to accept the idea of takeover was not sufficient to elicit sustained support from the peasantry.

The Quit India movement had been conceived of as comprising all the elements of previous agitations but in an intense and concentrated form. One strand of this strategy was a familiar one - to force the government to redesign the structure of power within which the Congress would take office again. But another aspect which gave a unique dimension to the movement was the war situation and this began to suggest that British power might be a transient entity. In which case, whether the British succumbed to the threat of the movement and started to negotiate or whether they did not, (the prospect of external danger coinciding with an internal power vacuum demanded an emotional refocussing on Swaraj.) The location and the conjuncture produced^a situation in which the administration in eastern U.P. collapsed under the assault of an eruptive response.) In this context a different strategy of power was required from that which had been worked out in the course of Civil Disobedience and which crystallised in the ministry period. (The relationship between the leadership and the masses and the motivations of the masses were not such that such a strategy could be worked out.) This was the weak component of the response both from the level of the leadership and of the masses. In making this point the intention is not to devalue the emotional impact of

1942. The simple fact here is that people died to raise a flag. (The point which is being made is that 1942 in these districts was a symbol of replacement ✕ but could not evolve into a new strategy of power.)

GLOSSARY

aarti	:	a ritual of acclamation
akhara	:	wrestling ground
amil	:	subordinate revenue official, sometimes also revenue farmer
ashraf	:	well-born, genteel
badmaash	:	rogue
bandobast	:	arrangements
bania	:	shopkeeper, trader
basta	:	bundle
bhaiachara	:	brotherhood, the holding of land and certain rights in common
biradari	:	community
boojharut	:	joint accounting by shareholders of an estate
chana	:	roasted gram
chaukidar	:	watchman
chhatri	:	of the warrior caste, here Rajput
dacoit	:	bandit
dehat	:	countryside
diara	:	alluvial land thrown up by riverine action
gandasa	:	machete
ganja	:	hemp
gau-rakshini	:	cow protection
goonda	:	a tough, a bully
gur	:	jaggery
haq	:	a right, a prescriptive fee
hari	:	a ploughing levy
harwaha	:	ploughman
hat	:	village market
jamabandi	:	record of rental accounts
karinda	:	agent

karro ya marro	: do or die
khud-kasht	: proprietor's holding cultivated by him
Lal pugri	: red turban, policeman
lambardar	: one who pays in revenue on behalf of a number of proprietors
lashkar	: a detachment
lathi	: staff
lathial	: staff-wielding muscle man
maafi	: land exempt from revenue
mahajun	: money lender, grain dealer
mahal	: unit of revenue payment
mandal	: circle
mauza	: settlement site
mofussil town	: small town in interior
mukhtar	: legal agent
muqaddam	: here village headman
nazrana	: a lordship due, a cess
neta	: leader
panchayat	: traditional council of arbitration
pargana	: revenue sub-division
patti	: a sub-division or share of an estate
pir	: holyman
prabhat pheri	: morning song procession
prajawat	: a lordship due taken from dependents
purbia	: one of the eastern districts
rais	: notable
rakshasas	: demons
sayer	: taxes other than land revenue
sharafat	: gentility
sharif	: genteel, well born
shikmi	: sub-tenant
sir	: land held by a proprietor under title of personal cultivation
sonar	: goldsmith
taluqa	: a collection of villages forming an estate

tari	: country liquor
terai	: damp jungle territory at foot of Himalayas
thana	: police outpost
thanedar	: police station house officer
tilak	: auspicious mark on brow
vakil	: legal representative

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